

Home News

DOCTORS URGE GOVERNMENT TO CURB SMOKING

PROPOSED HIGHER TAXATION AND ADVERTISING RESTRICTIONS

Government action to curb the rising consumption of tobacco, especially cigarettes, is called for in a report which eight doctors, under the chairmanship of Sir Robert Platt, have prepared for the Royal College of Physicians. They conclude that cigarette smoking is the most likely cause of the recent world-wide increase in deaths from lung cancer, "the death rate from which is at present higher in Britain than in any other country in the world".

The report, which has been sent to the Ministry of Health, was approved for publication at a meeting of fellows of the college. It suggests six possible lines of action under the headings of public education, restriction of tobacco advertisements, wider restriction of smoking in public places, higher taxation, printing of smoke analyses on cigarette packets, and the organization of anti-smoking clinics.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

After a 2½-year study of smoking and health the panel declare that the evidence that cigarette smoking often has harmful and dangerous consequences is so convincing that preventive measures are undoubtedly needed. For the health of the present population of this country it is necessary, they say, that "any measures which are practicable and likely to produce beneficial changes in smoking habits" should be taken promptly.

Among preventive measures the report discusses the removal of harmful substances from tobacco smoke by filtration, modifications of tobacco to lower the tar content, and inducements to cigarette smokers to change to pipes or cigars.

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Standing Committee, who are concerned to promote research into the effects of smoking on health, yesterday criticized the college's report on several grounds. They said there was a growing body of evidence that smoking had pharmacological and psychological effects of real value to smokers. The main unspoken lesson of the report was the need for more intensive research.

The Tobacco Advisory Committee, who represent the industry in general trade matters, said that further taxation would be most inequitable and would penalize the many millions of smokers who derived pleasure and solace from smoking.

SURVEY FINDING

The report recalls that in the past 10 years the connexion between smoking and cancer of the lung and other diseases has been widely referred to, but it says that there is clearly room for more persistent public education. A recent survey in Edinburgh had shown that two-thirds of those wishing to discontinue the habit gave expense as their reason.

Many smokers regarded the lack of any official action against cigarette smoking as an indication that the evidence was "only theoretical" or "mere statistics". If the Government did not consider it necessary to take action, it was argued, no action was as yet required of the individual.

The following "decisive steps", the report states, should be taken by the Government:—
PUBLIC EDUCATION.—Much more imagination, effort and money should be devoted to drawing the attention of the public to the hazards of smoking. Special attention should be paid to effective education of schoolchildren, but use should also be made of every modern method of advertising, including posters, press notices, and short items on the radio and television. An educational campaign among children might be supported by more effective restrictions on the sale of tobacco to children.

"The regulation forbidding the sale of tobacco to children under the age of 16 is widely flouted, and in any case cigarettes are freely available in slot machines."

LEGISLATION AIM

ADVERTISEMENT RESTRICTION.—"While it may be doubted whether advertisement does much to initiate the smoking habit, and it is predominantly designed to attract smokers towards the advertiser's particular brand rather than to increase overall consumption, legislation to prevent or at least to restrict the advertisement of a habit which causes such widespread injury to health would be reasonable and would provide evidence of official acceptance of the reality of the hazard."

RESTRICTION OF SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES.—"This would be desirable for the convenience and enjoyment of what may be an increasing number of non-smokers and it might ultimately contribute much to the discontinuance of smoking by altering social acceptance of the habit."

TAXATION

—After suggesting that increases in tobacco taxation might persuade many smokers to stop, the report says it seems unlikely that higher taxation would have "any lasting deterrent effect". A differential increase in taxation of cigarettes with a reduction of taxation on pipe and cigar tobacco "might, however, persuade many cigarette smokers who cannot forsake the habit to change to safer forms of smoking".

and 50 per cent of women are regular smokers. Men who smoke cigarettes consume on an average 19 and women 11 cigarettes each day.

