

P O BOX/C P 0501  
MONTREAL 101, CANADA

January 25, 1974

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Dear Norman,

Jim showed me the memo of December 6 you wrote him about mine of November 23. We had a good session on PRT at the R & D Conference and I think successfully resisted any temptation to act like a PRT-71 Steering Committee. In fact the discussions that took place should be of considerable help to the next Steering Committee meeting, as you no doubt will learn from Fred and Jim.

I would like to comment on some points raised in this correspondence in the interest of clarification, and with the hope that this will be helpful.

2. 10

We are in the waste utilization business. Redrying plant waste is not a potential new source of raw material. We use all of ours and I would think so does any large company that operates in a leaf growing region. Similarly Schweitzer in the U.S. and at Le Mans is shipped leaf plant waste for subsequent shipment in sheet form to the purchaser of the leaf from which the scrap originated. Some people do not use sheet, so there are still some bargains in leaf plant waste, which are snapped up by those who do. The availability is rapidly diminishing and the price is rising.

I think an advantage of the PRT concept is the possibility of integrating waste utilization with PRT. That is to say, PRT would provide a means of combining in one plant the processing of waste plus other raw materials (non-tobacco?), into a sheet possessing the characteristics set forth in the PRT-71 objectives.

If this cannot be done then a typical operating company would be faced with the necessity of having two sheet plants.

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- (3) I too, do not see the achievement of Schweitzer technology as an objective. However, I think Schweitzer sheet or PCL can provide useful benchmarks for comparison and communication, particularly in the areas of subjective quality and manufacturability. I do not think we have much reason to hope that PRT will come up to natural leaf in the subjective sense.

Most manufacturers have a pretty good idea of how much reconstituted tobacco their blends can absorb, and I would like to suggest an alternative method for subjective assessment to that now being used. This would consist of difference testing to determine how much of a given PRT sheet can be incorporated before a difference is detected between sample and control. PCL or Schweitzer sheet could serve as a sort of benchmark for this type of evaluation.

- 4) (5) There seem to be three chief reasons for interest in tobacco sheets:

- a) A means to recover tobacco waste and possibly to utilize low priced, low grade tobacco.
- b) Smoking and Health
- c) Economic. Scarcity and cost of tobacco.

As things now stand "tobacco substitutes" seem to be in the lead with respect to (b) and (c). For the waste utilization part of (a) paper technology is more economic at a very large scale of production, and PCL is a better process at more modest levels of production. Both of these latter processes can be used to convert low priced scraps and leaf in addition to waste. We have done this and so have many others. Sources of such raw materials are drying up and the price is rising. Limited quantities of redrier plant waste are being exported from Canada at \$0.25/lb by the one manufacturer who does not use sheet.

I do not know of any large source of supply of tobacco available at a low enough price for conversion into PRT at an overall cost that would be competitive with Cytrel. "Cheap" tobacco finds its way to some countries for use in its natural state, and from an economic stand-point nothing could be gained by converting it into sheet.

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I readily admit to a high degree of ignorance as regards world sources and prices of tobacco, but would suggest that PRT-71 objectives might be reviewed in conjunction with an analysis of potential sources of supply of tobacco raw materials, and the scale of manufacture at which a paper technology process is more economic than PCL. (Under what circumstances would which BAT territory use PRT-71?) Perhaps this would lead to the identification of the kind of tobacco for which PRT-71 must be developed to cope. As I have indicated, we are very gloomy about the prospects of developing a form of agriculture in our environment that could make PRT competitive with Cytrel.

- (5) Based on our work and that of Dr. Johnson it appears that a clean sharp cut deals with the bruising problem.
- (9) The operative word with regard to "wood-pulp" should have been "wood-pulp derivative," for example CMC.
- (13) I was trying to indicate what action ITL might take independently of PRT-71. The two ITL people that were here felt that any effort by an agricultural research station to produce low cost tobacco for conversion into sheet should be encouraged, and that ITL might offer to help out by preparing PRT's from small lots of experimental tobaccos. (The Canadian agricultural research people have been investigating the possibility of setting up their own sheet making facilities) However, I do not think anything has come of either initiative.
- (14) We shall discuss low profile tobacco (item 2, page 6) with the Delhi Station. Some work was carried out in 1973 by it and ourselves last summer.

What is the "method used by Dick Comber"?

I promise to attend the next Steering Committee meeting and look forward to seeing you then.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

  
R. M. Gibb

cc Mr. S.J. Green

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