

hemp - use or abuse ?



Uhis week we present the pros and cons of hemp. Hemp, or more commonly, marijuana, has been banned from use only very recently in history. The con side presents the use of hemp as undeniably abusive, and very likely destructive. Period. Need anything more be said? The pro side, by contrast, presents a more colorful debate, stating that the banishment of hemp use not only limits our freedom, but also eradicates a host of hemp's other beneficial uses.

Please remember while reading this, that the Features Editors wish only to contrast the opposing views. No pro or con bias is intended.

Also remember that while bias is not intended in the articles themselves, it is inherent because of our very nature. Therefore, at the very least, this feature should show you how the same plant, hemp, can be viewed quite differently. c.l.

the case against hemp:

introduction

"Marijuana, hashish, and hashish oil are obtained from the Indian hemp plant *Cannabis sativa*, a tough annual which readily grows in both tropical and temperate climates. The principal psychoactive constituent of this plant is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), a hallucinogenic substance that is much less potent than an equal weight of LSD. The concentration of THC in marijuana can range up to approximately 8% of the dried bulk weight for leaf products, while the concentrations in resin preparations (hashish and hashish oil) can range up to 15% and 70% respectively. Actual concentrations in products sold on the street in North America, however, are usually much lower, varying widely according to source of supply.

The Indian hemp plant, is an annual from which marijuana, hashish, and hashish oil are prepared. More than 60 constituents, known as cannabinoids, occur naturally only in the cannabis plant. There are numerous cultivated and naturally occurring strains (varying in hallucinogenic potency) found throughout the world. Frequently, cannabis is bought and sold on the street under the names associated (often incorrectly) with the geographical origin of the cannabis preparation: Colombian, Acapulco Gold, Jamaican, Mexican, Panamanian, etc."

medical uses

"There is no generally accepted medical use for crude cannabis. When used in research, cannabis preparations and individual cannabinoids are usually referred to by a botanical or chemical name respectively. Recently, THC was marketed under the name Drabinol for the treatment of nausea and vomiting due to cancer chemotherapy.

At present, there is no official clinical use for this drug. However, it is being tested for its possible usefulness in the treatment of nausea and vomiting due to cancer chemotherapy, glaucoma, epilepsy, and muscle spasm due to multiple sclerosis or spinal cord injury. In experimental studies in which THC is administered in capsules, single doses have ranged up to 20 mg.

THC and other cannabis constituents and derivatives are being tested for possible use in the treatment of asthma, epilepsy, glaucoma, and the nausea caused by drugs employed in the treatment of cancer. However, their clinical usefulness for some of these purposes has not yet been established."

hemp use

"Teenagers who regularly come home under the influence of drugs or alcohol are, consciously or unconsciously, sending our signals for help. What these kids desperately want is for someone to help them with their problem.

WHAT IS A DRUG?

Scientifically, a drug can be defined as any substance taken to change a person's physical, mental or emotional state. Some drugs are legal and other drugs are illegal. Some are helpful and others are harmful. All drugs, legal or illegal, can lead to problems.

WHAT IS DRUG ABUSE?

Drug abuse is any use of a drug that causes a physical, mental, emotional, legal or social problem.

The Brunswickan would like to thank Joan Burt, Head Nurse of the Regional Addiction Services, for her helpful information on the case against hemp.

WHAT IS DRUG DEPENDENCE?

"Addiction is a disease that ends in jails, institutions and death. Many of us came to Narcotics Anonymous because drugs had stopped doing what we needed them to do. Addiction takes our pride, self-esteem, family, loved ones and even our desire to live. If you have not reached this point in your addiction, you don't have to. We found that our own private hell is within us.

Drugs influenced your behavior your decisions and your judgment. It's strange but suddenly you decide to quit the school hockey team...before being expelled! You don't like the practices anymore...you don't like it or you can't keep up to the rest of the team...short of breath?...

It's funny but your old friend with whom you grew up in the same neighborhood doesn't interest you anymore...She is not cool, she does not take dope...

It's the first real lie that you told your parents. What a strange feeling! It bugs you to hide things from the. "I can't tell them that I like taking dope".

Drugs can control a person.
Drugs can change a person.
Drugs can burn a person.
Drugs can kill a person.

A drug addiction develops gradually without you becoming aware of it."

the case for hemp

introduction

"When taken at low to moderate doses, cannabis usually induces a general feeling of well-being, relaxation, and emotional disinhibition. A wide spectrum of perceptual and sensory distortions may be experienced, although at these dose levels the effects are not nearly so intense as those associated with LSD. Mild cognitive and motor impairment typically occurs during cannabis-taking episodes; other very common physiological effects involve the cardiovascular system-increased heart rate, as well as a small drop in blood pressure.

