



# POST

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The tobacco industry's ordeal and its  
**CRASH EFFORT FOR A  
SAFER CIGARETTE**

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AN OLD MAN ON A RAFT**

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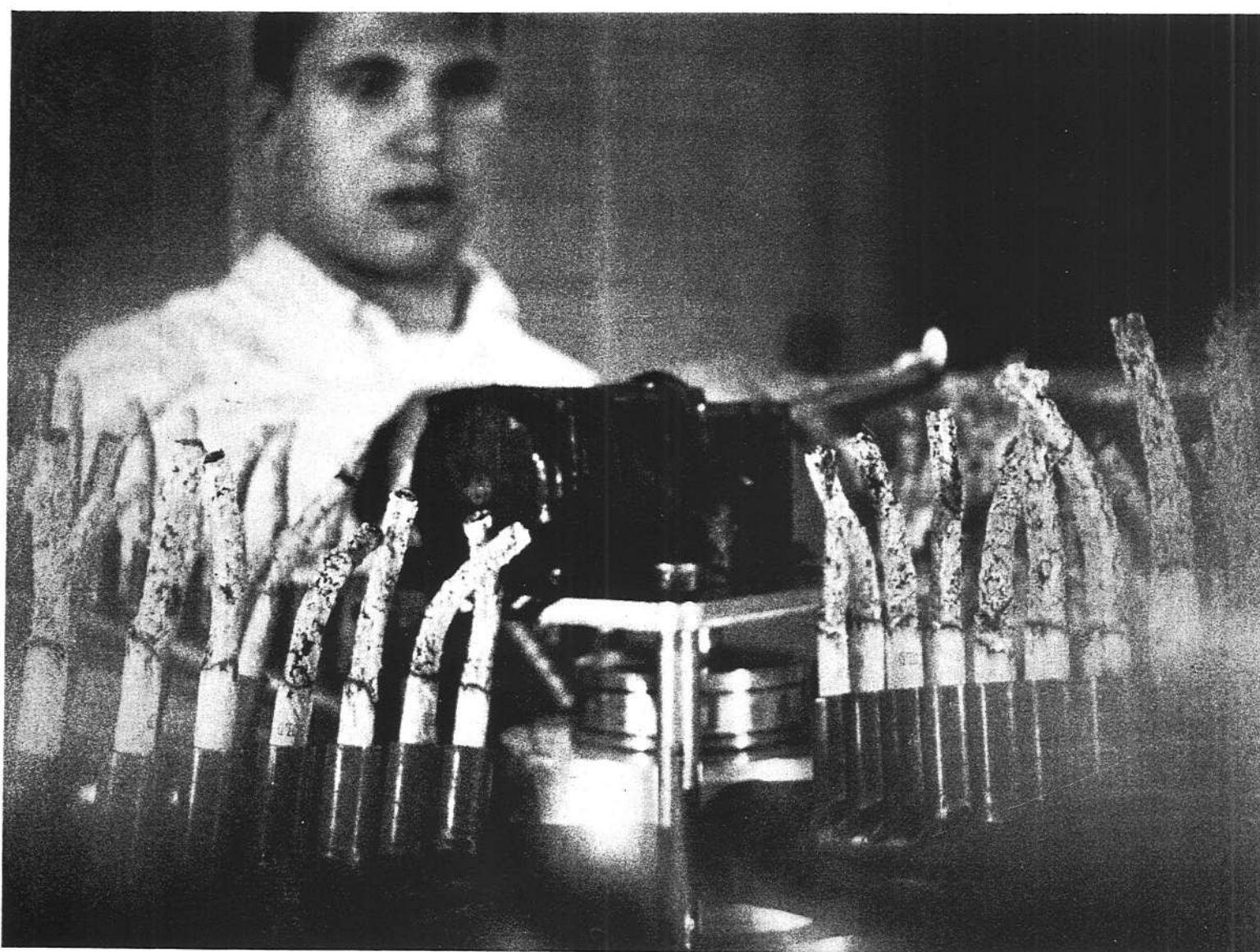


By BILL DAVIDSON



NEW HOPE  
FOR CIGARETTE  
SMOKERS:

# CRASH EFFORT FOR A SAFER CIGARETTE



*To collect tobacco-smoke components for analysis, the P. Lorillard Co. uses a machine which busily puffs 100 cigarettes at a time.*

In the American tobacco industry, January 11, 1964, is now known as The Day the Bomb Dropped. The bomb, of course, was the long-awaited report of Surgeon General Luther L. Terry's Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health. Terry dropped it in a press conference which many industry leaders watched on the monitors of TV networks taping the event.

One of the men on ground zero in New York that morning was Dan Provost, a publicity executive of the Liggett & Myers Tobacco Co. Waiting nervously with other officials of the firm for the broadcast to start, Provost absentmindedly wandered over to the news printer in the office. To his surprise he found that an advance story was already going out over the wire. He read the first few sentences of the dispatch and gasped, "Oh, my God!"

