

NON-MEDICAL USE—TRANSFER OF OFFENCES
TO FOOD AND DRUGS ACT, AMENDMENT
OF PENAL PROVISIONS

Mr. John Gilbert (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Justice. I should like to ask the minister whether he intends to implement two of the recommendations contained in the report, namely, firstly, that we transfer these psychotropic offences from the Narcotic Control Act to the Food and Drugs Act immediately, and second, that we amend the penal provisions of the Criminal Code?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I think the preliminary position of the government has already been stated this morning.

NON-MEDICAL USE—COMMITTEE STUDY OF
LEDAIN COMMISSION INTERIM REPORT

Mr. Warren Allmand (Noire-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Would the minister consider referring the interim report of the LeDain Commission to the Standing Committee on Health, Welfare and Social Affairs, where Members of Parliament may study the recommendations and receive representations from the public?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to take that suggestion under consideration.

NON-MEDICAL USE—CHANGES IN LAW RE-
GARDING TRAFFICKERS—PENALTIES FOR
POSSESSION OF HASHISH

Mr. Paul Yewchuk (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Justice. Is the government planning to make any changes in regard, first, to traffickers in marijuana and, second, traffickers in hard drugs, including amphetamines? Are there to be any changes to deal with the particular problem of trafficking?

Hon. John N. Turner (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I cannot at the moment add any more precision to the preliminary position of the government already stated.

Mr. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Would the minister indicate whether the government has taken a position with respect to lightening the penalties for possession of hashish to

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make them similar to the penalties for possession of marijuana? If so, when can such announcement be expected in the House?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the position of the government with respect to that matter has been well stated by my colleague, the Minister of Justice.

FINANCE

DISCUSSION WITH BANKS TO BRING ABOUT
LOWERING OF PRIME INTEREST RATE

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, if I may change the subject, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. As he knows, the Bank of Montreal announced two or three weeks ago a reduction in their prime rate of interest, and no other bank has yet made such an announcement. Would the minister inform the House whether he has held any discussions with the other banks or their officers with regard to reducing their prime interest rate in order to ease the inflationary effect of high interest rates?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): No, I have not had direct contact with the banks, in this regard Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lewis: A supplementary question. The minister recently attended a meeting of the Canadian Bankers Association and I had hoped that this might have been one of the subjects he discussed with them. May I ask the minister whether he knows if the Governor of the Bank of Canada has held such conversations? If he does not know, would the minister assure the House that he will undertake to request that the Governor of the Bank of Canada seek the taking of action to reduce interest rates on the part of the chartered banks?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I met with the operating officers of the banks in Vancouver but there was no direct discussion of this particular question. That is what I meant when I said I had had no contact with them concerning this matter. I know that the Governor of the Bank of Canada has met with the presidents of the banks recently and I shall be speaking to him or the Deputy Governor this afternoon.

Mr. Lewis: A further supplementary question. Will the minister assure the House that he will request the Governor of the Bank of Canada to seek from all chartered banks a reduction in interest rates?