

Marijuana easier to get than beer

BY DAVE WILSON

Marijuana is easy to come by at school, said four long-haired students at Port Credit Secondary School.

The four, all aged about 17 years, made this startling admission to a Mississauga News reporter at the conclusion of a drugs seminar Thursday for parents of pupils at the school, to which students were also invited.

The four boys attended the seminar.

"If you want it, 'grass' is easier to get than beer," revealed one of the four, all of who freely admitted having taken marijuana.

One confessed to having tried LSD and all knew of another student at their school who had taken a long-effect 'trip' on the drug STP.

"He imagined he was a rock for three days," they said.

They also said that a large number of students at the Port Credit school, which has a total register of 1,350, took marijuana, especially ones in the 14-17 years age group. Anybody could get "the stuff" if they wanted it, they added.

Approached later about the validity of these statements, Glenn Grice, chairman of Mississauga Board of Education, commented: "This is prevalent in several areas and our close proximity to Toronto does not rule out the possibility of there being some truth in this."

"I don't know if this story is true or not," he added. "Kids do tend to exaggerate and it is certainly no reflection on the school. We cannot search everyone."

He continued: "I don't know what can be done about it. As a Board of Education we have had an all-day session with our physical education teachers and they have been addressed on the subject."

Written information about drugs could be obtained at the school by students, Mr. Grice said, and consideration was being given to the possibility of presenting information through an expert to students at schools in the area.

Director of Education James A. Turner said after the drugs seminar Thursday, when Dr. Andrew Malcolm of the narcotic unit of the Addiction Research Foundation addressed a large gathering of parents; "The only reason this seminar was called was a matter of general information to parents".

He denied that it was because of any particular fear or knowledge of a prevalence of drug-taking

at Port Credit Secondary School.

"Like other schools, we have had a few cases of

students having marijuana," said Mr. Turner, "but no more than anywhere else".

Expert discusses addiction threat with students

"Tell your children about the dangers of taking marijuana, but don't try to paint a horror picture," was the advice given to some 400 parents at a drug seminar at Port Credit Secondary School Thursday.

Dr. Andrew Malcolm, psychiatrist with the narcotics unit of the Addiction Research Foundation in Toronto, made the suggestion during an informative talk on the background and effects obtained from the more widely used drugs, in particular marijuana.

The narcotics expert, who had just returned from Italy where he had been studying the drug situation, warned that it would be wrong to suppress correct information about drugs and the harm they could do, but added that it could be equally dangerous to put over an ultra-vivid impression of the long-term effects of drug taking.

"There is no evidence of mental or moral injury from moderate use of marijuana," he said. "But excessive use indicates and intensifies mental instability."

Marijuana, unlike morphine, heroine and methedrine was not physiologically addicting he said. It was, rather, a habituate.

"It is nearly always in social circumstances that people start taking marijuana," stated Dr. Malcolm. "Some people can leave it alone for as long as they like, but there are those who gradually increase its use until they take it every night."

"Then they tend to move further away from the kind of life they led before habitual use of marijuana," he added.

So many young people today went for marijuana because it was the 'in' thing to take 'pot' — "The cool, cool term for marijuana," he said.

"But to become habituated to marijuana at 16 years of age was to run the risk of missing the richness of the change which is going on around," warned Dr. Malcolm. "They are missing a very important time in their lives."

"During early teens people are more vulnerable to the disordering effects of marijuana than



DR. ANDREW MALCOLM

they probably ever will be again, in their lives."

"Rebellion against conformity was the basic reason for young people taking drugs, just as previous generations had turned to secret smoking and drinking for 'kicks' in their 'teens,' he said.

Dr. Malcolm told the parents: "We should try to advise these young people that they shouldn't smoke marijuana (a) because it's against the law; (b) because people who do run the certain risk of becoming habituated to it and eventually 'drop out' of society; (c) any mental instability will be intensified; and (d) they will probably go on to LSD because it is the next step, and LSD is proved to be physically dangerous."

Alcohol was also an extremely dangerous drug, pointed out the speaker, even more so than marijuana, he said. "But this isn't to say we should welcome to our bosoms another drug which is less dangerous."

Answering questions after his talk, Dr. Malcolm said there were certain restaurants in Toronto where heroine could be bought once you had ingratiated yourself with the people there. It was a false impression that only in Yorkville could marijuana and other drugs be obtained.

Dr. Malcolm was thanked for his informative talk by J. A. Turner, director of education for Port Credit. The speaker, had previously been introduced by G. Grice, chairman of the Board of Education.

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