A few miles away, Morgan Cramer, president of the P. Lorillard tobacco company, was at a meeting of the board of governors of his golf club when an attendant rushed in and called him to the phone. Cramer listened to the same news dispatch that Provost had read and then roared, "I just *can't* believe it. Have

somebody in Washington fly up to New York with copies of the report immediately. I'm on my way in to the office right now."

At about the same time, the phone began ringing in the home of W. C. ("Mutt") Burton in Reidsville, N.C., a community whose economy depends exclusively on tobacco farming and cigarette manufacture. Burton heads the Reidsville bureau of the Greensboro (N.C.) *News and Record* and is the town's wit and philosopher. The calls were all the same: "Mutt, what does this mean? What am I going to do if I lose my job [or my farm]?" To each caller Burton said gently, "Now don't you fret. Even if what they say is true, you know that folks aren't going to quit doing anything that's bad for them." But each time, as he hung up the phone, the sober look on his face belied the optimism in his voice. Burton was worried, and he was shocked.

Like everyone connected with the tobacco industry—farmer, factory worker or executive—he had expected the surgeon general's report to condemn cigarette smoking. But no one had expected that condemnation to be couched in such relentless,

"THE INDUSTRY WILL NEVER BE THE SAME AGAIN."

#### Safer Cigarette

unequivocal terms. Previous official statements on smoking had always hedged a bit or left room for the tobacco industry to blame the rising incidence of lung cancer on something else, like air pollution. In 1957, for example, Leroy E. Burney, then surgeon general, wrote that "The weight of the evidence is increasingly pointing in one direction: That excessive smoking is one of the causative factors in lung cancer."

The January 11 report minced no words. It stated without qualification that cigarette smoking is the principal cause of lung cancer and one of the most important causes of chronic bronchitis. It asserted that male cigarette smokers have a higher death rate from coronary-artery heart disease than nonsmoking males. And it summarized its findings with the flat statement that "Cigarette smoking is a health hazard of sufficient importance in the United States to warrant appropriate remedial action."

The crisis in the tobacco industry which these words brought on continues unabated today. It is not unlike the ordeal of the liquor industry in the period just before the Prohibition Amendment was ratified, but this time many more people are affected. Over 70 million Americans are habitual cigarette smokers. To supply them, the tobacco industry supports some 750,000 farmers, 100,000 factory workers, 4,500 wholesalers and 1.5 million retail outlets, including vending machines. The industry as a whole grosses eight billion

dollars a year—seven billion from cigarettes—spends \$150 million a year to advertise its products and contributes well over \$3 billion a year in excise taxes to federal and state treasuries.

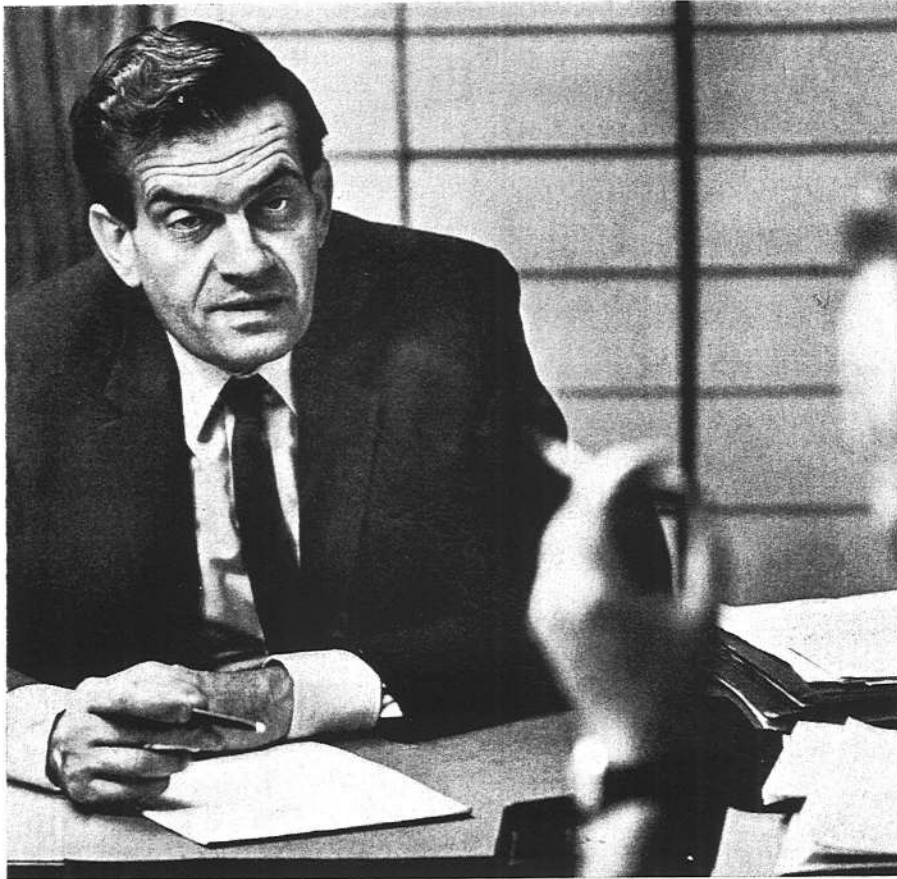
The danger signs went up quickly in the days immediately following the surgeon general's report. All over the country, many people stopped smoking completely, strove to cut down, or switched to pipes or cigars, with the result that cigarette sales dropped somewhere between 10 and 20 percent in every section of the United States. The abolitionists swung into action, much as they had in pre-Prohibition days, and those churches which frowned on smoking as well as drinking found themselves in a strange partnership with such organizations as the American Cancer Society in the drive to set up anti-smoking clinics. There was genuine panic among the uneducated, some of whom even developed psychosomatic cancer symptoms, and there were at least a dozen reported cases of janitors and cleaning women who were fired for refusing even to touch cigarette butts in their daily chores.