At the very high dose levels normally associated with the use of hashish oil, the effects of cannabis can more closely approximate those of LSD in kind and in intensity, and the probability of adverse psychological reactions increases. True hallucinations can occur and may be accompanied by disorganized thought, paranoia, and panic. Fortunately, such severe reactions are infrequent among normal users; since the effects of smoked cannabis are rapidly experienced, users are able to discontinue their intake before adverse effects become too serious. By comparison, those who swallow the drug are more likely to experience an adverse reaction, as they have much less precise control over the size of the dose.

Tolerance develops to the desired psychoactive effects of cannabis with regular use, and regular use may also cause psychological and mild physical dependence. abrupt abstinence after protracted and regular high-dose use can result in a withdrawal syndrome which includes sleep disturbances, anxiety, restlessness, sweating, loss of appetite, and upset stomach.

The effects of chronic daily or almost daily use have recently become the subject of extensive research. Many findings are preliminary (and sometimes contradictory). However, there is a growing body of evidence that chronic heavy cannabis smoking is particularly harmful to the body's respiratory system."

"In North America, there have been no reports of deaths in human beings directly attributable to cannabis overdose. However, it is very likely that a number of deaths have resulted indirectly: for example, cannabis has probably contributed to fatal car accidents, for it has adverse effects on such important driving skills as judgment, perceptual/motor coordination, ability to concentrate, and depth perception." ■

the case for hemp

introduction

"Hemp is an annual plant which can be grown in all 10 province and can reach heights of 4 metres or more. Today, hemp is best known as the source of marijuana, but hemp has long been grown for thousands of other uses worldwide."

"NORML CANADA (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws in Canada) asks: "CAN MARIJUANA HEAL THE CANADIAN ECONOMY?" NORML CANADA prepares for a new NATIONAL MOMENTUM. NORML, a non-profit organization for the reform of cannabis laws, and public education on the possible approach of an end to prohibition. NORML's POLICIES are directed at the eventual industrialization of cannabis for MEDICAL, RECREATIONAL, and COMMERCIAL USES. The by-products of cannabis include pulp-and-paper, textiles, medicines, fuel, employment, tax revenue, trade and commerce."

political view

by Sam Weiner (Co-Ed - Hemp Standard)

"The idea of freedom has been dissected, categorized, and marketed to the people in the form of a remote control: the average citizen is hardly apt to raise a fuss over their incarceration when they have *Full House* seeping like diarrhoea through their sensory apparatus.

Canadians are not easily incensed lot. We brook our fellow human being's inconstancies well - as an American friend of mine observed, "Canadians will tolerate stupidity up to a point. Take the gang violence which escalated a couple summers ago: the police took it for some time, but when they decided to end it, it ended." This makes us wonderfully immune to extremist viewpoints - we are laid back and so don't fall into their alarmist dialectic. On the flip side, though, we can't let ourselves lose the second half of the equation: incisive, direct action when things have gone much too far - if we lose that we become rotting couch potatoes.

The U.S. constitution was formed on solid, honest ground: government of the people, by the people, and for the people. The constitution was based on the idea that the people could revise it, or abandon it altogether, as soon as it was proved ineffective; the colonists were, after all, escaping an absolute monarchy. Americans have since lost this ideal. Government has become an almost parental figure of authority; incontestable.

And we in Canada are well on our way down that path of dissolution. Government is corrupt on all levels and is, in a word, indecent. We have born the injustices meted out by corrupt authority, and we are wise to do so: society is a tight spider's web and radical alterations in the structure of this web will cause chaos, leaving us no better off than when the first man lifted his club and set about peacekeeping.

But in the very specific area of hemp legislation, lack of consideration, even absolute renunciation of the citizen's right to choose, has gone much too far. Legislation is dictated by the paper industries, by the Moral Majority, (which we all know is neither) and by a handful of similar special interest groups. A staggeringly valuable cash crop is denied our failing farm industry, citizens are fined and jailed for no reason: the time has come for action.

