

Treatment of Drug Addicts

treatment" may be imposed. The legislation will also provide for release from custody only upon approval by the national parole board and under supervision for an indeterminate period and upon terms to be laid down by that agency. Those so sentenced will of course be committed to the new institutions as soon as they can be set up. The new institutions will be operated under the present federal penitentiary system, but will include the most up-to-date program for treatment of addicts.

This is not just a plan to hold addicts in custody, but rather an earnest attempt to treat their addiction by the most modern methods available, with the hope that a substantial number may be returned as useful citizens to society.

The program will also provide for increased penalties for those involved in trafficking drugs. Under this approach, the law and the enforcement of it will be based on the view that the trafficker who peddles drugs primarily to pay the cost of his own addiction is no less a menace to society, while at large, than the trafficker who peddles for some other purpose. Details of the legislation will be announced in due course, but it is generally proposed to provide that anyone convicted of trafficking may be sentenced to imprisonment for life, and in the case of a second or subsequent offence, will automatically receive an indeterminate sentence. The duration of the period of probation or parole for such persons will similarly reflect the view that narcotics traffickers require permanent supervision, and must not be allowed to associate with juveniles or other addicts. Other changes with respect to sentencing will also be made.

With regard to that field involving co-operation by the provinces, we are primarily concerned with the prevention of addiction and the treatment of those who may be prone to the use of drugs but are not criminals. The problem here is that the federal government has no jurisdiction over such a person unless or until he has committed a crime, but the main effort should be to treat him and prevent him from becoming a criminal. The full answer to this problem therefore depends upon provincial co-operation.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare has established a committee to study and report upon improved methods for dealing with the non-criminal addicts, and this committee will be working in co-operation with the provincial departments of health. It is anticipated that a few centres will be established in suitable locations where a trained staff can study methods of treatment and guidance

of non-criminal addicts. These would be community based services with emphasis on follow-up and prevention of reversion to addiction.

In addition and in order to be able to deal with recalcitrant individuals who are not amenable to treatment in a community centre, we have proposed to the provinces that they provide a procedure, under provincial legislation, for the referral of suspected addicts for medical and psychiatric examination and for committal for treatment of those found to be addicts. Such persons could then be committed for treatment to the new federal institutions to which I have referred, if the provinces so desire, under appropriate financial arrangements to be worked out.

An important feature of this proposal is that those committed for treatment under provincial legislation will not have any form of criminal record nor be subject to the stigma attached thereto, but there will be available to them the extra care and treatment as well as the rehabilitative program which it will be possible to develop under a co-ordinated plan designed to achieve maximum results in terms of the prevention of crime, the treatment of addiction, the rehabilitation of offenders, and the curtailment of a social evil.

To us it is clear that the fullest benefit from the program can only be achieved if there is co-operation at both levels of government. Some of the changes can, of course, be proceeded with independently, but the full extent and effectiveness of the program can only be realized when we determine the extent of the co-operation that will be available. We are encouraged by the expressions of interest received so far, and are proceeding with the preparation of detailed plans as rapidly as possible.

Hon. Paul Martin (Essex East): The extended statement made by the Minister of Justice today is one which the hon. gentleman was asked to make a year and a half ago in this house because of a declaration he had made outside parliament, speaking in British Columbia. The statement deals, however, with a matter of the greatest importance, and the house generally will regard it as one which should receive the most serious consideration, in the light, of course, of what specific recommendations may be made.

The minister has said there are two aspects of the problem of drug addiction; one which involves criminal jurisdiction and is assigned exclusively under the British North America Act to the federal government. Another involving administration, depends upon the exercise by provincial governments of the authority extended to them under section 92 of the B.N.A. Act. In any event, the treatment