In tobacco-manufacturing cities, such as Louisville, Ky.; Richmond, Va.; and Greensboro, Winston-Salem and Durham, N.C., apprehension concerned jobs more than health. Every one of the six major cigarette manufacturers—R. J. Reynolds, American Tobacco, Philip Morris, P. Lorillard, Liggett & Myers and Brown & Williamson—foresaw declining revenues, and cut back on the work week or fired workers, or both. As this is written, nearly all cigarette plants in the United States are down to a production schedule of three or four days a week instead of the normal five. As a result thousands of workers have had their pay cut as much as 40 percent.

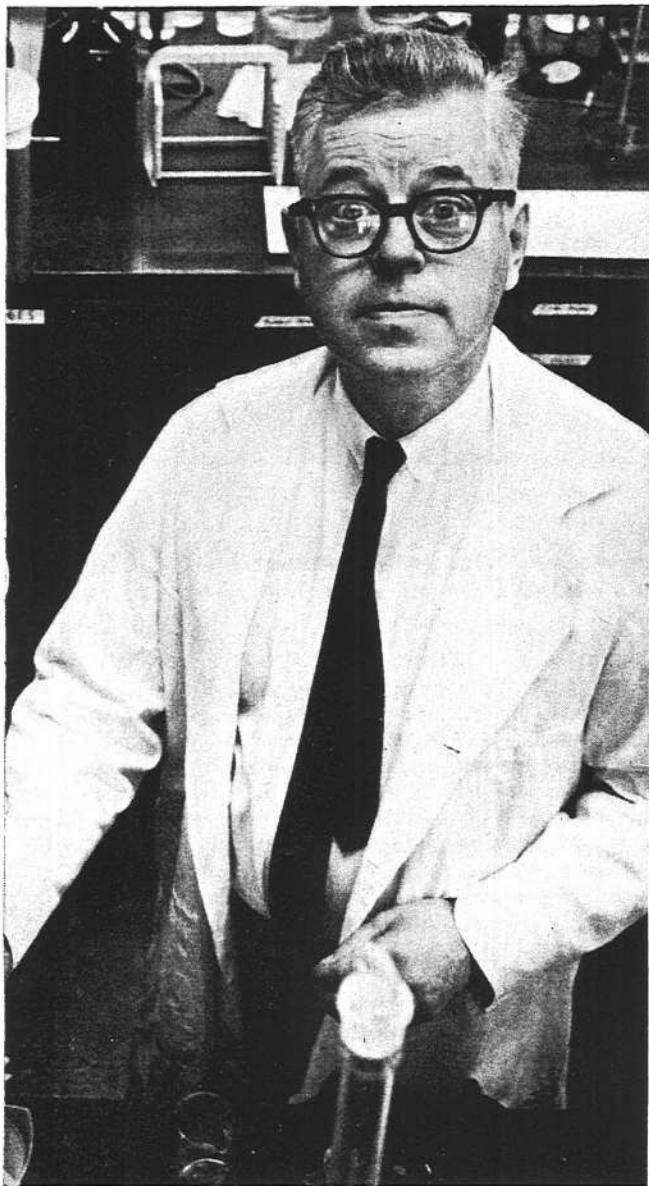
In Greensboro, cigarette-machine operator Brona Caudle, a divorcee with two children, thought the tobacco industry would solve this problem as it had others in the past, but in the meantime things were tough. "When you're making seventy-two dollars for a forty-hour week," she said, "and then suddenly you're cut back to \$43.20 for a twenty-four-hour week, you're in trouble. But I guess I shouldn't complain. A fellow in our factory, with nine kids, was fired outright."

