

20/2/84
PG-DM

Copy for information of
D. M J Hardwick et al
D. R E Thomson
M. A L Heard

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} Please show to your
SSH Colleagues.

VISIT TO INFOTAB BY DR L C F BLACKMAN

16 February 1984

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GENERAL

The visit was very well organised by Bryan Simpson and Antoinetta Corti. The atmosphere of the small organisation (organisation chart attached), is enthusiastic and I was impressed both with the individual staff and with the scope of activities.

It is clearly right that Millbank and Operating Companies should use INFOTAB as much as possible and eliminate duplication. It must be recognised, however, that despite overall similarities of activity with the GR&DC smoking and health team, and the Millbank PA Department, there are some areas where the similarity is only surface deep. For example, the analyst in charge of INFOSERIES is aged 25, has a degree in languages and has been with INFOTAB just one year. She writes impressive abstracts of current scientific papers which she selects as being worthy of distribution to Member companies and NMA's. She does not rely just on the authors' abstract, but scans the article for points of major relevance. She is not, however, a scientist and we cannot expect her to interpret all articles in the way than an experienced tobacco scientist would do.

My initial temptation, therefore, to try to reduce the work of the GR&DC team by reprinting articles from INFOSERIES must be tempered with the fact that we have somewhat different objectives, ie the specialist CAC research laboratories and BATCo functions as opposed to overseas NMA's.

What is important is that we ensure:

- (a) That our Operating Companies receiving the INFOTAB information without undue delay from the NMA's or lead companies.
- (b) That Public Affairs, Millbank, likewise process the INFOTAB information for circulation to those Operating Companies that do not yet have an effective trade association.

The computer-based information storage and retrieval system is now well under way; there are 1000 abstracts in the system and between 100 and 200 new ones are being added monthly.

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The main subjects covered are Taxation, Legislation, Primary Health, Passive Smoking and Third World Issues. BAT is to be the first Member company to have on-line access to the data base (target mid 1984). It must be recognised that the data base will, of necessity, cover current and future information, rather than past material.

Passive Smoking

I discussed with Bryan Simpson the proposal that INFOTAB should initiate and fund a major investigation into passive smoking. I made the following comments on the draft proposals to be considered by the Advisory Committee on 20 February:

1. Great care must be given to identify an area, or areas, of work that are likely to produce sound new data to counter the ever growing number of anti-smoking based studies that are being published.

If the work is totally arms length, industry will not be able to prevent publication of any adverse findings.

2. The recently published book "ETC - Environmental Tobacco Smoke" by Rylander et al, looks to be an excellent vehicle to promote some good scientifically established facts about sidestream/ambient smoke.

We must first ensure that maximum use is made of this throughout the world. Second, we must ensure that any future study builds on the basis already established.

3. In similar vein, much more use should be made worldwide of the Australian video film on passive smoking "Beyond All Reasonable Doubt".

4. It is important to have Members on the Working Party who are fully experienced in the scientific and legal aspects programme: I think it is not so necessary at this stage to have a strong in-put from Public Affairs.

I feel it has scientific credibility and is sufficiently clear for the layman or non-expert to understand. Having spent more than \$100,000 on th film, it seems tragic that so little use has been made of it to date.

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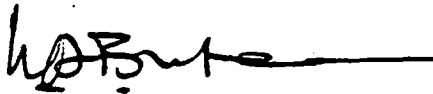
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spelling*

Smoking and Health

I was invited to give a talk to all staff on the current BAT approach to smoking and health, ie concentration on amolalies and controversy rather than low delivery products.

BAT

I was given the very clear understanding by Bryan Simpson that BAT plays a leading role in the affairs of INFOTAB. At dinner in the evening, Mary Covington independently stated this view. [She said in passing that she wished Philip Morris had such a good PA team.]



L C F BLACKMAN

20 February 1984

CC Mr R L O Ely

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