

# Pot use by servicemen rising

Mon. Apr

OTTAWA (CP) — Marijuana is being used increasingly by young servicemen in the armed forces, Lt.-Gen. J.C. Smith said Tuesday.

Smith, assistant deputy defence minister, told a Commons defence committee meeting "there tends to be a correlation between the very new recruits just out of high school and the incidence of use of marijuana."

While marijuana use is increasing, so-called hard drugs are not being used much in the armed forces, he said. Heroin, cocaine, LSD and opium are widely considered to be hard drugs.

The alcohol problem is more serious, he said. The forces have rehabilitation programs for alcoholics in several centres across Canada.

Smith said he did not have figures immediately available on drug use.

"We go to some considerable length at recruit units to counsel people on the attitude of the armed forces toward drugs," he said.

If a recruit is caught using marijuana for the first time, he would be required to take special counselling.

"Only in the event of persistent use, or in the event of trafficking, do we take stern action," Smith said.

This might mean court martials for the offenders. If found guilty, the offender could be jailed for a while or discharged from the armed forces, Smith said later.

But he said that "alcoholism is a more serious problem than the use of soft drugs."

"We are giving consideration to other means of treating the problem," he said. "We try to keep abreast of problems in treatment of alcoholism."

Smith said after the meeting that drug use in the armed forces simply reflects what is happening in society generally.

# PROVINCIAL

A 21-year-old North Saanich man was convicted of driving while impaired by marijuana and was fined \$450 in Victoria provincial court Thursday.

Ian David Brenton, 9125 East Saanich, was convicted following a trial before Judge Blake Allan.

Constable Peter Backus of the RCMP testified that he was part of a BATvan mobile roadblock on the Pat Bay Highway near Sidney on Dec. 15 when Brenton was ordered to stop.

Backus said Brenton literally jumped out when the officer asked him to step out of his vehicle. The policeman said he noticed a lot of smoke from Brenton's car and smelled marijuana on the driver, who was the lone occupant.

Backus said he ordered Brenton to perform a number of physical co-ordination tests and that Brenton had difficulty in performing them.

He described Brenton as being very jovial, co-operative and unconcerned about the situation. Backus said Brenton appeared as though the exercise was humorous. A search of Brenton's car, however, produced nothing.

Backus then asked Brenton: "Have you been using drugs?"

"Yes," Brenton replied.

"When?" Backus inquired.

"About 15 minutes ago,"

Brenton replied.

"How much did you have to smoke?" Backus asked further.

"Two tokes, I just picked up some hitchhikers and they had it."

Backus said Brenton was still very unconcerned and jovial until he was told that he was being charged, when his attitude turned to one of displeasure.

Under grilling by defence lawyer William McElmoyle, Backus admitted there was nothing wrong with Brenton's "heel-to-toe" manner of walking but added: "Yeah, that's the way I walk. But I don't bounce."

McElmoyle made a no-evidence motion and argued there was no definition of "drugs" in the Criminal Code of Canada. He noted that marijuana was listed in the Narcotics Control Act under "cannibis (marijuana)." He argued further that there was absolutely no evidence marijuana impaired a person's ability to drive, nor was there any evidence of poor driving on Brenton's part. He suggested that the court could not take notice that the effect of marijuana impaired one's ability to drive.

After Allan dismissed that motion, McElmoyle then made a motion of insufficient evidence, saying that there was a lack of definition of what a "toke" or a "joint" was and that he expected crown counsel James Main to call expert witnesses to testify on the effects of marijuana on driving ability.

Allan, in rejecting the second motion, said it was "an important case."

He said that McElmoyle's description of the tests as "vicious" might apply to the aged but that Brenton was a young man and that the criticism was unacceptable. He noted that experienced police officers testified that they came to the conclusion Brenton was impaired while driving and stated that he was satisfied the meaning of the word "drug" includes marijuana.

Allan placed Brenton on six months' probation and ordered him to take the impaired drivers' course.

The judge also added the condition that Brenton not take any alcohol or marijuana on the days of the course.

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78

C22 THE CALGARY HERALD

## Pot puffer in hospital due to spray, doctor says

HAMILTON (CP) — A doctor says a drug user is suffering from probable poisoning after using marijuana believed to have been sprayed with the herbicide paraquat in a Mexican government program to curb the illicit drug trade.

Dr. Dennis Psutka, director of emergency services at McMaster University Medical Centre, said Tuesday that he felt obligated to inform the public that the contaminated marijuana is probably in this area.

Last month, the U.S. department of health, education and welfare issued a warning that smoking Mexican marijuana might lead to irreversible lung damage.

An estimated 20 per cent of the drug entering the U.S. is contaminated with paraquat, officials have said. The contamination was estimated at more than 2,200 parts per million compared with a maximum allowable level of 0.05 on food crops in the U.S.

The U.S. government has been subsidizing Mexico's spraying program, but farmers have been harvesting marijuana crops before the chemical can take effect.

### NO DETAILS

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Dr. Psutka would not give details about the age or sex of the local marijuana smoker because of possible legal ramifications.

He said the patient, being observed for possible kidney damage, smoked some marijuana during the weekend and experienced chest pains, nausea and diarrhea.

He said the patient went to the emergency department two days later because of blood in the urine.

Dr. Psutka said he could not confirm that paraquat was involved because of the time lapse, but he said the symptoms are "classic and we are assuming it was."

Symptoms include dizziness, sore throat, a burning sensation in the chest, nausea and vomiting, he said.

He said he has not heard of any deaths caused by smoking paraquat.

There have been some reports of probable paraquat poisoning in the Toronto area, he added.

"I've heard reports of a \$4 testing kit being available that works on a color changing principal if paraquat is present in the marijuana, but drug users know more about that than we do."

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