The tobacco farmers are less apprehensive than the cigarette-factory workers, and with good reason. Tobacco has been a protected crop for 30 years, receiving government support—\$40,000,000 in 1963—as one of the six basic agricultural crops in the United States. The Department of Agriculture limits the number of acres on which tobacco can be grown, in order to prevent a glut on the market, but a government-financed corporation buys all surplus tobacco at approximately 57 cents a pound, a few cents below the market price. These twin safeguards make tobacco one of the most lucrative cash crops in the nation, bringing in about \$1,000 per acre.

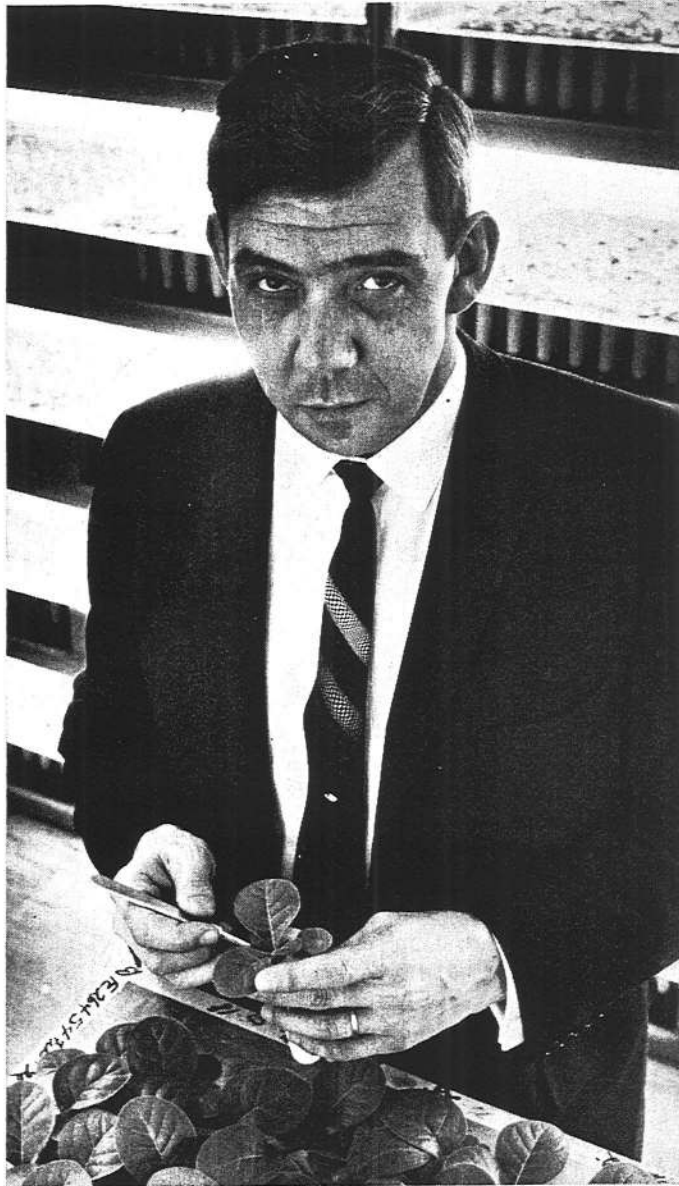
Another source of protection for the tobacco farmer is political. Among the most effective blocs in Congress is the tightknit group of senators and representatives from the two dozen tobacco-growing states, especially North Carolina, Kentucky, Virginia and Maryland. Let one finger be raised to cut the tobacco farmer's revenue, and the legislators rise in his defense—usually employing the time-honored technique of threatening to



Dr. Ernest Wynder of the Sloan-Kettering Institute is working on a new filter idea.



Dr. Charles Kensler developed Liggett & Myers' charcoal filter.



Brown & Williamson's Dr. Robert Griffin grows tobacco in lab.





At P. Lorillard research laboratory in Greensboro, N.C., Drs. Clifford O. Jensen and Alex Spear light up a line of cigarettes in test smoking machine.

withhold their support from other agricultural legislation. As one North Carolina Congressman said, "What do you expect me to do? Half of the economy of my state is based on tobacco."

Despite these powerful protectors, however, the more far-sighted tobacco farmers are genuinely worried about the future. In Rockingham County, N.C., for example, Dennis Knight owns 36 acres, of which 12 are allotted to tobacco. He has been letting the others lie fallow, rotating each year. But now he has started hedging his bets: On the acres not planted in tobacco he has taken up dairy farming. "Last fall," he says, "my wife and I drove up through West Virginia and saw those towns where the coal mines have closed down. It was terrible, all those people hanging on the hillsides looking for a miracle so they could make a living again. Now I get nightmares thinking it *could* happen here. This cancer scare could make North Carolina a run-down Tobacco Road again."

