



Bill would curb smoking

My colleagues in the Senate are deciding the fate of smokers. They are considering a four-bill package which would restrict smoking in food stores, hospitals, restaurants, and public meetings.

We, in the House, approved all but the public meeting room bill earlier by comfortable margins. The public meeting room bill is facing its first big test since it was introduced by a senator and hasn't come before the House of Representatives yet.

The legislative package would require:

- Food stores to post "no smoking" signs in all areas except limited places set aside for smoking by employees and customers.

- Restaurants with a seating capacity of more than 50 persons to prohibit smoking in specified areas marked off by signs.

- Hospitals to adopt policies that would protect patients against exposure to tobacco smoke, if they desire protection; to outlaw sale of tobacco products on their premises and to restrict smoking by patients, hospital staff, and visitors to designated areas.

- Public bodies to designate space where smoking is allowed.

MANDATORY SENTENCE

We're getting closer to mandatory prison sentences for those convicted of committing a felony with a gun.

The Senate recently approved the bill which the House had passed earlier, and which when signed by the Governor, will take effect Jan. 1, 1977, and would require a two-year mandatory sentence upon conviction of a first offense, a mandatory five-year sentence and ten-year sentence upon a second or third and subsequent convictions, respectively.

PCB LIMIT

With a concern for health and pollution, we recently passed legislation which would sharply restrict the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

The bill eventually would halt foreign manufacturers' sales of PCBs for uses that state officials say would lead to water pollution. Monsanto Company, the sole U.S. manufacturer of PCBs, has already limited sales voluntarily.

PCBs have been found in Lake Michigan salmon at levels four times the maximum allowed.

Once the bill becomes law, the Department of Natural Resources says the PCB levels in fish would begin declining in as little as two years.

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