Senate Committee Investigates Consent in Radiation Testing

Radiation, from Page 1

the Fernald School, President Charles M. Vest asked Litster to head an investigation of the insti-
tute's records.
Litster has not concluded his review of all the radiation tests recently discovered, but his calcula-
tions for fumes' radioactivity tests indi-
cate that the doses involved were very small.

Litster said that the purpose of the investigation was to ascertain the amount of risk people were exposed to, and to determine the harm caused by the exposure.

"It is important to recognize that the purpose of these studies was to improve understanding of nutritional processes in order to promote the health of young people, and that the radiation exposure appears to have been well within today's limits," Vest said.

Kennedy hearing
Kennedy chaired a meeting of the Senate Committee on Labor and Human Resources at the Fernald School. The hearing focused pri-
marily on the issue of informed con-
sent.

"We want to know what records exist, how great the dangers were and, how much consent, if any, was obtained from the research, and how much harm was done," Kennedy said in his opening statement.

"Once we have this information, we can enact legislation to help the victims and prevent any repetitions of these abominable practices," Kennedy continued.

In the 1970s, Kennedy intro-
duced legislation that effectively could extinguish without the informed consent of the subjects, according to a spokesman in Kennedy's office.

According to Memo, to the best of his knowledge, no formal review policies existed at MIT in the late 1940s and 50s when the studies were done.

Litster testified that Felix Bren-
ner PhD '52, who based his thesis on the calcium studies, found that the Fernald School acted as a custo-
dian for the patients and permitted them to participate.

"He was very tough with the questions he asked, but they were fair and appropriate questions," Lit-
ster said.

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