But few of the farmers in Rockingham County are as prudent as Dennis Knight, and they are the despair of Horace Hux, the dedicated young county agent for the Department of Agriculture. Hux has been pleading with them for years to protect their future with something other than tobacco. For the most part, however, they are stubbornly settling down to ride out the storm, expecting it to blow over like so many others they have weathered in the past. Until it does they are cutting back on their spending for clothes, new equipment and other non-essentials; and these economies—coupled with the layoffs and cutbacks among factory workers in the towns—have set off an economic chain reaction that seriously threatens the merchants of the region.

"Our stores haven't been hurt so far because people have to buy food, and they'll try to save pennies with us," said John Apple, a supermarket executive in Reidsville, N.C., "but the little country stores out in the county are really suffering." In Belk's department store a clerk said, "We deal in clothing, and with the farmers scared and the workers here cut back to four days' work instead of five, they don't have much money left over for clothing after they've bought food. Let's hope it gets back to normal soon. Heaven help this section if it doesn't." Among the hardest hit are the local appliance stores. "We've had a drastic drop in applications to buy things on time," said Clay Murray, executive secretary of the Reidsville Merchants Bureau and head of the town's credit and collection agency. "And we're having a lot of trouble collecting bills for doctors and dentists. I really don't think people are hurting too much yet—but they sure are apprehensive."

#### "We licked James I"

In the cigarette companies themselves, attitudes range from defiant bravado to genuine concern for the public welfare. "We licked an English king, James I, when he attacked the use of tobacco in 1604," said one executive, "and I think we can lick the United States Government today." But 99 percent of the industry's top brass are willing to cooperate with the Government and with medical authorities. Most officials agree with the man who said, "I'm still not convinced by the surgeon general's report that cigarettes are the cause of lung cancer and other diseases. The report is filled with discrepancies and unanswered questions. But I'm willing to do everything in my

power and to spend every cent we possibly can for research to produce what the Government and the doctors will consider a safer cigarette."

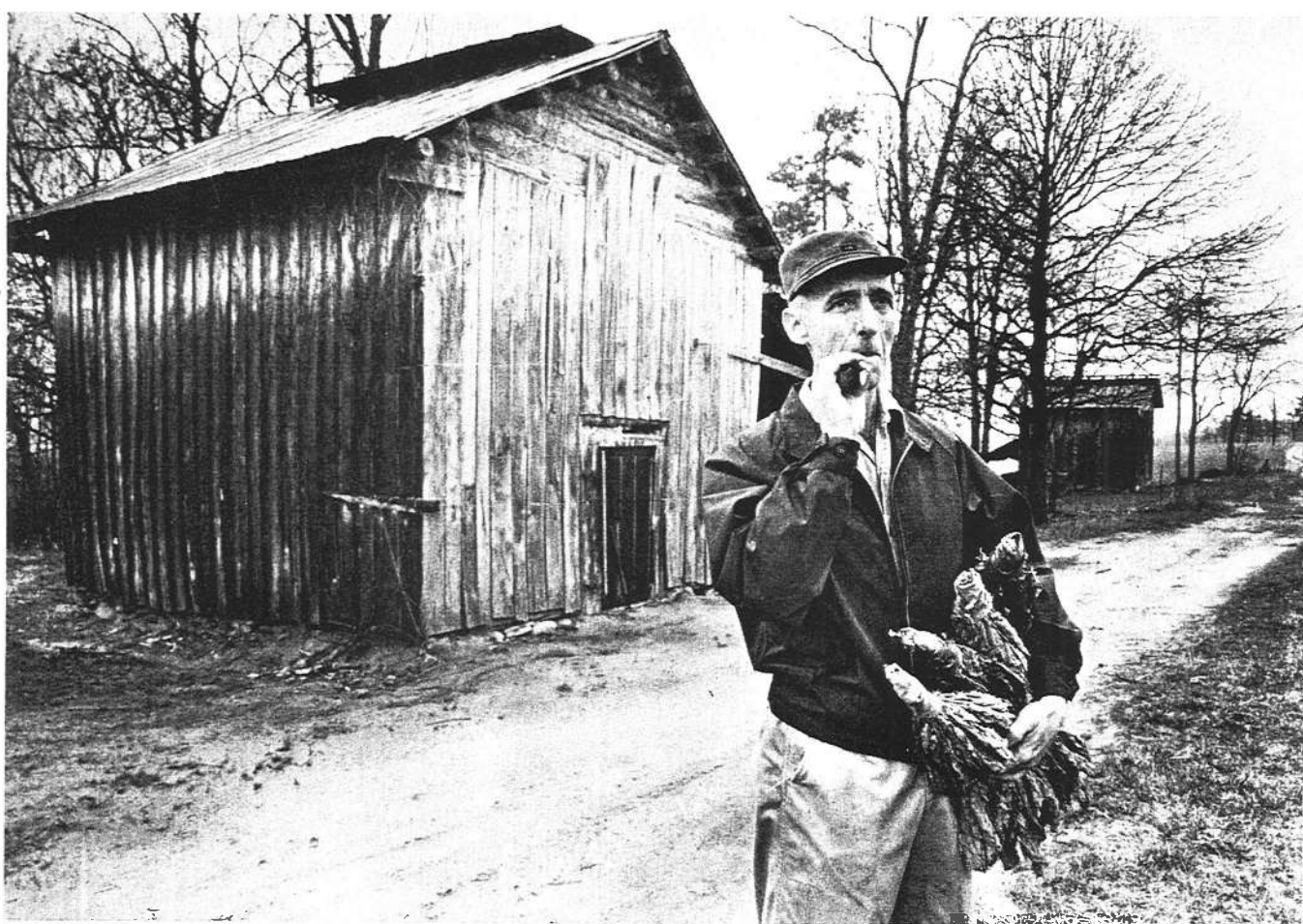
Although all six of the big companies have had research programs under way for some time in their own well-staffed and well-equipped laboratories, there was a period of confused vacillation before the attitude of many officials hardened into the present concentration on the search for a safer cigarette. In the first dark days after release of the surgeon general's report on January 11, scientists friendly to the industry made the usual rebuttals, pointing out that the Government's report involved no new research but was merely a compilation of old reports, and claiming that there is just as much evidence against air pollution as there is against cigarettes as a cause of lung cancer. There were even a few isolated appeals to prejudice, such as the statement by a South Carolina legislator that all the scientists and doctors on the surgeon general's committee are Northerners and that the report "is just another Yankee attempt to subdue the South."

Next came a period when the industry waited hopefully for the furore to die down, confident that the public would soon forget about the report and resume its normal buying of cigarettes—as the British public had done a few weeks after the shock of a similar report by the Royal College of Physicians in 1962. But the weeks went by and sales in the United States generally continued to drop—in some places as much as 30 percent—right on into spring, although some states reported signs of a slight comeback in March. Moreover, public attacks on the industry continued. In Congress, Sen. John J. Williams of Delaware introduced

an amendment to kill the Government's tobacco price-support program on the grounds that another arm of government, the surgeon general's office, had condemned tobacco as injurious to health. Tobacco-bloc senators beat back this attack, but others popped up in state legislatures and city councils. A Committee of the New York State Senate, for example, charged cigarettes with causing "mass murder" and called for "a declaration of war against cigarettes."

Most serious of all for the industry, the Federal Trade Commission proposed a government ruling that every cigarette package be required to carry a printed warning such as: CAUTION: CIGARETTE SMOKING IS DANGEROUS TO HEALTH. IT MAY CAUSE DEATH FROM CANCER AND OTHER DISEASES. The FTC held hearings on the proposal in March and then began deliberations which are still in progress. All these developments have made the tobacco industry acutely unhappy.

Yet out of all the gloom and despair there have emerged some solid reasons for hope. U.S. Sen. John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky turned up the first. Reading the surgeon general's report, he began to wonder if it were not based largely on studies of the old-fashioned nonfilter cigarette, since there had not really been time to compile statistics on death rates among smokers of filter tips, which have only recently come into widespread use. On January 13, just two days after the release of the report, Senator Cooper wrote to the surgeon general, asking, "Is it not correct that the advisory committee made no judgment as to the effect of adding filters to cigarettes?" The following day, January 14, Surgeon General Terry answered Senator Cooper's questions in a letter that was released



*T. S. Butler, North Carolina tobacco farmer, carries cured tobacco from his 100-year-old curing barn.*

## MOST TOBACCO FARMERS EXPECT THE PRESENT CRISIS TO BLOW OVER.

### Safer Cigarette

to the press but was generally overlooked in the hubbub still raging over the report itself. He wrote that "it is erroneous to conclude that cigarette filters have no effect," adding that "filters in common use do remove a variable portion of the tars and nicotine," and that "the committee felt that the development of better filters or more selective filters is a promising avenue for further development."

The next ray of hope for the tobacco industry came from a totally unexpected source—from Dr. Ernest L. Wynder of the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research, a man who had been known for years as one of the most implacable foes of cigarette smoking. It was Doctor Wynder who had helped precipitate the first big cancer scare in the early 1950's when he revealed he had produced thousands of cancers on the backs of mice by painting the animals with concentrates from cigarette smoke. Since then he had made study after study with laboratory animals, all designed to prove the virulence of the cigarette. Citing all his evidence, he had become one of the world's most articulate critics of smoking. On January 24, however, Doctor Wynder made a statement—which also was lost in the turmoil surrounding the surgeon general's report—in which he said that the development of less harmful cigarettes was entirely possible. "Some elements in the tobacco industry have already made good progress in developing safer cigarettes," he added.

