

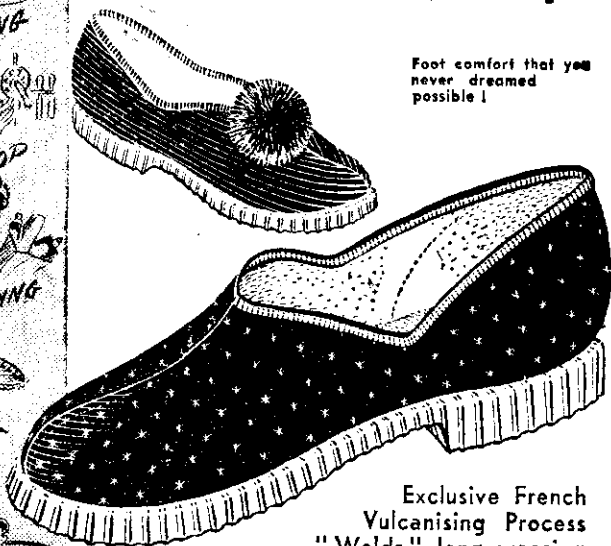
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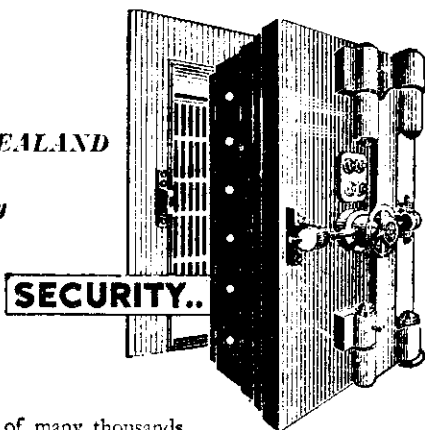
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A.1.

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4.2A

Fluoridation Under Fire

HAVE you had swedes and turnips brown at the heart? You've cooked them and they've tasted bitter and stringy. That lovely looking apple with brown corky areas in the flesh, or browning at the core, or brown spotted throughout, didn't thrill you, and you were somewhat caustic about the grower. Rightly so. The swedes, turnips and apples came from ground short in the trace element boron. Applying a tiny quantity of boron to the soil remedies the trouble.

Plants, animals and humans all need minute traces of certain elements for health. Shortage of iodine spells goitre, but iodised salt prevents that. Farmers in some areas supply cobalt to avoid bush sickness in cattle. The latest discovery is that teeth require just the right amount of fluorine. U.S.A. is so convinced of the correctness of hardening the teeth of the growing generation with the proper amount of fluorine that 840 towns and cities are adding fluorine to their water supplies, and 15½ million people drink such water. The local authorities are not asking the people beforehand, just doing it. As in our country, the law allows a local authority to treat a water supply for purity and for the advancement of the people's health.

Fluorine is a trace element needed for good tooth structure. With about one part per million in a water supply, the teeth of children drinking that water are more resistant to decay. With less fluorine than this, our propensity for sweets and carbo-hydrates allows dental caries free play with our teeth. With fluoride round about one part per million or higher, the teeth keep decay at bay much better—40 to 60 per cent better—in spite of sugar, sweets, biscuits and sticky carbohydrate foods. But fluoride can be overdone. When you have two or more parts per million in a water supply, the tooth hardening goes on to discolouration, ugly mottling and even pitting. However, that danger needn't worry a modern community. Water engineering delivers the exact amount of chemical precipitators, of chlorine, of fluoride, as required, continuous tests being run to maintain the additions at the right level.

New Zealanders have teeth that readily decay. They're not hard enough. Since the fluoride story broke, our water supplies have been examined, and every public water supply tested has shown a gross deficiency of fluorine. Wellington and Hutt Valley run at about 0.1 parts per million, so does Palmerston North, Whangarei, Tauranga and many other places. Hastings and Havelock North are low at 0.13, Napier at 0.15. It is very rare to find a place with half a part per million. No. In the last nine years the average of many analyses all over the country has proved our water supplies to be deficient in fluorine.

The Hastings Borough Council, convinced by its local dental association, began fluoridation last year. The Health Department approved, and examined sufficient children's teeth to be able later to evaluate any benefit that accrued.

THIS is the text of a talk on health broadcast recently from the ZB, YA and YZ Stations of the NZBS by DR. H. B. TURBOTT, Deputy-Director-General of Health.

The British Ministry of Health, following the favourable report of a mission to U.S.A. on the pros and cons of fluoridation, is now asking local authorities to co-operate and fluorinate water in selected communities to prove its value, just as is being done in Hastings.

Lately, an Anti-Fluoridation Society is trying to persuade the Hastings Council to stop the fluoridation. They say fluorine is a poison. So is iodine, chlorine. All three are safe and work for health in correct quantities. Iodine and chlorine are accepted. Why burke at fluorine? Many overseas water supplies have over one part per million. It is

said to be a cumulative poison. Please believe the National Research Councils of both America and Great Britain that this is not so through controlled water supplies. It is said to have caused minor ailments in Hastings. Believe the Hastings doctors. Such ailments were widespread in



the district but only Hastings had fluorinated water. It is said scientists disagree over the safety of fluorination. Any who do are out of date. Its safety is vouched for by the U.S. Public Health Service, the Canadian Health Department, the British Ministry of Health, and the International Dental Federation.

I hope the Hastings Borough Council turns a deaf ear to the Anti-Fluoridation Society. If it does, and continues its good work, Hastings' growing generations will, in a few years, have better teeth than elsewhere in New Zealand.

The Kristina Home

THE Kristina Home—a short-stay home for intellectually handicapped children—was opened at Silverstream, near Wellington, less than three weeks ago, and soon after the first children moved in Barbara Basham, Women's Programme Organiser at 2YA, visited the home with a tape recorder. Listeners will hear the programme she brought back in the 2YA Women's Session on Monday, May 17, and in the Business Women's Session from the same station the following Saturday. Formerly the Sir Thomas Duncan Home for polio cases, the Kristina Home was placed in trust by an anonymous donor, since when many others have given help towards preparing the building for its new purpose. The home stands in about two and a half acres of garden, not far from the Silverstream railway station. It will take from 16 to 20 children for stays of up to two months, and is intended to help where mothers are ill or need a holiday or in other cases of emergency. It will also be open to mothers passing through Wellington who need somewhere to spend a night.

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 14, 1954.