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**CIGARETTE SMOKING—THE HEALTH QUESTION  
AND THE BASIS FOR ACTION**

The Committee heard testimony and considered published evidence of the Department of National Health and Welfare as well as major professional and voluntary health organizations and individual authorities to the effect that cigarette smoking is now considered by experts to be one of the most important causes of preventable illness and death in Canada. This conclusion has been derived from hundreds of studies of various kinds in different countries of the world and there is no substantial body of informed health opinion or consistent scientific evidence that disputes this conclusion.

The Committee also heard testimony from individual witnesses, most of whom appeared at the request of the Canadian tobacco industry, to the effect that further evidence was required before the association between smoking and disease could be considered to have causal significance. These witnesses dealt with possible alternative explanations such as changing diagnostic accuracy and fashions in medicine, selectivities of various kinds in epidemiological studies and certain inconsistencies in the data. These possibilities have been recognized by health authorities reviewing the continually accumulating evidence of the hazards and were dealt with in such major reviews of the world-wide evidence as the United States Surgeon General's 1964 Report on Smoking and Health. There appears to be decreasing reason to conclude that possible alternative explanations could account for a substantial portion of the relationship between cigarette smoking and disease.

Because of the complexities of this problem and the conflicting evidence presented to the Committee regarding the association between cigarette smoking and disease, the Committee considered it was important to examine the health issue thoroughly, particularly with respect to the importance of statistics, the nature of scientific evidence, and the balance of the expert testimony. The Committee recognizes, however, that it is not a scientific body and must place considerable reliance on the judgments of scientific authorities.

**THE BASIS FOR ACTION**

In addition to major Canadian health organizations, including the Department of National Health and Welfare, the Canadian Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute of Canada, the Canadian Heart Foundation, the Canadian Tuber-