

Ferdie J. Deering

OCT 10 1974

# Smoking Curbs May Just Be Start

THERE'S a lot of furor against tobacco nowadays, because it seems that more people (50 million) are smoking more and more people (170 million) are enjoying it less.

One group of anti-smokers is called ASH (Action on Smoking and Health) and another is GASP (Group Against Smokers Pollution). All around the country, they're fussing about smoking in public.

A group called the Oklahoma Coalition for Clean Air showed up at the state capitol recently and the next day a Legislative Council committee voted to recommend that laws be introduced to prohibit smoking in certain public areas.

Whether anything like the old-fashioned railroad smoking car is on the way back or not, airlines already give passengers the option of sitting where smoking is not allowed. Cities, states and institutions are considering more smoking regulations.

In Miami, Fla., it is illegal to smoke in grocery stores and smoking was banned at hockey games in Houston after fans complained the fog hid the players. Arizona and South Dakota have laws under consideration to make it illegal to smoke in elevators, libraries and art galleries, plus a few other places.

Such laws are not totally prohibitive to smoking, because they usually provide that inhaling of nicotine may be done if it is in a segregated place.

This is something to consider, because anything done to cut down on use of tobacco could cost the government money. Tobacco is a hard crop to grow, requiring much hard labor and high risk for low returns. The federal government is still subsidiz-

ing tobacco growers in order that federal, state and local governments may collect taxes on cigarettes and other tobacco products.

The movement to reduce tobacco smoking got a boost recently when a Kentucky researcher announced that a "substantial amount" of pesticides used to control insects on tobacco plants survives burning and may be inhaled by people who don't smoke. It might be toxic.

This could set off a whole new line of federal regulations and even pit bureaucrat against bureaucrat in Washington, as they try to prove whether taxes, pure air or public health ought to be the supreme consideration in growing and marketing tobacco.

The government hasn't put a tax on the air we breathe yet, but when the Environmental Protection Agen-

cy gets it purified to suit its inspectors, the tax proposal might come.

It is reported that after Jan. 1, advance permission will be required to start any construction that will attract autos. Parking spaces will have to be approved, too, although it is hard to see how a parked car will pollute the air.

Which brings us back to the smoking problem. If a motorist risks getting a ticket from police for overparking and also one from EPA for overpolluting, what would a street smoker get?

There's no telling where all of this may end. The next step may be for EPA to put a ban on eating garlic and onions in public. This would affect the hamburger business, and cattlemen already are losing money on every steer. And even cattle may have halitosis.