

The Canada Lancet

VOL. LIII.

TORONTO, OCTOBER, 1919

No. 2

EDITORIAL

AN EFFORT TO REGULATE THE IMPORTATION AND EXPORTATION OF OPIUM AND COCAINE.

Following the adoption of a resolution, Mr. Rowell introduced in the House, on 17th October, a bill to license import and export of cocaine, opium and their preparations. The bill continues in effect Orders-in-Council passed in May last under the War Measures Act. In recent years, Mr. Rowell said, quantities of opium and cocaine imported into Canada had shown a marked increase. In view of that situation and in order to exercise greater control, the Orders-in-Council were passed. The increase in importation, however, did not necessarily mean an increase in consumption in Canada. The object of importation into Canada had been largely to get the drug smuggled across the international border into the United States.

Mr. Rowell read a series of figures showing the effect of the Orders-in-Council. During the year ending March 31, 1919, there were 12,333 ounces of cocaine imported into Canada. During the three months of 1919 under license, July, August and September, cocaine imported amounted to 1,544 ounces. Morphine imported during the year ending March 31, 1919, totalled 30,087 ounces. During the three months under license importations were 2,695 ounces, approximately 10,000 ounces per year, instead of 30,000.

Crude opium during the year ending March 31, 1919, was imported to the extent of 34,263 pounds. During the three months under license, importations were 1,110 pounds, or 4,400 pounds per year, as compared with 34,000 pounds before licensing was put into effect.

Very stringent steps should be adopted with the object of controlling the sale of habit forming drugs. It has been definitely stated that there are at least 1,000,000 dope fiends in the United States, and, as many from the United States come to this country, they may bring the habit with them. The problem cannot be trifled with. Strong measures are required.