

### Cigar

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was actually an enjoyable experience. And, smoking the American variety was like puffing on a dirty furnace. "European cigars are becoming more and more popular with Americans,"

Nielsen said it's easy to see why he feels that Americans are willing to pay for better American cigars, but they're simply not made. He also feels that even cigars made to sell for a dime can be manufactured entirely of tobacco.

"I sell an all-tobacco cigar for a dime," he said, "and people are very surprised when they know what they're getting. It's made in Red Lion by a small company, and they're obviously making a profit or they wouldn't be in the business. Now, why can't the

bigger companies, with all their capital and automation, make a good, all-tobacco cigar for a dime?"

In Nielsen's view, the American cigar industry is suffering from a lack of quality, and if that doesn't change, the whole business will go down the drain. He echoes Agway's Mark Hess in calling on farmers to produce a quality product, and feels the European market is a possible outlet for locally grown tobacco.

"Europeans don't grow tobacco," he commented, "yet they send us our best pipe tobacco and our best cigars. Where do they get the tobacco? They buy it from us. They age it carefully, and they cure it carefully. Then they produce a good product and sell it to Americans for a good price. I'd be just as happy to buy more American products. I'd rather buy American products. But I can't get them because they aren't made."

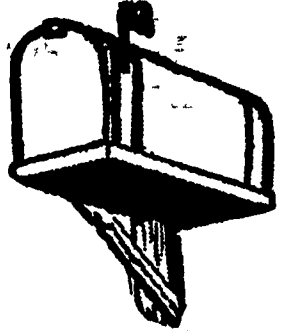
Nielsen's interest in tobacco began about 22 years ago, he said, when he started to smoke a pipe. He still calls himself a pipe smoker, rather than a cigar smoker. For the past 15 years, Nielsen has been experimenting with blending pipe tobaccos, and his tiny shop is a veritable perfumery of tobacco fragrances, some strong, some sweet, some heady, some subtle.

Nielsen lives with his wife and children in Christiana, and quit the printing business last spring to fulfill a long-time dream of owning a tobacco shop. At the Kitchen Kettle, a cluster of small shops, his biggest customers are summer tourists, but he has developed some local trade and mail order business. Mail order buyers especially favor his ten-cent all tobacco cigars.

Nielsen said he is working on pipe tobacco mixtures that would

contain mostly Lancaster County product. He is having a bale of top-quality Type 41 cut and cased by a firm that specializes in that kind of work, and expects to be experimenting with different mixtures throughout the next few months.

How well does the pipe tobacco market pay for its raw material? "Well," said Nielsen, "I told the man who's doing my cutting that I could get him more of this tobacco for about 75-cents a pound. Know what he said? He said, 'Oh, is that all?'"



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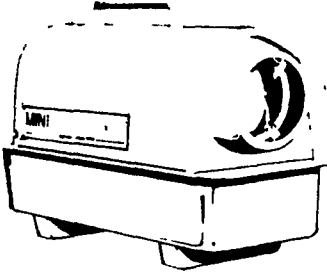
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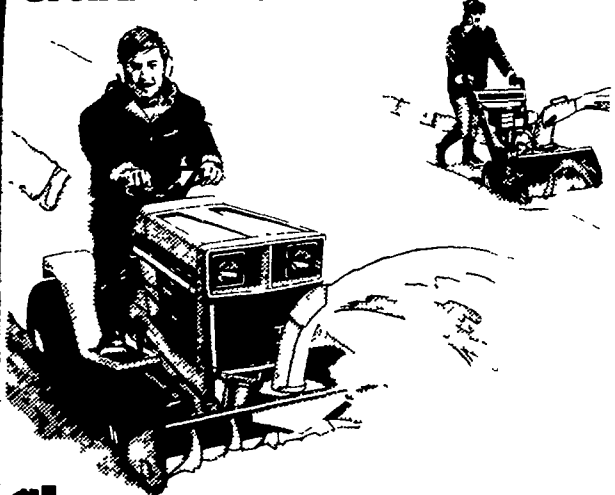
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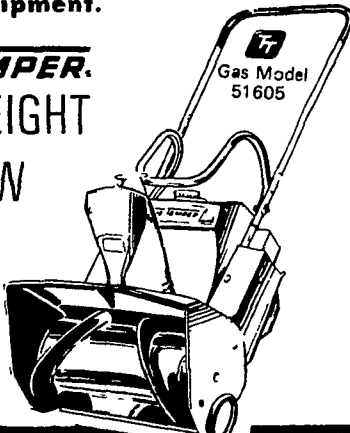


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