

LOOKING BACK ALONG TOBACCO ROAD

DUTIFUL daughters once filled father's pipe for him and lit it. Daughters now line up in queues, competing with fathers, brothers, mothers and boy friends, seeking the elusive cigarette.

We surprised our tobacconist the other day with our opening gambit. We did not



"... in smoking jacket and cap"

ask him to add to his chronic stoop and fetch something from under the counter, but sought an answer to a question! We wanted to know the proportion of men to women smokers in New Zealand.

"I guess it's about 50-50," he said. "But it's hard to find the true answer"

"Mademoiselle From Armentieres"

E. C. H. ROWLAND, the man who wrote the words of "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" (though he was emphatic that he wrote only four verses and took no responsibility for the many others that soldiers of the last war added), told the story of how it came about in a recent BBC "In Town Tonight" programme.

After war broke out in 1914, Rowland was one of the first actors in France—on August 14. And he put on the first troop shows at Ballieul, in September, with bus-drivers as stars. The following March he was at Armentieres, racking his brains to find a new number for a show. And he says it was "in the Cafe de la Paix where I found a good-looking girl who served drinks but wouldn't stand any nonsense from anyone" that he got the idea for the new number. In half-an-hour he wrote the lyric, four verses, and a friend of his, Lieutenant Gitz-Rice, of Montreal, wrote the music.

But, Rowland told listeners, the song didn't take on and "was dead in a week." Months afterwards, when he was sitting with a pal in a field near Ballieul, a battalion marched up the line. And they were singing *his* song. From then on all the troops took up the song and by the end of the war "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" had some 150 verses. But it didn't bring the composers a bean. In 1940 Rowland was invited to go to the United States and broadcast the story of how the song was born, but he couldn't get there. So BBC listeners were the first to hear it.

because some women might — I said might—be buying smokes for their men-folk." Then the man behind the counter cursed the man who started us smoking. That was probably Ralph Lane, first governor of Virginia, who is credited with having been the first English smoker at any rate. But it was through the influence and example of the illustrious Raleigh "who took a pipe of tobacco a little before he went to the scaffold," that smoking became common among Elizabethan courtiers.

Fulminations against the habit have been bitterly personal and literary. Once no gentleman ever smoked in the presence of a lady. If he were permitted, through womanly graciousness, to take a whiff, he did it in a part of the house reserved for himself and in smoking jacket and cap. Nowadays a packet of ten will find the way to many a maiden's heart.

The history of tobacco is lost in the mists of Red Indian mythology, but we will hear quite a lot about it and its addicts if we listen to 2YA at 7.15 p.m. on Monday, February 4, when the first of a series of talks will be heard. The title will be "Pernicious Weed . . . Sublime Tobacco: The Story of a Habit."

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