The Hemp Standard intends to educate the Demos, the people, about the hemp plant and its many uses. (In contravention of section 462.2 of the criminal code, a manifestly undemocratic law). It intends to provide a forum for communication

| Criminal Code | | |
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| Cannabis: Offences, Definitions and Penalties | | |
| Offence | Definition | Maximum Penalty |
| Possession | - To knowingly have cannabis on your person. - To knowingly control cannabis in another place or within another person's possession. - To have knowledge, consent, and some control over cannabis in the possession of a fellow group member. | Summary conviction - First offence: 6 months and \$1,000 fine. - Subsequent offence: one year and \$2,000 fine. Indictment - 7 years |
| Cultivation | - To knowingly grow or assist the growth of cannabis. | Indictment - 7 years |
| Possession for the Purpose of trafficking | - To possess cannabis for the purposes as defined for trafficking. | Indictment - Life |
| Trafficking | - To manufacture, sell, give administer, transport, send, deliver or distribute cannabis or any substance held out to be cannabis. - To offer to do any of these things. | Indictment - Life |
| Importing or Exporting | - To knowingly transport or arrange for transport of cannabis across the Canadian border. | Indictment - Life (7 years mandatory minimum) |

among people.

We must not let freedom become just a word. We must come together and with one voice tell our politicians that we do not believe marijuana is a narcotic, we do not believe marijuana leads to harder drugs, we insist hemp be liberated for industrial use. We insist that we are capable of self-government in this instance. We insist freedom must remain a reality."

"NORML does not condone the illegal consumption of marijuana for recreational purposes under the present marijuana laws. In lieu of this, NORML CANADA will lead its members through the democratic process of asking the government to liberate marijuana, and not to take any more "P.O.W.'s, Prisoners Of Weed."

medicinal uses

"Every part of the plant can be used commercially: the seeds for oil and food (the seed is an excellent source of protein); the foliage for medicine; the stems for fabric, paper, fuel, paints, construction materials and plastics.

For more than 3,500 years (prior to this century), hemp has been one of the most widely used plants for medicines. Omni Magazine (Sept. 82) indicated that if marijuana were legal, it would immediately replace 10-20% of all prescription medicines and when fully researched up to 40 or 50%."

industrial uses

"Farming only 6% of North America's acreage with hemp for Biomass would provide all our gas and oil energy needs and end dependency on fossil fuels. Also, the gasoline or methanol produced from Biomass gives off no sulfur when burned and would go a long way to solving our acid rain problems.

Hemp pulp could totally replace wood as a source for pulp in paper production. One acre of hemp produces 4 times as much pulp for paper as the same acre of trees, thus halting the deforestation of our country; hemp paper can be produced without dioxins and many other pollutants now used in the production of paper.

Hemp fibers can be used to produce rope, canvas, cloth of varied quality, and fine linen. Hemp could effectively replace cotton and be grown in Canada. Hemp discourages the growth of weeds, is insect, disease and drought resistant, and is easy on the soil, (thus reducing agricultural reliance on chemical pesticides and fertilizers).

Recent studies indicate that depletion of the ozone layer threatens to reduce world soya bean and other agricultural crop production by up to 50%. Hemp on the other hand resists the damage caused by increasing ultraviolet radiation and actually flourishes in it by producing more cannabinoids which provide protection from ultraviolet light."

history of cannabis law

"Emily Murphy, a police magistrate and judge, was apparently the first Canadian to have publicly voiced concern about cannabis. In her book "The Black Candle" published in 1922, Murphy included a chapter entitled "Marijuana - a New Menace". Writing about cannabis, she stated: Addicts while under its influence, are immune to pain, become raving maniacs and are liable to kill or indulge in any form of violence to other persons, using the most savage methods of cruelty without any sense of moral responsibility. When coming from under the influence, these victims present the most horrible condition imaginable. They are dispossessed of their normal will power, and their mentality is that of idiots. If this drug is indulged in to any great extent, it ends in the untimely death of its addict.

Thus began the irrational propaganda campaign against cannabis, which continues to this day!

In 1969, the Federal Government appointed a Royal Commission of inquiry into the Non-medical Use of Drugs under the Chairmanship of Gerald Le Dain, Dean of Osgoode Hall law school. In 1973, the Commission's final report recommended that possession and cultivation of cannabis for personal use should not be considered a criminal offense. After spending 3.5 million dollars on this Royal Commission, our government has ignored its recommendations.

NORML cites the country of Holland for its visionary foresight and courage to legalize marijuana and hashish and all cannabis by-products, for recreational purposes. Use is restricted to certain public establishments, and in the privacy of ones own home. In a recent interview, the mayor of Amsterdam was quoted as saying "All we know is that since we legalized it, we have eliminated 85% of the crime involved."

use of hemp

"The 2 most complete studies on cannabis (Jamaican studies 1968-74, and the Costa Rican study 1980) indicate that everything else being equal, an average cannabis smoker will live longer than a person that does no drugs at all; with less wrinkles and generally less stress, thereby having fewer illnesses.

The 2 studies found no relation of cannabis to crime; no impairment of motor skills; heavy use of cannabis was not found to curtail the motivation to work; there was no evidence of organic brain damage or schizophrenia." ■