The report addresses a word finally to the doctors. On them, it is said, rests a special responsibility "The doctor who smokes will inevitably lessen the effect of any campaign of public education concerning the consequence of the habit and will find it harder to help his patients who need to stop smoking."

The report, *Smoking and Health: A Report of the Royal College of Physicians on Smoking in Relation to Lung Cancer and Other Diseases*, is published by the Pitman Medical Publishing Co., Ltd., at 5s.

INVESTIGATORS TOOK THEIR OWN ADVICE

Five of the signatories to the report who faced a press conference at the Royal College of Physicians yesterday made clear their own smoking habits. Sir Robert Platt, President of the College, said that when they started they had two heavy cigarette smokers among them; now there was only one, or perhaps none. He gave up smoking in 1954, he said.

Of the other members of the investigating committee present Dr. J. N. Morris said he gave up smoking cigarettes after the evidence began to appear and now smoked two miniature cigars a day; Dr. J. A. Scott,



Sir Robert Platt, President of the Royal College of Physicians, speaking at the conference.

L.C.C. Medical Officer of Health, said he smoked a pipe; Dr. J. G. Scadding gave up smoking in 1945; and Dr. C. M. Fletcher, secretary of the committee, who used to smoke a pipe and cigars, said that in the past eight months he had smoked only three cigars.

But more than a third of their audience smoked cigarettes throughout the meeting.

LUNG CANCER

During his speech Sir Robert Platt said: "It is the cigarette smokers who get the cancer of the lung. Indeed, those who smoke 25 or 30 cigarettes a day have about 30 times the chance of dying of it than a non-smoker has. Of course you may say it is still only the minority, about one in eight, of heavy smokers who died of this disease, and this is true. But supposing you were offered a flight on an air line and you were told that usually only about one in eight of their aeroplanes crashed, you might think again."

There was also a big excess of deaths from other diseases in heavy smokers of cigarettes, he said, especially deaths from bronchitis and coronary thrombosis, and especially at the younger end of the middle-aged population. "So much so, that between the ages of 35 and 55 the death rate in heavy cigarette smokers is three to four times that in non-smokers."

He suggested three reasons for the reluctance to believe the facts—"first of all because we never like accepting unpleasant facts; secondly, because very big financial interests are involved...; thirdly, and most importantly, many people who smoke cigarettes want to go on smoking".

REPORT CALLED INCOMPLETE

The Tobacco Manufacturers' Standing Committee stated yesterday that the evidence in the report "is well known and adds little to that quoted by the Medical Research Council in 1957".

The Royal College of Physicians' committee was set up to consider the effects on health of both smoking and air pollution. By deferring to a separate report their consideration of air pollution the committee had "produced an incomplete assessment of the problems involved".

CHURCH SITE AS A CAR PARK

COURT HEARS VICAR'S APPLICATION

Judgment was reserved by Mr. G. H. Newson, Q.C., deputy chancellor, at a London Diocesan Consistory Court yesterday on an application by the vicar and churchwardens of St. John's Church, Chelsea, for a faculty to use the blitzed site of the church as a car park.

Yesterday was the second day of the hearing. The court had been told that a petrol station was proposed for the blitzed vicarage site. Mr. E. Garth Moore, counsel for the applicants, said there was no question of petrol pumps being installed on consecrated ground.

One of the objectors, Mr. John Riley, of Meek Street, Chelsea, said he wished the church site to be made into a children's playground. He was prepared to finance the laying out of the site to the extent of £150 and to pay £100 a year towards its maintenance.

Another objector, Mr. Patrick Corbett, a member of Chelsea Borough Council, suggested that the site should be a playground for children aged from three to six years. Answering Mr. Garth Moore, he said: "I am objecting to the development of the site in the interests of petrol peddling."

SCHEDULED FOR SCHOOL

Opposition was also expressed by Mr. Arthur Bevis, owner of a garage and petrol station near the site. His objection, he said, was on commercial grounds, though he supported the idea of a playground.