A third major boost to the industry came on January 31, when the American Medical Association announced that it was taking up where the surgeon general's

committee left off. "Our purpose," the A.M.A. said, "is to find what in the tobacco is harmful, the mechanism of injury and what can be done to remove it." The tobacco people, jubilant at this indication that the A.M.A. felt something could be done, contributed \$10 million to the research project.

But perhaps the most important note of hope was found in, of all places, the surgeon general's report itself. The report had made it clear that the removal of tars and nicotine from cigarettes was not enough. It explained that there are gases in cigarette smoke, such as hydrogen cyanide and acetaldehyde, that cripple the body's own cleansing mechanism in the respiratory tract, thus allowing cancer-causing substances to lodge in the bronchial tissue instead of being carried away. For this cleansing, the body relies on millions of little hairlike protuberances in the respiratory tract, called cilia, which beat back and forth like oars in an ancient slave galley. The rhythmic beat of the cilia moves the mucus upward, carrying with it all debris from the lungs, until both mucus and debris can be swallowed harmlessly or spat out. Cigarette smoking is known to slow down the beat of the cilia and even to eliminate many of them altogether. But, said the surgeon general's report, scientists have recently opened an important line of investigation concerning the gases that inhibit or destroy the cilia. In what probably is its only positive finding, the report states, "It has been reported that a filter containing special carbon granules removed gaseous constituents which depress ciliary activity."

This one cheerful little sentence has touched off what promises to be the big-

gest and most expensive marketing war in cigarette history, a war that is already being labeled The Great Charcoal Derby. First out of the starting gate was Liggett & Myers with its new Lark cigarette. The company began its research into cilia inhibition several years ago when it engaged the noted pharmacologist, Dr. Charles J. Kensler of the Arthur D. Little research organization in Cambridge, Mass. As a result, the Lark—with an activated charcoal-granule filter sandwiched between two conventional filters—was already on the market when the surgeon general's report was released.

### Charcoal success story

Lark took off in sales like nothing the industry had seen in many years. Within a few weeks of the report's release, it zoomed from nowhere to a place among the top-selling cigarettes. In some areas, it was the No. 1 cigarette in February and March. It is one of the few brands that have run counter to the generally downward sales trend since the surgeon general's report. Another is the American Tobacco Company's new Carlton, which features low tar and nicotine content and which works on a different principle, removing most of the smoke with air holes in the paper and then using specially treated charcoal not so much to take out gases as to add aromatic flavor.

Liggett & Myers, like all the other cigarette companies, is prohibited by a 1960 Federal Trade Commission ruling from making any health claims for its products, but it had a lucky break with the Lark. Dr. Louis F. Fieser, one of the 10 scientists on the surgeon general's advisory committee and a professor of chemistry

at Harvard, was interviewed on January 21 by *The Harvard Crimson*, the university's student paper. Doctor Fieser was asked what he smoked. "Larks," he said, and added that, "this filter represents a definite encouraging advance." Thousands of reprints of the college-paper interview thereupon appeared all over the country—and Lark was on its way. It will not have the field to itself for very long, however. P. Lorillard's new York Filters, Brown & Williamson's new Avalon, and the new Multifilter Philip Morris—all with activated charcoal-granule filters and each claiming additional features which supposedly make it superior to the Lark—have been test-marketed and are ready to enter the Charcoal Derby.

But is charcoal the real answer to the industry's problem? Even Doctor Kensler, the scientific father of the Lark, does not think so. "It's just a start," he says. "The encouraging thing is that we proved that the gases are harmful and that we found a way of selectively pulling them out of the smoke, instead of just removing part of the whole smoke, which is what the purely mechanical fiber filter does. The next step is to find other harmful components and selectively remove them with other filtering materials. We may end up with five or six different filters on a cigarette."

Dr. Ernest Wynder goes even further in his predictions. "I still think the best thing is not to smoke at all," he says, "but since most people are going to continue the habit, we must come up with a safer cigarette, which I'm convinced we can do. The less harmful cigarette will be designed with a multiple approach. We can use strains of tobacco that have less hazardous substances in them, we can use less hazardous methods of curing tobacco, we can use finer cuts of tobacco for more complete combustion, we can find better mechanical filters to remove particles, and we can add as many filters as necessary for selective removal of gases and other dangerous materials."

Doctor Wynder himself is experimenting with a new filter that is based on his theory that the Turkish water pipe is the safest way to smoke, because so many potentially dangerous substances dissolve in the water as they bubble through. He traps droplets of water with glycerine in a fiber filter, which thus remains moist and effectively takes out such smoke components as acids, aldehydes and phenols. A major chemical company is adapting Wynder's filter for commercial development, and it is not unlikely that the 1965-model cigarettes will have water filters added to the charcoal and others.

