JeS0 tto the NEWS

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PUBLIC HE.AL'TH PROBLEMS

From the time John Rolfe first sent tobacco to England in the 17th century until recent years, to smoke or not to smoke was consider ed a matter of personal choice. As the silent, suffering majority, at long last, is asserting its right to breathe clean air, many different rules have been devised.

Eleven nations, including Japan and the Soviet Union, have banned all tobacco advertising. Most European countries ban television and radio advertising, as well as smoking on buses and at the movies. Norwa bans shop window displays and makes it a criminal offense to offer children anything that even looks like a cigarette, even if made of chocolate or licorice.

Belgium and Denmark limit the size of newspaper ads, and Finland restricts the size and the number of the ads. Austria has decreed that no model in a tobacco ad may be less than 30 years old. Bulgaria for bids smoking in any office that contains non-smoking employees "except where the latter have given their written consent."

Sweden is working on a 25-year smoking control policy aimed at cutting smoking to the level of the 1920s, where it will no longer be a public health hazard., The plans write off current addicts and are entirely directed at making children born in 1975 or thereafter the first nonsmoking generation.

In the United States, there is a growing number of restrictions on smoking in public places. In New York City a smoker can be fined up to $1,000 for smoking on an elevator or in a supermarket. Minnesota

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requires that no-smoking areas be provided in all public buildings and, if no area is designated, smoking is banned. Bars and taverns, which are not subject to the law, must post a sign that they have no clean air areas. For some time, Federal law has required that every cigar ette ad and package have printed in conspicuous letters: "Warning:
the Surgeon General has determined that cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health."

It is strange that no such warning on the package has ever been required for hard liquors such as whiskey, gin and vodka. Yet, the evidence is clear that they pose as much, if not more, of a public health problem than tobacco.

Hard liquors can be addictive like other habit-forming drugs. They not only cause ailments to the drinker, but kill and maim thou sands of innocent people each year by automobile accidents. They are a major cause of poverty among low-income groups whose addiction in duces them to divert money away from food and other necessities.

The Federal Food and Drug Act requires that a warning against unsafe dosage, and a statement as to the quantity, kind,and proportion of alcohol be prominently placed on the label or outside the package. However, no health warning has ever been required on hard liquor labels or advertisements.

It is time that we apply our American ingenuity to solving the costly public health problems caused by tobacco and hard liquors. The life you save may be your own.

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