DON'T WORRY GIRLS

Bikinis Safe With SST

By BARRY GOLDWATER

In the recent congressional debate over the SST no argument proved more important or fascinating than one called "the bikini story."

The story belongs to Dr. William Kellogg of the National Center for Atmospheric Research who headed a working group on the climatic effects of the SST last year, and was offered in House committee testimony to counteract scare stories that the development of the SST would produce an increase in the number of skin cancer cases in the United States.

In it Dr. Kellogg reassured scantily clad female bathers that they could wear bikinis and ward off the possible skin cancer effect of the SST by making sure they wore bathrobes at least once in every 2,000 years.

The story was part of Kellogg's reply to a statement by Dr. James E. McDonald of the University of Arizona at hearings before the House subcommittee on transportation appropriations.

It was cited to show that Dr. McDonald was engaging in a ridiculous "numbers game" when he testified that development of the SST could reduce the ozone content of the stratosphere and result in 10,000 cases of skin cancer.

Dr. Kellogg himself tells the story best. Here is the way he put it at the House hearing when questioned by Rep. Sidney Yates of Illinois.

"I do not know when I have had a story appreciated so much.

"I was attempting to put the kind of argument that Prof. McDonald had made concerning the ozone and its effect on the ultraviolet and the consequent effect on skin cancer into some kind of perspective and trying to say that I disqualify myself completely as a person who knows anything about the medical aspects, but then neither did Jim McDonald — professionally that is.

"So I feel that I was allowed to play the same kind of numbers game that he has played, in addition to the examples that you have already heard, such as you can change the ozone above you by 1 or 2 per cent by moving 50 or 100 miles north or south; that you can go from sea level to Denver and do the same thing.

"Then I became intrigued by the 10,000 cases of skin cancer out of a population of 200 million. It works out that this means that one person in 20,000 might be affected.

"If all these probabilities are linear, as McDonald's theory implies, if you change one part of the thing by one part in 20,000 that is the kind of thing we are changing.

"I ask myself what would I have to do in order to protect myself from the 1/20,000 of the effect if I was out in the sun every day of my life. I live about 20,000 days and this means if I covered my head one day in my lifetime I would have eliminated the effects of the SST.

"But you and I usually only get out on weekends, so this works out to be only once in 200 years.

"Then if girls are concerned about the time that they wear bikinis, they should wear a bathrobe once in about every 2,000 years to overcome the effects of the SST."

Dr. Kellogg told the committee that Prof. McDonald is a very good atmospheric scientist when he sticks to the subject of the atmosphere. He suggested the Arizona professor gets a little out of his field when he begins discussing medical questions.

In a numbers game with 20,000 probabilities anything is possible. But to raise such an outlandish probability that Prof. McDonald raised is to do a disservice to laymen trying to understand if the development of SST constitutes a dangerous health hazard. Obviously it doesn't.