The vicar, the Rev. Geoffrey Barber, who now holds services in a church hall, said the object of leasing the site as a car park was to obtain income. He thought there was no need for a playground at the site and it would not be consistent with the traffic using the road.

Mr. H. E. Ling, a churchwarden, said the church authorities were of opinion that to rebuild the church would not be justified. The land was scheduled for building a school by 1972. The Diocesan Advisory Committee had no objection to the scheme.

LEADERS' MESSAGES TO CANDIDATES

FROM OUR POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

Mr. Macmillan and Mr. Gaitskell published yesterday their personal messages to some of the candidates at the present by-elections. Mr. Macmillan took the opportunity to emphasize the importance of the imminent Geneva conference and the halting of "the ruinous arms race".

In a message to Mr. Norman Miscampbell, at Blackpool North, Mr. Macmillan wrote that the Government had consistently worked over the years for better international understanding. "All past experience, however, shows how disastrous it would be to take the short cut of indulging in one-sided unilateral disarmament, or to weaken in any way the balance of power which is essential to deter aggression."

To Mr. F. Wood, in Middlesbrough, East, Mr. Macmillan wrote that it would be no contribution to disarmament for Britain to weaken in any way the balance of power that is essential to deter aggression. Since the war peace had rested on the willingness of free people to bear the burden of maintaining adequate defences.

ECONOMIC RECORD

To Mr. Taverne, in Lincoln, Mr. Gaitskell wrote attacking the Government's economic record and commented that "lethargy, indifference and reliance on out-worn methods and techniques have been the order of the day in all too many British industries". The Government's record abroad had been just as bad.

In his message to Dr. Shirley Sumnerskill, in Blackpool, North, Mr. Gaitskell proposed measures that, he said, would make a tremendous change in the atmosphere and prospect at home and abroad. They included reform of the tax system to catch those who make money the easy way; firm action against the land price scandal; curbing monopolies; a Government drive to increase investment, research and efficiency in industry; half-pay on retirement; firm support for the United Nations; and acceptance of the Monckton commission report on Central Africa.

MINISTER TALKS OF LABOUR "VOMIT"

FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT

BOURNEMOUTH, MARCH 7

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter, Minister of Pensions, told a conference of women Conservatives here today that the Labour Party were "back to their old vomit of pensioning".

"Regardless of the fact that pensions were raised to their highest level yet less than a year ago and that the real value of the pension in terms of what it will buy is today higher than it ever has been before this last rise, they are starting a clamour about pensions", he said.

He said that what made this clamour more nauseating was that their own record in office made it clear that under a new Labour government the pensioner would fare very badly. "People have now learnt that the Socialists are only concerned about old people's pensions when they are in opposition. The Conservatives care for them when in office."

Mr. Boyd-Carpenter said they wanted to be increasingly selective in the way they disposed of the vast sums of money which the Government spent on social service benefits. The complete universality of benefit that was probably essential for the

News in Brief

CLEAN SHEET.—For the first time in over 10 years no case of drunkenness was heard at Old Street Magistrates' Court, London, yesterday.

FLYING DOCTOR SERVICE.—Sir Frank Medicott has accepted the position of hon. treasurer to the Flying Doctor Service of Africa Ltd.

AIRMEN'S SOUNDPROOF FLATS.—A block of flats for aircrews and their families to be erected opposite London Airport is to have completely soundproof rooms and passages.

YOUTH EMPLOYMENT COUNCILS.—Lady Albemarle has been appointed chairman of the National Youth Employment Council in place of Lord Coleraine, who is retiring from the post on March 31.

CRUSHED TO DEATH.—John Macdonald, aged 46, of Sydney Terrace, Edinburgh, first mate of the Liverpool motor vessel Broughty, died when he was crushed between the quayside and his ship at St. Helier, Jersey, yesterday.

COMMON MARKET COURSES.—Two-day residential courses for directors and senior executives on "The United Kingdom and the Common Market" are to be held at the Export Centre at Sundridge Park, Bromley, Kent. The first course begins on Monday.

