

a problem that was growing and it had to be controlled. In the well known case of *Regina v. Adelman*, the court of appeal of the province said that one of the ways to control the use of marijuana was to impose six months mandatory imprisonment upon any person convicted of possession. Following that decision, all the magistrates in the province used that judgment as a guideline and imposed at least six months imprisonment for first offence convictions for possession. Since that time the use of marijuana has quadrupled or quintupled; certainly it has reached the point where its use is greater than ever before.

I am pleased to see the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) in the House, as I know of her intense interest in the subject of drugs. She has spent a great deal of time studying the problem and I hope she will participate in this debate. Let me say something to her, through you, Mr. Speaker, regarding penalties imposed for the possession of drugs. If I am wrong, I hope she will correct me. The hon. lady had some concern that the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lang) was about to remove the section from the Criminal Code which provided seven years imprisonment for importing marijuana or any other drug. Let me point out to the hon. member that if she had had a child who came across the border with a "joint" in his pocket, at that time the mandatory penalty, upon conviction, was seven years in jail. One of the few progressive steps we were able to get from the Minister of Justice was removal of that particular section. The hon. member for Calgary North (Mr. Woolliams) was instrumental, as I recall it, in this House in pointing out the iniquitous feature of that section which should not have been in the act.

The penalties imposed are clearly not the answer; this fact has been demonstrated over and over again. The problem is out of control and the penalties we have been imposing have done nothing about it. What we do not understand, in respect of the drug trade, is the nature of the typical drug pusher. I have had the opportunity of defending pushers from time to time. The individuals who sit behind desks in New York and in Asia exporting these materials have not been convicted so far. We have not got to them, and until we adopt a whole new approach we will never get to them. The people we are getting to are the addicts. If addicts are to maintain their habit, they must sell the drug or turn someone else on. That is the insidious part of this drug problem: the guy you have addicted to the drug has to get his neighbour hooked on it in order to make a profit and maintain his own habit.

We must start treating this as a medical rather than a criminal problem. It is long past the time this government took another look at the Le Dain commission report on which we spent some \$4 million. The only response we have been able to get so far from the Minister of Justice or the Solicitor General (Mr. Allmand) is that they will move the use of marijuana from the Narcotics Control Act to the Food and Drugs Act. That is a big deal; but what will it do about this problem? What will it do to reduce the amount of crime that has developed from the use of marijuana?

● (1550)

I think we must ask ourselves whether this government will take a meaningful approach toward stopping or controlling drug addiction and drug trafficking. What they

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have done—and I give them some credit for this—is to improve their prosecution procedures. They have set up a fairly large group of prosecutors, in the Vancouver area in particular, and increased the number of convictions. Statistics show that this is a direct result of the increased enforcement by the Minister of Justice, and I congratulate the government for that gesture. However, we need to spend more money in the investigatory area. This problem will not be solved until we get down to doing the hard work of detecting, walking the streets, increasing the number of undercover people and tripling or quadrupling the amount of money that the federal government is now spending. I do not have the figures in front of me, but I hope the Solicitor General will tell us the amount of money he is spending on this problem. However, so far as I know, the new, co-ordinated law enforcement unit in British Columbia is provincially funded.

We have a national emergency in terms of heroin addiction and drug trafficking, and the problem must be treated on a national basis. We cannot continue saying, "It is your problem out there on the coast." If we do not solve the problem in British Columbia, it will crop up in Saskatoon and all across the country in our small communities.

Mr. Nielsen: We have it now.

Mr. Leggatt: You have it, but not to the same extent, because British Columbia is one of the most heavily urbanized sections of the country. In every community where you have a great discrepancy between wealth and poverty, the rate of crime is high and certainly the rate of drug addiction is high. I should like to get back to the point I was making. We must beef-up the whole investigatory branch and we must establish closer liaison between the federal government and the co-ordinated law enforcement unit in order to control this problem. This is not a provincial responsibility but a national responsibility and it is time we realized it.

We have to think about where we go in terms of the Le Dain commission report. As I have said before, the federal government has spent some \$4 million gathering a great deal of evidence on the whole question of drug addiction. Let me summarize very briefly what the report said. It said that we must de-criminalize heroin addiction which, as the report states, is a medical and not a criminal problem. It is no good saying that it is wrong to use heroin and "We will lock you up if we find you using it". That is exactly what we have been doing up to now. Not only has that failed to solve the problem, but it has made our area one of the drug centres of North America.

We can no longer use that approach. We must use alternate approaches. One of the approaches recommended by the Le Dain commission offers one of the greatest hopes of solving the problem, because when you take the market away from the organized drug trade, you start to move in on the problem. In all these consensual crimes—and this is a consensual crime because no one forces the needle into your arm—all that the organized drug people are doing is satisfying the existing market; but because it is a criminal activity the market continues to grow, profits grow and the whole thing spirals out of control. The Le Dain commission report, according to a newspaper article, said: