

June 10, 1954

PUBLIC RELATIONS REPORT
AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
TOBACCO INDUSTRY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
OF WISCONSIN
Archives Division

Early in the life of the Tobacco Industry Research Committee, it was accepted as a basic principle that every effort should be made to avoid stimulating more adverse publicity and controversy on the subject of tobacco and health.

That principle has been and will continue to be carefully adhered to in the work carried on for the Committee. Nevertheless attacks on the industry recurrently stimulated by various individuals and groups antagonistic to tobacco, have been increasing, and some elements of the press are continuing to feature unfavorable aspects of any medical report bearing on tobacco.

On its part, the Committee properly has refrained from engaging in any direct controversy with the industry's critics. It has stood upon the basic statement of January 4 and upon the symposium of views of 36 scientists issued by the Committee in booklet form in April. Both of these statements received wide and favorable comment in the press.

In public relations recommendations submitted to the Main Committee in January, it was contemplated that a basis for a positive program of public information would be provided when the Scientific Advisory Board and Scientific Director had been selected and were at work, and when various preliminary editorial research projects were well under way. These things have been accomplished and the Committee now has the basis needed for carrying on a long-range plan of public relations activities aimed at keeping the following facts before the public:

1. That there is no proof that smoking is a cause of lung cancer;
2. That an impartial and independent Board of scientists, doctors and educators is advising the TIRC, as a public service, on all problems of tobacco use and health;
3. That the TIRC is determined, through a long-range program, to make every possible effort to help get the facts through laboratory and statistical research;
4. That initial funds for research have been appropriated and more will be provided as warranted to help in getting the answers by scientific means;
5. That all of the laboratory research recommended by the Advisory Board and financed by the TIRC will be carried on by recognized and independent laboratories, institutions and hospitals.

Report of Activities

As background for the recommendations which follow, certain active and continuing projects are briefly summarized:

TIRC as a Source of Information - Committee headquarters is gaining recognition as a source of authoritative information on the subject of tobacco and health. The result is that news and magazine writers, columnists and commentators are turning to the Committee and its public relations counsel more and more for information. This will increase as the Advisory Board gets into action and more material is released.

As part of this service, bibliographical files are being developed for two purposes, (a) public relations reference; and (b) technical reference.

Clippings have been sifted for significant stories and ten public-
ity reports have been made to the TIRC.

Misstatements Corrected - Reports and statements appearing in the
press, radio, television and newsreels are carefully monitored. Whenever
misstatements are made steps are taken to correct the record. This has
been done by personal contact and letters to the editor.

Coverage of Medical Meetings - With the cooperation of the AMA,
the American Cancer Society, the New York Medical Society and industry
people, close check is kept on medical meetings. A calendar of coming
events having to do with tobacco and health is being maintained. The
important ones are personally covered through New York staff or field
offices and reports are being made to the TIRC, its Scientific Advisory
Board and Industry Technical Committee. Where possible, abstracts or
texts of important papers are obtained for TIRC distribution.

In cases where positive presentations are to be made we can alert
the press. This has been done, for example, in the case of a paper to
be given next week by Dr. Harold L. Stewart, of the National Cancer
Institute, in Clearfield, Pa.

Foreign Surveys - As proposed in the January 15 program, and
approved by the Main Committee, surveys on the cigarette controversy have
been conducted in European countries. Reports have been made on Switzer-
land, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, and a detailed report is in
preparation on England.

Hill and Knowlton, Inc. overseas associates will continue to
watch developments in these countries, particularly in Great Britain,
where the government has taken an official position.

Correspondence and Callers - A large volume of public relations correspondence, which at times has topped over 100 letters a week, continues from lay press, radio, doctors, medical press, trade press and the industry. Individual letters have been sent to a large number of doctors who wrote detailed comments on the "Scientific Perspective" booklet. Personal and phone calls of the same type are increasing.

Recommendations

In keeping with the objectives outlined on page one of this memorandum, the following program of activities is recommended:

Releases - As developments warrant, and subject to approval of the Scientific Advisory Board, information on the work of the Board should be released to the public. Two such announcements have been made and a proposed third is attached. Dr. Little would be the logical spokesman for the Board in connection with such reports or any other statements to be made to the press, on the air, or before groups.

Results of medical statistical research to be authorized by the TIRC should provide valuable information bearing upon tobacco use and health. It should be in order, subject to clearance in each case with the TIRC, to release some of this information to the press.

Background Memo and Booklet on TIRC and its Advisory Board - A brief editorial memo giving the facts about TIRC and its medical board is in preparation as a follow-up to the press conference. This would be distributed to special press such as science writers, medical press and organizations; also to columnists, commentators, editorial writers and Sunday editors.

The material in this editorial memo could be developed into a dignified and effective booklet for wider public distribution, as a follow-up to the "Scientific Perspective" booklet which was issued in April.

Progress Report Advertisement - Consideration could be given to development of an advertisement on the TIRC. This could take the form of a progress report to be run in (a) the communications trade press (Editor and Publisher, Printers' Ink, Tide, Broadcasting-Telecasting, etc.); and (b) the medical press. Such a report would remind these groups of the points listed on the first page of this memorandum.

Film - A 13-minute film on the industry's research program should be produced and offered to television stations. This would explain the workings of the TIRC and feature the Scientific Advisory Board. It could be partly developed from press conference footage on the new scientific director.

Editorial Contact Project - A special project should be made of visiting publishers, editorial writers and commentators in principal cities. Objective would be to explain to influential press the TIRC, its Scientific Advisory Board, and their functions. This would require much of the time of a top staff member working closely with the TIRC program. It could well be extended to include editors of local, state and national medical journals and executives of medical and research organizations.

Editorial Research - Continued emphasis should be given to editorial research. In the January 15 program, two lines of inquiry were suggested: (a) smoking habits of long-lived distinguished public leaders; and (b) human ills erroneously attributed to tobacco over the centuries. The second subject has been found more marketable and has received the placement emphasis thus far. In addition, research should be carried forth on (c) current scientific opinion holding that no case has been proved against tobacco; (d) the many theories about cancer causes; and (e) the psychology of how the public is carried away by over-simplified reading of scientific experiments.

All the material resulting from this research would be made available to interested writers for magazines, newspapers, columns, radio and television. None of this would be for sponsorship or release by TIRC.