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Dr. Green's paper on the Association of
Smoking and Disease

(attached to Minutes of Scientific Development
Committee, 21st July 1972)

I entirely agree with the statement that "Because smoking has become a social problem, cigarette manufacturers must become more, rather than less, socially responsive". As you will remember, we discussed this question in Montreal, and came to the conclusion that B.A.T. should pursue, for example, product development in order to reduce the apparent and increasing "social offensiveness" with the habit, and this is being done initially via research in the U.K. Other work, eg. BATFLAKE, is also, of course, proceeding via the N.P.C.

Our thinking, however, needs to be taken a good deal further in order to construct the guidelines Dr. Green recommends. There are, I think, two underlying policies governing the development of "healthier" products with related communication programmes, which though they overlap, can be separated:

1. Pre-empting hostile government legislation through timely agreements within the industry, ie. demonstrating to Governments and to the public that tobacco manufacturers are "socially responsible" people. This could be extended to pre-empting moves by powerful consumer groups (consumerism) which independently from Government, could throw smoking in general, or certain products in particular into disrepute. This policy, however, tends to limit rather than expand, our marketing activities, eg. through advertising restrictions or warning labels.
2. The second policy encourages expansion in product development work, and consequently in marketing also. The policy suggested by Dr. Green, ie. that we should aim "to provide the best service we can for our consumers" (even though 'consumer orientation' has always been a cardinal principle recommended, and adopted by Marketing). Dr. Green, however, is going further, and much of what he has in mind is becoming explicit in the work of the N.P.C. Perhaps the guidelines should now be stated more clearly, and the main thrust of the central work undertaken by N.P.C. could well be governed by them. "Best service" should be defined, not in terms of negative "warnings" or invidious comparisons between products to the disadvantage of our existing ranges, but rather by providing new products, positively and attractively promoted, including new ingredients like BATFLAKE, or with new filters which have known consumer appeal (shown by the usual methods of pre-testing). BATFLAKE, indeed, is very much a case in point. When the product tests in Jersey and Switzerland have been completed, we need to decide whether or not we should make claims for the

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material in communication with the consumer: this is perfectly possible, if we discover, say, in further research, that some consumer's anxieties are relieved when they know that a reliable manufacturer has produced a "safer" product. Consumers may even welcome the inclusion of non-tobacco materials. We do not know, and we ought to find out. You rightly add, however, that it would be "nice to have official blessing". If attractive programmes, promoting "better" products with new ingredients are devised, then consumers are more likely to be induced to purchase them if the ingredients are authenticated by independent and official groups, i.e. governments or professional bodies. Direct health claims may be difficult or impossible to make, depending on the existing regulations in a given country. But regulations can be changed in the light of published evidence which entails that we would have to accept the loss of some competitive edge with shared information. This is precisely where our marketing skills should be exercised.

"Safer" products, even with an enriched choice for consumers amongst a variety of "healthier" products, may still find a limited market, even in the more sophisticated and health-conscious countries. The entire "Hi-Fi" sector in the U.S.A. is showing gradual decline, and our knowledge of consumer "segments" worldwide suggests that opportunities for this kind of development and communication will be restricted to certain types of smokers. Consumer motivation is indeed complex, as shown in the recent excellent survey of literature made by D.J. Wood (G.R. & D.C).

In brief, I think the "guidelines" suggested by Dr. Green are well worth formulating, particularly in the light of active product development underway, under the auspices of N.P.C. I think a joint R & D/Marketing working party is suggested, in order to formulate proposals.

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