With all this encouragement from unexpected sources, the tobacco industry is finally recovering from its January 11 shock. No longer disposed to deny or debate the cancer problem, it is now pinning its hopes for continued prosperity on the search for a safer cigarette. And it is getting help from government officials such as North Carolina's dynamic young Gov. Terry Sanford, who says, "We need research, research and more research. It is inconceivable to me that a nation which is planning to put a man on the moon can't identify the dangerous substances in tobacco and remove them."

Even the farmers are showing renewed optimism. "Something good will come out of all this trouble," says T. S. Butler of Rockingham County. "Now the scientists will find the cause of the health trouble and eliminate it, and we'll be able to grow something that will be safe for the public and which they'll still enjoy."



Tobacco growers can also rejoice in the fact that Ernest Wynder and other top scientists have already determined that such proposed tobacco substitutes as lettuce, spinach and petunia leaves produce even more cancer-inducing substances than tobacco when they are made into cigarettes and lighted. They lack only nicotine, which is habituating but not particularly harmful and which gives tobacco its pleasant tranquilizing effect.

At the cigarette companies themselves, the research director has become king. In Richmond, Philip Morris's Dr. Helmut Wakeham presides over a new million-dollar glass-and-steel laboratory so handsome it is mistaken by visitors for one of the city's college buildings. In Louisville, Brown & Williamson's Dr. Robert Griffin is allowed to grow acres of miniature tobacco plants indoors in his quest for new, safer strains. In New York, P. Lorillard's Dr. Harris B. Parmele, developer of the Kent and the new York Filters, is consulted on major policy decisions.

From top to bottom the industry is in transition. Changes are being made in the automated, supermodern factory machines that turn out 1,600 cigarettes a minute. Other changes are under way down on the farm, where tobacco growers still use 100-year-old log curing barns that look exactly like the backwoods cabin where Abraham Lincoln was born.

Even long-standing advertising policies are changing. R. J. Reynolds, for example, is planning to withdraw all spot radio commercials from disc-jockey shows after three P.M. and on weekends, when schoolchildren would hear them; it has withdrawn all advertising from campus publications and ceased all promotional activity in colleges; it will no longer use models younger than 25 in its ads; and it is dropping the theme that virility goes with smoking, replacing he-man actors in some ads with inanimate objects such as a simple pack of Winston cigarettes. Other companies carry this theme even further, using ads that feature cross sections of their new filters in the matter-of-fact style of a scientific drawing.

It is safe to predict that within a year or two many of the famous old cigarette names will have disappeared, to be replaced by successful new brands whose names haven't even been thought up yet. With the old brand names will also go much of the gracious, 18th-century flavor of the companies, for they are all diversifying or planning to diversify these days. Visitors to the Philip Morris offices in New York, for example, can see by the exhibits in the reception room that the company is engaged in making not only cigarettes but also chewing gum, razor blades, transparent food wrappings, shaving cream, men's toilet articles and industrial adhesives.

Recently an old-time tobacco-company executive entertained a caller in his office. In a rich southern accent he spoke of his boyhood days on a tobacco farm and of his long climb to the top of his company. And when he discussed the surgeon general's report, it was with a genuine concern for the public welfare.

But then he picked up a pack of the old-brand-name cigarettes which his company still makes, though its sales have dwindled in recent years and fallen off precipitously since January 11. "You know," he said, "these will be gone soon, and I've been smoking them, man and boy, for over fifty years. I'll miss them. But I guess I'll have to reconcile myself to the fact that this industry will never be the same again."

THE END



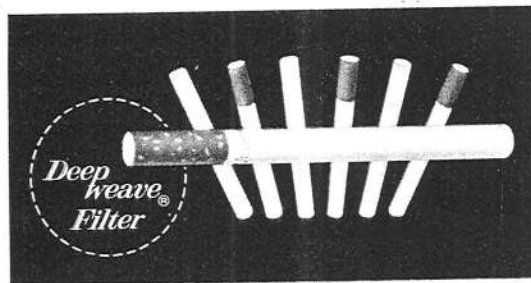
*Two workers on Philip Morris assembly line feed filter "plugs" to a machine which assembles the cigarettes.*



Viceroy's got the Deep-Weave Filter  
and the taste that's right!



Viceroy is scientifically made  
to taste the way you'd like a  
filter cigarette to taste.  
Not too strong...not too light...  
Viceroy's got the taste that's right.



SMOKE ALL 7

Smoke all seven filter brands  
and you'll agree: some taste  
too strong... while others  
taste too light. But Viceroy—  
with the Deep-Weave Filter—  
tastes the way you'd like a filter  
cigarette to taste. That's right!