

## DRUGS

### ANNOUNCEMENT OF PROGRAM TO COMBAT NON-MEDICAL USE—INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

**Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to announce to hon. members that the Department of National Health and Welfare is inaugurating today a comprehensive national program to combat the non-medical use of drugs which will include extensive research, information, treatment and drug analysis programs.

This co-ordinated approach to the drug abuse problem arises out of continuing departmental studies and careful consideration of the recommendations of the interim report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Non-medical Use of Drugs which was tabled in the House on June 19, 1970.

The over-all program will be co-ordinated by Dr. Aurèle Beaulnes of the department.

Research on the non-medical use of drugs will be conducted jointly by the Department of National Health and Welfare and the Medical Research Council. Participation will be open to all Canadian scientists wishing to expand their research or initiate new projects on the bio-medical, sociological, educational, or other aspects of drug abuse.

● (2:20 p.m.)

The requirement for research was determined by the serious lack of knowledge concerning the effects of psychotropic drugs, especially over the long term. Priorities for research have been established and will be made known to scientists, along with an invitation for them to apply for research support in the various priority areas. All applications received from scientists will be assessed on the basis of merit and relevance to the drug abuse question.

Research will also be encouraged in the fields of epidemiology and sociology in order to further knowledge on the factors that lead individuals to drug abuse.

The recommendation of the Le Dain Commission that the federal government investigate the establishment of regional drug analytical laboratories across Canada has also been approved and amendments to the Food and Drugs Act and the Narcotic Control Act have been passed in order to get these laboratories operational.

The new regulations will permit a physician to receive a sample of a controlled, restricted or narcotic drug from an individual under his professional care and to transmit it for analysis to a scientist authorized to possess the drug for this purpose. This service is of extreme importance to physicians treating drug abuse sufferers, as proper analysis will assist the practitioner to determine the most appropriate treatment for his patient.

The information program will provide Canadians with up to date factual information on drug abuse. The program will be developed in consultation with provincial health and welfare departments and other agencies dealing with the problems of drug abuse. Assistance will also

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be provided to provincial programs and, where necessary, to initiate new programs.

The information program will consist of four components: data retrieval, data analysis, information processing and communications.

The department will support a greater number of innovative services designed to meet drug-related social problems. Demonstration grants and other short-term assistance will be provided for experimental programs undertaken by existing or new organizations, some of which will be operated by the young people themselves. These innovative services will include such projects as crisis intervention, rehabilitative and preventative service, detached street work, indigenous counselling, information and referral services, as well as residential treatment centres, work activity programs, employment services and other community development services related to the problems of drug abuse.

Through such innovative programs particular effort will be made to strengthen the ability of families and communities to understand and deal with social conditions that generate youth alienation, drug abuse and other allied problems.

For fiscal year 1970-71, the Department of National Health and Welfare has budgeted a total of more than \$400,000 to finance these initiatives. The total amount forecast in the next fiscal year for the over-all program is \$4.5 million.

In addition, I should point out that under the Canada Assistance Plan the federal government is sharing in the cost of a wide range of welfare and rehabilitative services, many of which are directly related to the prevention and treatment of social problems associated with the misuse of drugs. It is my hope that the provinces will make greater use of the sharing provisions of the plan. I will discuss this matter with the provincial ministers of welfare this week.

Further details regarding application for grants for research under this program and for further information will be brought to the attention of interested researchers.

As hon. members are aware, a plenipotentiary conference on psychotropic substances is currently under way in Vienna, Austria. Sixty-two nations and a number of international agencies are participating in the deliberations.

The conference has been called on recommendation of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs which drafted a protocol on psychotropic substances at its meeting last year. This protocol envisages international and national controls on psychotropic substances which are liable to abuse, such as LSD, amphetamines, barbiturates and certain tranquilizers.

Canada has taken the position that the international instrument which will result from the conference should provide maximum flexibility in order to take into account present Canadian policy in this area, as well as changes or developments which may occur in the future.

I have received a report from the Canadian delegation and I am pleased to say that many countries share the Canadian view and have emphasized the need to prepare