

CIA/MO

Tel. 1-613-993-1111

November 15, 1979

(memo to Smith by
RKG February 1981) 5-2 51

SMOKING ISSUES

I think analysis of this issue should distinguish between the attitudes and roles of various regulatory bodies (federal, provincial and municipal governments, transit commissions, etc.) and those of society at large.

Federal and Provincial Governments

Health Departments genuinely believe that elimination of smoking would significantly improve the nation's health. More importantly, they have no other ideas of how to deal with lung cancer. Another aspect to the motivation of Health Departments is the conviction that a number of diseases are largely a consequence of poor "lifestyle" - overeating, poor diet, excessive drinking, lack of exercise, smoking, etc. A major change in orientation of Ottawa health authorities occurred during the regime of Marc Lalonde when it was decided to emphasize disease prevention through better lifestyle ("Participation") rather than cure. This idea originated in Canada, as far as I know, and Canada got a good deal of acclaim internationally.

Apart from a genuine concern for health, there's no doubt that the cost of medical services to governments has a good deal to do with governmental motivation. Interestingly a U.K. study showed that virtual elimination of lung cancer, sharp reduction in heart disease, etc., which would theoretically be achieved by elimination of smoking, would hurt overall government finances through increased cost of medical care for the aged, old age pensions, loss of tobacco tax revenue, etc.

Health Departments recognize the failure of their attempts to stamp out smoking on health grounds. They now use the social acceptability issue to reinforce their attempts to indoctrinate children with the "lifestyle" concept of better living. This is very evident in the anti smoking spots on CBC TV. It seems clear that federal and provincial Health Departments believe that the end justifies the means and that no counter action from the industry on social acceptability would have any effect on the activities of health departments. In fact Dr. Morrison once warned Paul Paré that any form of overt advertising in promotion of smoking rather than brands would ensure immediate government retaliation.

107473412

Municipal Governments

Although every conceivable argument is brought by the anti smoking groups to influence city councils I would suggest there are two areas of real and legitimate concern to city councillors:

- 1) The views of their citizens about smoking regulation in the areas over which city councils have jurisdiction.
- 2) Matters of fire prevention.

Fire prevention is clear cut and not really controversial.

City councillors are really quite close to their people. It's quite easy (except with Mayor Drapeau!) to get a topic on a city council agenda and with good organization it's not difficult to force a council to deal with an issue. They can't bury it in the manner of senior governments. An issue such as smoking in public places is of the kind city councils hate to have. It's like dog by-laws. There are dog lovers and dog haters, and a majority of tolerant people. City dog by-laws are seldom enforced literally and whenever they are the city makes an enemy in the person of the dog owner, or of the dog hater if the law is not enforced.

Copy

Given this situation I would think the most constructive action on the part of CTMC would be to give well documented advice (behind the scenes?) to city councils which are confronted with pressure to legislate in the smoking area. The advice would consist in the record of what has happened elsewhere as a consequence of local laws. What has been accepted, what has been rejected and proven unenforceable, what problems have faced local law enforcement officers and courts, legal problems for the city, what legislation has been accepted as "reasonable" by smokers, non smokers, owners of stores, restaurants, bars, etc.

The objective would be to help councils "look good," and to minimize attacks on the industry and smoking in general. In a nutshell the "Ottawa approach" applied at the municipal level.

The contrary approach: a public debate using the "freedom of choice" or "too much government" argument doesn't seem to me to have credibility. The American thought of a grass roots movement against local smoking restrictions sounds all right in theory provided there really is a large support for this view in the society of concern to the local council. But what has been the truth of the matter? Has there ever been an example of successful mobilization of ordinary citizens to express disapproval of local smoking restrictions on social acceptability grounds? Winning a battle with expensive high power lobbying as in California may be necessary at times, but what was the net impact on

107473413

Municipal Governments continued

social acceptability of smoking, or on the public assessment of the tobacco industry?

Transport Commissions, Airlines, Railways, etc.

The notion of segregation of smokers and non smokers is becoming widespread. I would argue that giving smokers a separate area, in many cases does more to damage the public image of smoking and smokers than would an outright ban. The smoking cars of the London tube system are strewn with litter, have foul air and appear to be populated with rather scruffy looking people. Demographically speaking smoking is primarily a "lower class" habit heavily weighted with poorly educated people, so public smoking areas inevitably communicate a poor image and reinforce the social unacceptability views held by many non smokers. ✓

Thus the proposed Quebec rules of either outright banning smoking or of insisting on adequate ventilation in mixed smoking, non-smoking areas would seem to be preferable to the establishment of segregated smoking areas. The Montreal practise of no smoking in public transport rather than the London provision of smoking areas on buses and subways is preferable from the point of view of maintenance of social acceptability.

