

solution. In some other fields our knowledge of causation furnishes an inadequate basis for a rational preventive programme; witness the varying claims for a dietary prophylaxis of degenerative arterial disease. However, there are certain fields where we know how to prevent serious disease but signally fail to apply our knowledge. If a massive campaign against the cigarette met with even modest success, it would probably save more lives at present sacrificed to lung cancer, coronary thrombosis, and chronic bronchitis than all the curative procedures discussed above.³

In its report, "Influencing Smoking Behaviour", the Committee for Research in Smoking Habits appointed by the Norwegian Cancer Society commented:

... Reduction of cigarette smoking is to-day the only possible method for reducing the incidence of lung cancer; and for reducing coronary thrombosis, probably the best one.⁴

It would seem unrealistic to expect tobacco growers and manufacturers to acknowledge the dangers of smoking. If they did, the inconsistencies between such an acknowledged belief and their behaviour would make it impossible for many of them to continue producing tobacco or cigarettes. But it is important, in recognizing the position that must be taken by tobacco growers and manufacturers, to assert that it is no longer in the public interest to prolong the debate about whether cigarette smoking is a health hazard. Too many potential or current smokers are liable to be misled or given false hope by such debate. The exact way in which cigarette smoking causes disease is another matter and continuing study and discussion is required.

One can only conclude that on the basis of the evidence, governments and health authorities have a continuing responsibility to

- (a) Do whatever is possible to reduce or eliminate cigarette smoking by Canadians,
- (b) Encourage wherever feasible, less hazardous ways of smoking for those who cannot stop.

There can be no question that if cigarettes were a food or drug or being newly marketed, their sale would have to be prohibited or strongly regulated on the basis of evidence now available, the known constituents of the smoke and the express purpose for which they are sold. Their use would likely only be reconsidered if there was subsequent evidence that a product had been developed which could be consistently used in a reasonably safe manner.

It is perfectly obvious, however, that cigarettes cannot be banned today, pending the development of a product demonstrated to be less hazardous. Cigarette smoking is too widespread and is the basis of an economically important industry from grower through to retailer. Widespread illegal manufacture and distribution

³ British Medical Journal, January 11, 1969, page 107.

⁴ Influencing Smoking Behaviour, International Union Against Cancer, 1969.