

Hodgman stubs out smokes gifts, Groom urges care

By ANGELA LEARY

DENISON Liberal MHA Michael Hodgman said yesterday he would not accept any more free cigarettes, following recent publicity he had been sent a number of cartons from a cigarette company.

"I have thanked the company concerned and requested it not to send me any more cigarettes," Mr Hodgman said.

"This is not because there was anything wrong at all."

He said he was not prepared to give any group any ammunition whatsoever to fire at him.

"Anyone who suggests that I could possibly be influenced in my vote by smoking three free cigarettes since December 27, when I returned to work after the short Christmas break, should seriously consider committing themselves to the Royal Derwent [psychiatric hospital]," he said.



Michael Hodgman: no more gift smokes.

Earlier this week, Mr Hodgman upset the Jewish community by likening the anti-tobacco lobby's attack on smokers to Hitler's treatment of the Jews.

Premier Ray Groom said he would urge all politicians to be cautious about accepting gifts.

"I think there is clearly an obligation on members of Parliament to be very careful about these matters," he said.

He said if a Tasmanian MP was to receive a valuable gift, he or she should return it.

The former state Labor government was in the process of developing a policy on the

acceptance of gifts when it lost power in February 1992.

Former premier Michael Field was very particular that his ministers did not abuse their positions by accepting valuable gifts.

A spokesman for Mr Field said yesterday that while the drafting of a formal policy had been shelved, Labor MPs were expected to use their common-sense in the matter.

The Federal Government has guidelines for ministers accepting private gifts.

Ministers can accept gifts up to the value of \$100.

Should they wish to keep a gift which was worth more than \$100, they would have to pay the difference into the Government coffers.

Otherwise, a valuable gift would become public property and be placed in a museum, public building or be auctioned.