THE REPORT of January, 1964, to the surgeon-general of the United States from the advisory committee on smoking and health may well have rung a reminiscent bell in the minds of history-conscious midwesterners. Citizens of the North Star State among others were scrutinizing the dangers of tobacco addiction nearly a century ago.

As early as May 11, 1876, the Minneapolis Citizen, in its weekly column on health and medicine, said that “tobacco, and the use of tobacco in every form, is a habit better not acquired, and when acquired is better abandoned” and went on to aver that “excessive smoking has proved directly fatal.” Twenty years later, on October 3, 1896, in the course of a crusade against the habit, the Progressive Age of Minneapolis linked tuberculosis with “the very free use of . . . tobacco,” and pointed out that smoking was bad for the stomach as well.

Associating poor academic achievement with the use of tobacco, the same paper on April 25, 1896, quoted a Dr. Seaver of New Haven, Connecticut, who wrote that “among students at Yale, smokers were found to be inferior to non-smokers, in both mental ability and physical vigor.” Even earlier, on November 6, 1889, the St. Paul Pioneer Press had decried the “alarming proportions” that smoking had assumed among Minneapolis school children.

After the turn of the century the No-Tobacco League of America addressed the fair sex, warning that “girls who smoke cigarettes tend to become un-moral, losing their finer feminine self-defense and showing a disposition to yield to the solicitations of the despoiler of virtue.” This group further indicted tobacco as “the coarse indulgence of practically every criminal, tough, white slaver, boodler, political corruptionist, law violater, opponent of morals and virtue, traducer of the manly virtues, and others of ill-repute.”

Legislative disapproval of tobacco was not lacking. In 1889 a bill was passed by both houses of the Minnesota legislature which forbade sale of cigarettes or tobacco...
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No-Tobacco League of America

KEEP THE YOUNG FOLKS CLEAN FROM THE BRIGHT OF NICOTINE

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THE YOUNG FOLKS CLEAN FROM THE BRIGHT

OF NICOTINE

of tobacco. He concluded by describing vividly the "disastrous result" of the habit upon one called to serve his country: "Short of wind from tobacco heart, his digestion deranged, hand trembling from tobacco paresis, acuity of vision impaired, mentality weakened and judgment unbalanced, he is in a poor condition to meet the sudden and excessive strain put upon him."

Thus in the perspective of history it appears that the 1964 statistics on smoking and health have ushered in only another skirmish in man's long war with the weed.

To minors, and in 1895 the Minneapolis Journal of February 6 reported that a bill "was introduced in the state Senate . . . to make excessive smoking a sufficient cause for divorce." Minnesota, however, did not go to the same lengths as its neighbor to the south. Iowa totally banned the sale of cigarettes from 1896 until 1921.

During World War I patriotism and economics were blended in a letter addressed on May 24, 1918, to Senator Knute Nelson. Objecting to a proposed increase in the cigarette ration to soldiers, the writer, a physician, urged that wheat be planted in place