

MEMORANDUM

The American Tobacco Company

TO Mr. H. R. Hanmer
Dr. W. R. Harlan

DATE March 8, 1960

FROM E. S. Harlow

CONFIDENTIAL

SUBJECT American Medical Association's Stand on Cigarette
Smoking-Lung Cancer Controversy.

Dr. Haag informed the undersigned in telephone conversation yesterday that a proposal was made to the American Medical Association that it formulate a national policy on the smoking and health problem (see attached correspondence, copies of which Dr. Haag sent over for our perusal in a personal communication to me. This material has not been logged). This matter was brought to the attention of the AMA Council on Drugs which was in session last week in Chicago and at which Dr. Haag was in attendance. A list of the names and addresses of the council members is also appended.

The Board of Trustees of the AMA were desirous that the council express an opinion by resolution so that the Board, which was also in session, could take formal and immediate action. Dr. Haag, after revealing that he and his associates had reviewed thousands of articles on the subject, stated they still felt that there was insufficient evidence to support a statement that smoking causes lung cancer or heart disease. Both Dr. Goodman and Dr. SeEVERS expressed the same view.

Dr. Starr reported that a similar decision had been made at a meeting of the council of American heart specialists although he himself believes that there is a relation between smoking and both heart disease and lung cancer.

A letter was produced from the files, written to Dr. Moody after he had made a similar proposal about a year ago. The letter was phrased in such a manner as to indicate that insufficient evidence was available for the American Medical Association to take any stand. All of the council then voted that this situation had not changed and the drafting of a similar letter would be the council's recommendation.

This situation reenforces Dr. Haag's opinion that we obtain a well known and recognized influential physician to replace him at his retirement since Harvey's presence on the council probably was the most important factor in preventing any action by the AMA. Also, because of his position, he becomes privy to information which would not accrue to a doctor of lesser renown.

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Attachments

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