One of the worst situations is that on Canadian airlines. Smokers are treated as second class citizens (back of the aircraft or over the engines). The ventilation systems don't really cope with a 100% concentration of smokers. By contrast many foreign airlines separate smokers from non smokers along the length of the aircraft. This practise avoids the sharp contrast between smokers and non smokers and minimizes the negative image created by a large concentration of smokers. To make matters worse the former practise of banning cigars and pipes on aircraft has been dropped. Aircraft ventilation doesn't cope with the heavy concentration of highly aromatic sidestream smoke created by cigars and pipes.

Anything that can be done directly with the management of public facilities, having designated smoking areas, to foster the provision of attractive well ventilated, clean smoking areas would help negate the social unacceptability aspects of such places. To my mind this is a genuine "smokers rights" issue. I found the Vancouver-Victoria ferry a most glaring example of communication of social unacceptability of smoking.

107473414

Social Aspects of Smoking

Those people who decide to take up smoking do so because it is socially acceptable at the time for them among their peers. They have at the time no appreciation of the benefits of smoking that later turn them into confirmed (addicted?) smokers. Research into smoker motivation among habitual smokers brings out a surprisingly high amount of social or perhaps "socializing" connotations to smoking. This is particularly true of light smokers who smoke on social occasions. Much of this kind of response to research questioning may be rationalization, but it nevertheless demonstrates a human need to be accepted socially and a conviction by many smokers that the smoking habit helps them in interpersonal relations and constitutes a bond among their peers. I'm paraphrasing research conducted in England and it may have considerably less validity in Canada where the institution of the pub does not exist. I would also think that the social aspect is very much a class phenomenon and that this may change from a positive to a negative factor as one moves up the social and/or the levels of education scale.

I think parallels can be drawn between smoking and drinking beer. Beer is (or was) for young men, or the lower classes in unattractive surroundings (beverage rooms and taverns). Beer advertising for a number of years seems to be trying to change this image by making two points:

- 1) Beer is socially acceptable among upper class people or people who do things that may be envied.
- 2) Beer drinking is a highly social activity conducted openly in the home.

Current cigarette advertising certainly communicates a high class image of smoking, and that smoking constitutes a bond between male and female. But it is also portrayed as taking place in isolation from the rest of the world, and there is no connotation of the acceptability of smokers among non smokers, in social gatherings, or in the real world available to the average man.

I am personally involved in a good deal of outdoor activity and I find that the people who are heavily into adult sports: skiing, sailing, tennis, hiking, etc. are rarely smokers. I think advertising that portrays a backdrop of the beautiful great outdoors, with a foreground of one or two people engaged in some sort of sports activity is at odds with the real world, and certainly conflicts with the "Participaction" concept that leads so many people to take up such activities. The social acceptability dimension confronting smokers is how they can comfortably maintain their habit in the kind of social environments they regularly encounter. Smoking alone or with one's girl friend at the top of a mountain presents no problem of social acceptability.

107473415

Social Aspects of Smoking

Fortunately for the industry, despite all the social and health pressures, the rate of successful quitting seems to be fairly stable and predictable among "addicted" smokers. There is a proportion of light occasional smokers who may reduce their frequency of smoking according to immediate social circumstances, but a more important aspect of social acceptability will be its impact on young people who may be experimenting with smoking.

Ottawa strategy is to incorporate anti smoking propaganda in a total package of lifestyle education to be given children at a very early age. To implement this program they must persuade provincial education departments to incorporate such teaching formally into the grade school education program, something they have been unable to achieve so far.

I don't see what the industry can do about this in a direct sense. However I do believe that the industry must accept the fact that there will be more and more regulations in public places that attempt to deal with the smoking vs no smoking problem. Rather than object to regulation on principle, our interest lies in having regulations that reduce smoker non-smoker conflict and that do not tend to lower the image of the smoking habit. I think our quarrel is more with the organizations which implement regulations than with the regulations themselves. As a smoker I would think twice about inviting a non-smoking friend (including my wife!) to sit in an Air Canada smoking section or ride in a CPR commuter smoking car.

I think that social acceptability as a public issue can only be resolved by appropriate response by public regulatory bodies. When this has been achieved the noise will die down and the "antis" will find it difficult to get a hearing. If smoking is conducted in ways that obviate the annoyance to non smokers at the level of their every day experience, senior governments will find it more difficult to get public support for what might be punitive action against smokers.



RMG

107473416