

Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse Act

toward the area of preventing the drugs from getting into the country, but even the RCMP told our committee that any strategy should deal with education in the schools and on cutting down on the demand side. The supply side will always exist. If it does not come from the Far East, it will come from the south and elsewhere.

Let us look at the figures. The most recent figures that were made available to us about specific spending by the Department of National Health and Welfare services and promotion branch reveal some rather staggering negative statistics about the amount of money the federal Government has been spending in the area of alcohol and other drugs, specifically in the health and welfare branch.

The figures speak louder than words. In 1984-85, the last year for which the Liberal Government was responsible for the funding of alcohol and drug treatment programs under the Ministry of Health and Welfare, the total amount spent was \$2.322 billion. That included approximately \$1.114 billion in the Department of National Health and Welfare in the area of alcohol abuse, and \$816 million to deal with programs relating to the abuse of other drugs. There was a subsequent total package of \$390 million, for a total of \$2.322 billion. These are figures from the Assistant Deputy Minister of the Department of National Health and Welfare.

Let me cite the figures for 1986-87 for the same Ministry. In 1986, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said we had a drug crisis and the Minister said it was an epidemic. The actual spending in the Department of National Health and Welfare, excluding the other Departments that deal with the interdiction and cutting down on the supply side, was \$1.529 billion. That was a decrease in spending of \$800 million over that three-year period in the Department of National Health and Welfare on the question of drug and alcohol abuse.

I certainly agree with the Minister and applaud him for moving forward with one recommendation, a Canadian centre on substance abuse. It is a centre which was endorsed by all three Parties. I am sure all Parties will support the legislation. However, I must ask the Minister to put the facts on the table as they relate to the whole area of substance abuse. Given that this is the only Bill we have seen in the House as a result of the work done by the Standing Committee on National Health and Welfare, I could not permit this opportunity to go by without putting the Government and the Minister on notice that we do not see a Bill representing one recommendation out of the 31 brought before us as a positive response to the crisis in the abuse of legal drugs in this country. We certainly feel there are a number of other areas where the Minister could move expeditiously. He would certainly receive our full support and I believe he would receive the full support of members on the government side of the House, to move on labelling, to move on employee assistance programs.

● (1340)

Mr. Hawkes: If we could trust your word.

Ms. Copps: I am sure the Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes) does not support employee assistance programs for federal government employees, but it was an all-Party unanimous recommendation of the Standing Committee. We are going into the private sector and telling federally regulated companies to give their employees a chance to come forward and acknowledge a drinking or drug problem and to deal with it in the context of treatment rather than dealing with it in the context of being thrown out of their job and being another unproductive Canadian. We think the federal Government could show the lead in the area of employee assistance programs. We feel that the federal Government should also show the lead in employee assistance programs when it relates to the Armed Forces and to the RCMP. Those are areas where family members, in many instances, are required to live in far-flung places.

There was another very great shortcoming in the Minister's recommendation, or lack of recommendation, as it relates to the native population. I think the Member, who sat with us on the unanimous committee which looked at the issue, was well aware of the fact that we have a very difficult situation in relation to illegal substance abuse in the native community. There has been a government program brought forward to deal with it under NAADAP. That is fine for those natives who happen to live in an area where they qualify for a NAADAP program, specifically those Indians or aboriginal people who are living on reserves.

In my riding of Hamilton East I happen to have a very large population of native people who would like to benefit from time to time from the programs being offered. We heard representations from Thunder Bay and many areas in Saskatchewan and Manitoba where the native person who seeks some help from the federal Government by way of a treatment program is told: "Well, you do not live on a reserve. That is a provincial problem".

They go to the provincial Government and ask for help for a problem—perhaps the community would like to launch a program in an urban area—and the provincial Government says: "I am sorry, that is a federal problem. You are covered under NAADAP". So we have a situation where these individuals and community groups are seeking solutions to problems which have resulted in the destruction of some of the social fabric of their communities and they are essentially caught between a rock and a hard place, if I can use a colloquial expression. The provinces say it is the federal Government's responsibility and the federal Government says it is up to the provinces. Meanwhile, people are hurting. People are reaching the point of suicide because they cannot get the answers they need when it comes to specific treatment programs.

Unfortunately, the Minister did not deal with that when he launched his national drug strategy. In fact, when the national drug strategy was originally announced, it did not even mention the word "alcohol" until some of us on the committee rose up and said that while we can talk about cocaine and