

LEGAL STATUS OF PUBLIC DRUNK

The Canadian Criminology and Corrections Association, an affiliate of The Canadian Council on Social Development, says that there is no justification for continuing to treat the public drunkard as a criminal — as he is under present federal, provincial and municipal legislation in Canada — and urges that he be detained and treated by a public health and welfare system rather than by the courts and prisons.

In a report released in Ottawa that contains six recommendations directed to the three levels of government, the Association states:

“Until now the criminal justice system has failed to provide any hope of improving the situation of the public inebriate. It is degrading and cruel and unnecessarily criminalizes behaviour that need not be defined in terms of penal sanctions.

“To justify the present system on the grounds that it gives prison jobs to skid-row derelicts, that it provides them with food, shelter and physical rehabilitation not available in other systems at this time, is a cynical, frightening and simplistic way of looking at the problem.”

COST OF JAILING DRUNKS

The Association estimates that there are about 100,000 jail sentences served in Canada in one year for the “offence” of public intoxication. These sentences represent more than one million man-days of detention a year, costing, roughly, from \$10 million to \$20 million — without counting the costs of arrest and prosecution.

The report, entitled *Drain the Drunk Tank*, is the result of a 12-month study by the Association's associate director Réal Jubinville, under the direction of a widely representative committee, including a judge, policeman, lawyers, treatment professionals and former alcoholics. Mr. Jubinville has made a survey of legislation and treatment facilities and practices across Canada.

The report's first recommendation, which calls for repeal of all legislation making public intoxication an offence, specifically mentions the federal Indian Act.

PROVINCES LAGGING

Only in the Western provinces, the Northwest Territories and New Brunswick, Mr. Jubinville says, has there been new legislation passed providing for the detention of public inebriates and their release after a maximum of 24 hours. In the other Atlantic provinces, some gestures have been made toward ceasing to charge public inebriates. However, in all provinces, being drunk in public is still a criminal offence and entails being picked up by a police officer and taken to the police station “drunk tank”.

The “drunk tanks”, says one of the report's recommendations, should be replaced by detoxication centres designated as such by health and welfare

authorities. “Health and welfare legislation is needed to provide a statutory basis for a program of public intoxication control,” Mr. Jubinville says.

The report recommends that police officers be legally designated as the persons authorized to take public inebriates into temporary protective custody and see that they go to detoxication centres. “The legislation should also protect the police from charges of assault or other court actions in performing this job,” says Mr. Jubinville, “as is the case in the legislation in some Western provinces and New Brunswick.”

DETOXICATION CENTRES

It is proposed that detoxication centres be given legal authority to detain a person diagnosed on admission as intoxicated for a maximum of 24 hours. If he is suffering from anything other than the effects of alcohol, he should be taken immediately to hospital for treatment. The inebriate could be released before the 24 hours are up to the care of a person who applies to take care of him, or if he proves himself able to take care of himself and not be a danger to himself or to others.

The next stage for many inebriates, says the report, should be post-detoxication care; it recommends that public health and welfare authorities establish such centres or buy the services from private organizations. For many alcoholics, simple detoxication is not enough, and would not be an entirely adequate alternative to the present criminal justice system. “For those who need further help and are prepared to accept it,” says the report, “the system should be geared to help them.”

NICKEL ADDITIVES PLANT

Construction of a \$3.6-million plant at International Nickel's nickel-refining complex in Port Colborne, Ontario to produce nickel additives for the foundry industry was announced recently by Mr. Henry S. Wingate, chairman of the International Nickel Company of Canada, Limited. Work on the facility will begin later this year, with start-up of production scheduled for mid-1972.

The initial annual production rate is programmed at 14 million pounds of “F” Nickel shot and of INCO's two regular grades of nickel-magnesium — NMA No. 1 with 80 per cent nickel and NMSA No. 2 with 50 per cent nickel. The plant will eventually have an annual planned capacity of 25 million pounds. The nickel-magnesium additives will be new products for the Port Colborne refinery.

At present, International Nickel is producing additives for the foundry industry in the United States, England, and at Port Colborne's existing “F” Nickel production facilities.

The new alloy plant will use the latest advances in electric induction furnaces, casting techniques and materials-handling equipment. Of the facility's