

# Sen. Introduces Bill to Protect Public from Electronic Products

WASHINGTON—Senator E.L. (Bob) Bartlett introduced in the Senate this week a bill to provide for the protection of the public from radiation emissions from electronic products.

Bartlett's bill would authorize the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to step up the research efforts of the department in radiological health and safety and to develop and administer standards to govern the manufacture of products which may emit harmful radiation.

The Secretary of the Treasury would be given power to refuse admission to the country of any foreign-made product which did not meet minimum safety standards.

In introducing the bill, Senator Bartlett said, "We are now at a time and place in our technological development where an increasingly wide range of devices are being employed which directly utilize X-rays or other types of radiation, and where another sizeable class of products may inadvertently, or as a side effect, produce high levels of radiation."

"One device of this latter sort," the Senator said, "has been very much in the news recently: the television set."

Bartlett was referring to the recent disclosure by General Electric that it was recalling 90,000 color television sets manufactured between June, 1966, and February, 1967, found to be producing X-radiation levels considerably in excess of the maximum safe level recommended by the National Council for Radiation Protection and Measurement.

As recently as a month ago the National Center for Radiological Health was

issuing assurances that no television viewers had received excessive exposure, but two weeks ago the director of the center, Dr. James G. Terrill, confirmed that the sets were potentially a serious health hazard.

Bartlett also noted in his statement the need for Congress to investigate the possible consequences of radiation leakage or over-exposure in X-ray devices used in medicine. He pointed out that the President had evidenced concern in this area in his February message on consumer protection.

At present no Federal statutes relate to the possible emission of radioactivity from manufactured electronic products.

Bartlett's bill is similar to one introduced in the House by Rep. Paul G. Rogers (D-Fla.) and John Jarman (D-Okla.), which is scheduled for hearings before the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce.

In his statement introducing the bill, Bartlett said, "For years I have been urging that we act upon the information we either have or can obtain concerning the hazards connected with diagnostic or or therapeutic X-ray devices."

"Moreover," he went on, "radiation hazards are of a particularly insidious sort. Exposure to radiation cannot be seen, smelled, heard or felt; the victim is particularly defenseless, knowing nothing of the dangers to which he is exposed."

"And whatever dangers may exist apply not only to the exposed individuals themselves, but also have a bearing on the characteristics and the infirmities their children and grandchildren might inherit," he stated.