

DRUG-CONTROL CONVENTION STUDIED

Mr. John Munro, the Minister of National Health and Welfare, has tabled an international legal document designed to develop effective controls on drugs such as LSD, amphetamines, barbiturates and tranquilizers. The convention was developed at a recently-concluded United Nations conference in Vienna.

Mr. Munro said that Canada had not signed the convention so that the document could be fully studied and discussed, particularly in connection with the final report of the Le Dain Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs.

"The main thrust of the convention recognized the need for rigorous measures to restrict the use of psychotropic substances for legitimate purposes," Mr. Munro said. "The convention, however, recognized that the use of these substances for medical and scientific purposes is indispensable and that their availability for such purposes should not unduly be restricted. In general, the convention envisages levels of control over psychotropic substances similar to those now in effect in Canada for these drugs," the Minister stated.

IDENTIFICATION PROBLEM

A problem faced by the conference in the preparation of the convention was to identify those substances to be controlled under an international treaty. The World Health Organization, through its Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, had proposed a preliminary list of 38 substances to be listed in four schedules. The conference decided to list 32 of these substances — ten in Schedule I, six in Schedule II, five in Schedule III and 11 in Schedule IV.

CONTROL MEASURES

The convention requires that the most rigorous measures of control be applied to the substances in Schedule I, which includes the hallucinogens such as LSD. Countries that ratify the convention are required to prohibit all use of substances in Schedule I, except for scientific and very limited medical purposes by duly authorized persons. The export and import of these substances will require a special authorization by the competent authorities of the countries con-

cerned. A separate import and export authorization will be required also for substances in Schedule II (central nervous system stimulants). Countries wishing to export substances in Schedule III have to so notify the competent authorities of the importing country, but this need only be done within 90 days of the time the drugs are shipped, and not prior to shipment as for drugs in Schedules I and II.

REQUIREMENTS OF PACT

Countries which ratify the convention also are required to furnish to the Secretary-General of the United Nations such information as the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs may request as necessary for the performance of its functions, and in particular an annual report regarding the working of the convention in their territories. Annual statistical reports must also be furnished by the parties to the International Narcotic Control Board.

Subject to constitutional limitations, countries ratifying the convention must treat as a punishable offence any action contrary to a law or regulation adopted as part of their obligations under the convention. At the same time, the parties to the convention may provide either as an alternative to conviction or punishment, or in addition to punishment, that abusers of psychotropic substances undergo measures of treatment, education, after-care, rehabilitation and social reintegration.

The convention will be open for signature until January 1, 1972. After that date, countries which have not signed may still do so. It will come into force on the ninetieth day after 40 states have signed it without reservation of ratification, or have deposited their instruments of ratification or accession with the United Nations.

Delegations from 71 countries attended the conference, as well as observers from four states, the World Health Organization, the International Narcotic Control Board and other non-governmental organizations.

Some 20 countries signed the convention at a ceremony on February 21, either with full authority to bind their countries to it or subject to ratification by their government.

CROPS TO FORAGE DRIVE

A three-year program, costing \$40 million, which will offer Prairie grains producers \$10 an acre to switch crop and summerfallow acreage into forage production, was recently announced by Agriculture Minister H.A. Olson and Mr. Otto Lang, the Minister responsible for the Canadian Wheat Board.

"The incentive payment will expand forage

production to meet the needs of our growing livestock industry. As the livestock industry expands to meet a growing consumer demand, the Prairie farm economy will gain stability through diversification," Mr. Olson said.

Mr. Lang said that the program would reduce grains production, "adding strength and stability to prices".

The plan will be administered by the Canada