

CANADIAN CANCER SOCIETY
NON-SMOKERS' RIGHTS ASSOCIATION
COALITION QUÉBÉCOISE POUR LE CONTRÔLE DU TABAC

PRESS RELEASE

GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC STATEMENT CONFIRMS INACTION ON TOBACCO

Ottawa, October 18 2000 — Today's economic statement contains absolutely nothing to help curb the tobacco epidemic, Canada's top cause of preventable disease and death, health groups point out.

The groups have been urging the federal government to substantially increase tobacco taxes to help curb cigarette consumption, particularly among teenagers.

Finance Minister Paul Martin suggested in May that his government wanted to return rapidly to pre-1994 tobacco tax levels in the five provinces (Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island) where taxes were slashed by between \$14 and \$21 per carton in 1994.

"A tax increase that could help reduce the death toll of 45,000 per year from tobacco and stem the worrying rise in youth smoking", said Francis Thompson of the Non-Smokers' Rights Association. "Tobacco tax increases are actually popular with the public. Nobody wants the tobacco industry to hook their kids."

With today's economic statement, the government may also have lost its last opportunity before the election to respond to the concerns of thousands of organizations and individuals who have come out in support of Bill S-20, the Tobacco Youth Prevention Act. This private member's bill would give stable funding to mass media campaigns and other tobacco control programs of the type that have been shown to work in other jurisdictions. An earlier version of the bill, S-13, was killed by the government on procedural grounds in 1998. The government has failed to deliver on a number of promises, including the commitment to propose a replacement.

For more information on Bill S-20, see <http://www.nsra-adnf.ca/english/hilltimes.html>.

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Further information:

- 1) Francis Thompson, *Non-Smokers' Rights Association*, (613) 230-4211
- 2) Ken Kyle, *Canadian Cancer Society*, office: (613) 565-2522, home: (613) 837-2508