CAMBRIDGE UNION POLL.—A further move towards allowing women into the Cambridge Union will be made today, when a poll will decide whether the three-quarters majority rule necessary for altering union rules should be changed to two-thirds.

RENT-FREE.—Tenants of a number of Coal Board houses in Armthorpe, near Doncaster, are to have nine weeks' free tenancy as compensation for damage to their houses during the past two years caused by faulty materials in the foundations.

DOCKERS END STRIKE.—The 1,100 dockers at the cross-Channel quays in Belfast who have been on strike since Monday decided yesterday to return to work this morning. The present system of employment of first and second preference dockers is to be reviewed.

GENERAL'S CAR OFFENCE.—Major-General Sir Richard Howard-Visse, aged 78, of Stoke Place, Slough, Buckinghamshire, was fined £10 and ordered to pay five guineas advocate's fee after pleading Guilty at Slough Magistrates' Court yesterday to driving without due care and attention.

SECOND HUNGER STRIKE.—Mrs. Helen Allegranza, of the Committee of 100, who is in Holloway prison serving a 12 months' sentence imposed under the Official Secrets Act and last Friday went on a 48-hour hunger strike as a protest against the British nuclear test explosion in Nevada, is on her second hunger strike, a "meditative fast" linked with Ash Wednesday.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION.—The Queen has approved the appointment of Mr. Leslie Robert Missen to be a member of the Local Government Commission for England, in succession to the late Mr. E. W. Woodhead.

RESTRICTIONS TO END.—Restrictions on the movement and marketing of poultry in east Suffolk because of fowl pest are being withdrawn from midnight tomorrow, the Ministry of Agriculture announced yesterday.

V.T.O.L. SURFACE EROSION TESTS

FROM OUR AERONAUTICAL CORRESPONDENT

Rolls-Royce have made tests to ascertain the extent of the surface erosion problems of using separate jet-lift engines for V.T.O.L. and S.T.O.L. (vertical and short take-off and landing) aircraft. They found that lightweight aluminium plates pegged to the ground reduce the erosion of grassland, tarmac, and asphalt surfaces to negligible proportions during V.T.O.L.

An RB108 jet-lift engine, mounted on a gantry, was used. Erosion occurred with ordinary concrete because water contained in small cavities in the top surface boils in the heat of the exhaust gases. This can be overcome by "water curing". Wet sand is placed over the concrete surface immediately after laying, and left for about 15 days, so that the moisture does not evaporate off the newly laid surface. Such a surface has withstood, with no deterioration, engine running equivalent to over 200 jet-lift take-offs.

Tarmac and asphalt surfaces showed an unacceptable degree of erosion. Satisfactory results were obtained by using a 2ft.-diameter plate of light gauge aluminium with a small circumferential lip, held to the ground by a single peg or skewer.

Simulated S.T.O.L. manoeuvres were made with an RB 108 engine mounted vertically in a Meteor aircraft. At speeds down to 10 knots no damage to tarmac or asphalt surfaces occurred.

The tests are described by two Rolls-Royce technicians, Mr. J. R. C. Fearon, deputy flight development engineer, and Mr. D. H. Norman, technical assistant, development department, in a paper published in the *Royal Aeronautical Society Journal*.

CALL FOR MEETING WITH DOMINIONS

The choice for Britain was whether to follow a policy of expanding Commonwealth trade as a first priority or to commit ourselves to a regional block in Europe, Lord Balfour of Inchrye told the annual meeting of the Greater London area council of the National Chamber of Trade last night.

"It is still not too late to bring together the great dominions in an effort to hammer out a revitalized Commonwealth policy", he said. "And then, as a Commonwealth, we can talk to Europe. It is still not too late to bring together the great dominions in an effort to hammer out a revitalized Commonwealth policy".

ADVANTAGE BRIDGE

ICES GO NG

RESPONDENT

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CKEY A.F.

RESPONDENT

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TAKE NCES