

August 13, 1945

Statement by Hon. John E. Fogarty, Congressman on Outing to be held by R.I. Pharmaceutical Association.

The druggists of Rhode Island planned to hold a gathering in the nature of a convention, at Watch Hill, Rhode Island. Upon inquiry, the association was advised by local ODT officials that it would be alright to hold such a gathering. In order to be completely honest and comply with all Government requests, the association addressed to the Washington Headquarters, for ODT, a formal request for authority which it was felt would be forthcoming as a matter of course.

Instead, the ODT in Washington refused to grant authority to hold the convention at Watch Hill, giving as its reason the statement that such a convention would "effect the deployment of troops to Japan".

A committee of the association spoke to Congressman John E. Fogarty about this letter from Washington. It was explained that these Rhode Island pharmacists intended using their own cars and would not use public transportation facilities of any kind. Expressing the opinion that the ODT's excuse for denying the authority to hold the convention was a silly one, Congressman Fogarty called Washington twice. First he talked to the Secretary for the War Committee of Conventions - a division of ODT. This official stated his opposition to the holding of the proposed gathering was based on the fact that "the war effort would not be hurt if the gathering were not held". Although ^{the} Congressman expressed his amazement at such a reason he was unable to obtain any clearer statement from the Secretary of the Committee. The Congressman then called Colonel Johnston, Chairman of the Committee and head of ODT. Colonel Johnston refused to budge, and insisted the ban must stand.

Congressman Fogarty informed Johnston that similar gatherings of pharmacists had been held in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Another was

recently held in the state of Washington. The Congressman also read to Colonel Johnston the stories published in Monday's Journal relative to the 90,000 people on Rhode Island beaches on Sunday, August 12th. 18,000 people, according to the Journal were on the Watch Hill, Misquamicut beaches on Sunday. These people according to the Journal were in large part people from inland cities of Rhode Island, Connecticut and Massachusetts. Colonel Johnston said "those people were bent on recreation - and recreation is necessary".

It does seem, Congressman Fogarty pointed out to Colonel Johnston, that these people (the pharmacists) could hold their convention, if they had been bent solely on obtaining some recreation. Because they were honest and above board in their attempt to obtain official sanction, they are to be penalized.

The Congressman told Colonel Johnston it was his intention to bring this matter to the attention of the general public because, in Congressman Fogarty's opinion it is one of the most flagrant examples of the bureaucratic frame of mind.

There have been many criticisms of bureaucracy - this denial of permission to hold this druggists convention is outstanding among all the cases which have been criticised.

Here are men who live very intimately with the families in their community. Cases are numerous where these men have climbed out of bed at three and four o'clock in the morning in order to fill a prescription or to render emergency aid to some suffering member of the community. Their convention to be held close to home would give to many of these druggists the benefit of newly discovered or developed scientific aids to health and safety. It is impossible to properly evaluate the benefits

that would come from such a convention. It is not by any stretch of the imagination a pleasure seeking junket.

Yet, in spite of the need for greater protection of the families on the home front - in a dictatorial and ruthless manner - the ODT tells the druggists of Rhode Island that they cannot get together - but 90,000 people - desiring nothing more than a day at the beach - they can go where they will.

This refusal is ridiculous and senseless. It is impossible to find justification for it and the quicker this mental attitude is kicked out of the Federal Government the better off the country will be.

Such instances serve further to show that some Federal officials think Rhode Island is worthy of no attention and it is high time we served notice that we are going to get some attention or find out why.

Congressman Fogarty advised the Druggists that he would hold the convention despite the ODT's letter and let the ODT stand up under the public criticism that would most certainly come - should that agency see fit to throw its weight around and try to interfere with the holding of the convention.

It should be noted that all arrangements for the holding of this convention had been made on the strength of the assurance by local ODT officials that it could be held. Programs were printed, the Hotel was engaged for the 4th, 5th and 6th of September and all expense incidentals thereto had already been taken on.

All this was explained to the Washington officials but it made no impression whatever.