

Topics

Reprise

CIGARETTES □ Add to the ever-lengthening list of reasons for not smoking the recent research findings that the more a woman smokes, the earlier she is likely to become menopausal. Even more significant, earlier studies linking menopause and heart disease may simply be additional evidence of the role of cigarette smoking in heart disease. Will this latest news have much impact on smokers? We are skeptical. More than a decade ago the Surgeon General of the United States concluded that "cigarette smoking is causally related to lung cancer in men; the magnitude of the effect . . . far outweighs all other factors." Many other types of cancer are also linked to smoking. In 1974, the American Cancer Society estimates, cigarette smoking was responsible for one in every five cancer deaths. Aside from cancer, cigarette smokers are more likely to die of heart disease than non-smokers, and smoking is probably the most important single cause of pulmonary diseases such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema. Yet tens of millions continue to smoke, seemingly oblivious to the dangers they are creating for themselves and, to some extent, their neighbors. Surely it is time for a large-scale Federal campaign to impress the dismal data on the smoking public, particularly the young. And parents careless of their own health might reflect on the example they set their children.

CONVENTION CENTER □ New York City's proposed and badly needed new convention center is now stalled in politics. The July 1 deadline by which the Mayor was to announce the choice of a site, after a careful study of alternatives by a city-state committee, has come and gone, and the latest word is that the decision will be made after the primaries.

For Mr. Beame the word is a lot safer than the deed. To take any action is to alienate someone important to his campaign. If he picks the 34th Street railyard site and makes his real estate supporters and developer Donald Trump happy, he makes the proponents of the Battery Park City site unhappy—and they include the business community of Lower Manhattan and David Rockefeller. If he chooses the Hudson River at 44th Street, the location to which the city administration has been "leaning" as a result of the Planning Commission's recommendation, then both groups are made miserable.

The Mayor is a man who obviously does not like to make people unhappy, particularly as an election approaches. His inaction, however, means that the cost of building the center might continue to escalate—something New York can ill afford. The city needs a convention center, not more unnecessary delay.