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BELL/LAING CIGARETTE

On Thursday, 7th September, Mr. J. D. Jones, Director, Project Development, Ontario Research Foundation, called unexpectedly and discussed the recent developments in the Bell/Laing cigarette. He is representing Bell/Laing.

This was first brought to our attention in 1965. It is a cigarette involving a redistribution of the tobacco to the outside compared with normal (i.e. a cigarette with a hole down the middle). This is claimed to give less irritation and now to produce less TPM per cigarette. Since this was very much in line with the way in which we were working ourselves, we told him in 1965 that we were interested but did not wish to discuss this development unless or until patents were obtained. Subsequently, this development achieved some publicity in Canada.

The present position is that Bell and Laing expect to obtain a British patent and a Canadian patent and that the U.S.A. patent should issue within the next week or two. Two other companies are interested; one was unidentified and is interested only in the gimmick value of the development. The other company is Rothmans, who are said to be seriously interested. A certain amount of work is being done on alcohol extracts of the smoke and the comparison has been made between the chemistry of these extracts from pipe tobacco, cigar tobacco, ordinary Rothmans cigarettes and Bell/Laing modified Rothmans cigarettes.

Bell and Laing have little experience with cigarettes and it may well be the results which appear to be favourable are not so much due to having a hole down the middle of the cigarette as to the lowering the rate of combustion of tobacco due to the firmer packing achieved. So far only hand-made cigarettes have been used, although it was mentioned that Bell has paid a visit to Rothmans laboratories and has spent some time there.

I said that we would probably consider a proposal to look further into this project providing we were assured that other manufacturers were not approached during the period of our investigation and Mr. Jones promised to discuss with the

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inventors this suggestion and to come back with some proposition which we could then consider. Mr. Jones suggested the possibility of an option at least to give us a lead time in production should we decide to pursue it further. I said that in view of the expense of looking into a project of this nature we would not be prepared to consider anything other than a purely nominal payment for such an option. I also explained that we already held patents for what I thought was the best way of making the Bell/Laing cigarette on a production scale.

My own view of this is that there may be some advantage to be obtained in this general area but that it would necessarily require very careful investigation. On the other hand, it is very much in line with our own thoughts and intentions in studying the annular construction of cigarettes and it would be wise to keep the door open if Bell and Laing are getting patents even if these are only of nuisance value.

Mr. Jones also left with me a paper by Bell and Laing on this subject. Bell is Senior Research Engineer at the International Nickel Company of Canada and Laing is a technologist in the University of Toronto in the Department of Metals and Material Science. I have no doubt that this is intended to be a serious contribution to the subject but I am doubtful whether there is any real value in it.

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