

The LeDain Commission Reports

[CONSIDERED CONCLUSIONS ABOUT THE NON-MEDICAL USE OF DRUGS]

The addictive use of drugs is a complex of problems, and as 1974 got under way, Canada had a new and complex set of recommendations for dealing with them. The LeDain Commission of Inquiry into the Non-Medical Use of Drugs sat four and a half years, held public hearings in twenty-seven cities and cost more than \$3 million. Its final 1,172-page report estimates that there are now 15,000 "daily users" of opiate drugs (such as heroin) in Canada and recommends new laws to replace the Narcotic Control Act and the Food and Drugs Act.

Specific recommendations—which range from

"lenient" to "harsh"—have stirred sharp controversy across Canada. They include:

- The elimination of all jail sentences for first-time possession of cannabis (marijuana or hashish); the removal of cannabis from the category of "hard drugs" such as heroin and cocaine; and the general lowering of penalties involving cannabis use.

- A stop to the expansion of the number of drugs which it is against the law to "possess." Specifically, it recommended that amphetamine-like drugs not be added to the list and, in general, that less emphasis be put on "possession"



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