

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

will be done? Never mind the British North America Act with its jurisdiction federally and provincially; this is a problem which affects everybody in Canada.

Is it not possible for the man who has the greatest responsibility in Canada in connection with health and welfare, namely the federal minister, to give some intimation as to the approach that is going to be made or the steps taken on a federal basis to tackle this problem of drug addiction? First of all, there is the question of curing those who can be cured. Second, there is the question of taking care of those who can never be cured. Third, there is the question of stopping the illegal importation of drugs into Canada.

If you can stop the illegal importation of drugs into Canada there will be no drug addiction problem. If you could wipe out the profit of those who push illegal drugs there would be no drug addiction problem. If you stop the profit on one hand and if you stop the importation on the other you cannot have a problem.

I admit that all this is not the responsibility of the minister of health and welfare, but I do know the minister is interested in this problem and has made a study of it. Personally I think the time has come for the minister of health and welfare to give some direction on the treatment and control in all the provinces. I understand the problem, and I hope that before this vote passes the minister will give us a real outline not only of the problem, because we all know there is one, but of the study being made of it and any recommendation the minister can make irrespective of the British North America Act.

Let us solve this problem whether it is federal or provincial. Because of the importance of this issue, because of the hundreds of millions of dollars it is costing Canada, I hope the minister of health and welfare at this session will give us a real proposal to try to bring this matter under control.

**Mr. Trainor:** I must say that I agree with the hon. member for Vancouver East as to the seriousness of this problem of drug addiction. However, I think it is a bit unfair to ask the minister to provide a final solution of the problem, because I do not think anyone in the world has yet succeeded in doing that. I think perhaps it would be legitimate to ask the minister what consideration he is giving to the question of treatment. It has been intimated that this is a provincial problem, and I suppose technically that is so under the terms of the British North America Act. However, apparently other federal states have succeeded in solving this problem, notably

the United States. I am sure the minister is familiar with the work being done at Lexington.

**Mr. Martin:** I have been there.

**Mr. Trainor:** Would the minister give consideration to establishing something similar in this country? It is recognized in professional circles that drug addiction can be treated only in a special institution where the addicts can be kept under proper control and supervision. Attempts are being made to do this at Lexington.

**Mr. Martin:** I have listened to what both my hon. friends have said. I know the interest of the hon. member for Vancouver East in this matter, and his very deep concern is somewhat responsible for the great role he has sought to place on my shoulders but it is one which, as the hon. member for Winnipeg South has said, cannot possibly be placed upon the shoulders of any one man or any one department.

Having said that, I do not want in any way to withdraw from my responsibility in connection with this matter. Of course I cannot ignore the constitution, and I know that on serious reflection my hon. friend will not suggest that.

**Mr. Winch:** Yes, I do.

**Mr. Martin:** If he does, then I must say that I could not ignore the constitution and I would not be worthy of sitting in the government very long if I did.

**Mr. Winch:** Are we not able to make grants?

**Mr. Martin:** I think I have been able to deal with the problem regardless of the constitutional position in another way. I do not think we should overstate the seriousness of this problem in this country any more than we should underestimate it. We have about 3,000 drug addicts; they have about 65,000 in the United States. The reported figures in England are that they have about 300; the reported figures from France are that they have about 250. The European figures show less incidence than is the case on the American continent, that is taking North America, Central America and South America as one unit.

I have said repeatedly, and I say again, that having in mind the inadequacy of the British reporting system and other factors I find it difficult to accept the continental standards and those in the United Kingdom. I talked about this matter with the director of this department in the United Kingdom when he was here in Ottawa this year.

**Mr. Trainor:** Does the minister mean standards or statistics?