

*The Address—Mr. Yewchuk*

failure to look after one's own economic needs in society.

Those who are promoting the use of this drug tell you there is enough evidence to warrant approval of "pot" smoking; that fewer controls are necessary than with tobacco and alcohol. They go on to say that a large number of young people use the drug, knowing from evidence produced by research and from personal experience that it is harmless. I say "Bunk", Mr. Speaker. Not enough evidence has been produced through research. No research is available today to produce conclusive evidence that these are indeed the facts.

As a matter of fact, the evidence presented by the Alberta Medical Association indicates that scientific observation in western countries has not as yet been undertaken in a controlled and scientifically valid manner. Therefore, to contend that marijuana is harmless is absolutely unwarranted. There is definite evidence of its toxicity, and after careful perusal of much of the published evidence by the World Health Organization and other authorities it appears they are of the opinion that the long-term and chronic use of this drug does produce psychic dependence.

Another danger that should be mentioned is that users of "pot" never know what they are really getting when they buy it. They do not know for certain that the substance they are given really is marijuana, or whether it is laced with something entirely different and more dangerous. Often pushers of this drug are extremely anxious to switch users to something much more harmful, such as the hard drug. But in spite of the dangers that exist, it is estimated that about 300,000 young people in our high schools and colleges still succumb to the use of these substances.

In order to enable us to deal with this problem we must try to determine the cause of young people using this drug. Part of the reason may be the massive propaganda campaign now being waged in this country to the effect that it is harmless and good. But that is not the only reason. When talking with a couple of students, having always thought in my own mind that people who used these drugs tended to have emotional problems, I was surprised to hear them say, "No; I smoke it because I like it". This seems to be true, Mr. Speaker; a certain percentage of these individuals do smoke it because of the effect it produces. Users can experience euphoria, elation, hilarity, relaxation and passivity. In many cases they feel that in fact the drug

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makes them more sociable and socially aware. In many cases they feel that their sensory thresholds to sound and sight are sharpened and they can enjoy art and music with greater intensity. That is one group.

● (9:10 p.m.)

There is another group which involves individuals with emotional problems. This group falls into three broad categories. The first includes individuals who are experience-seekers; they are simply curious and want to give it a try; they want to experiment. Sometimes they are motivated to do this in order to rebel against their elders. Fortunately, this group is only a short-term use group.

The second group are oblivion seekers. These are the individuals with great emotional problems. They find that a drugged state of mind gives them a pleasant respite from all the strains and stresses that life around them produces. When discussing their reasons for using this drug they go into long harangues about all the injustices of our society and all the difficulties they have in trying to compete with present-day society. Often these individuals also show feelings of inadequacy and incompetency and use the drug simply to try to fill in the void that exists in their own minds about their abilities.

There is a third group called the personality-change seekers. This is the most badly affected group because of a basic personality disorder. They are trying to find an easy way to alter that disorder and they turn to drugs. They most commonly use a variety of drugs, always to no avail. They try combinations of stronger and stronger drugs, eventually winding up in a difficult position because their disappointment and frustration increases when they do not feel better.

A number of young drug users take drugs because of certain stresses that society places on them. It is becoming more and more common for young people to believe that they are expected to participate in sexual relations at a younger age than in the past. I think this is true. Society seems to expect our young people to do this. These young people often are not emotionally or physically prepared for this sort of experience and find themselves greatly disappointed after it. They then develop the idea in their minds that there is something wrong with them physically or that they are inadequate. Therefore, they try to