

NARCOTIC DRUGS

Although the terrible evil of Drug addiction has not as yet become one of New Zealand's problems, we are informed that it is a thing to be reckoned with even here. Statistics are not readily available, and we are unable to speak with any authority, but the following article from the World Superintendent of the Narcotic Drugs Department, should be read carefully by all members of our Union.

NARCOTIC DRUGS DEPARTMENT

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Dear Friends,—

As I am now on furlough after seven years in the Near East as Secretary for the World's W.C.T.U., this letter goes to you from the United States with all good wishes for you and your work in 1947. May I ask that you send me reports of your activities and of conditions and problems in your countries to reach the above address not later than May 1st, so that they can be used in a summary for the World's Convention.

It is needful that we be always active in opposing this narcotic vice which surcharges the needless misery of drug addiction on a world already suffering. However, World's Narcotic Week, February 21-28 can give added stimulus by press work (articles and short notes), by radio, in schools, churches, clubs and meetings of all kinds.

Three years ago Prime Minister McKenzie King of Canada wrote: "Just when we most need to be clear-headed, in order to face the hard facts before us, there is all too frequently a very real inclination to give way to dangerous tendencies merely as an escape from realities." Much has been written, too, of the very real danger to servicemen in countries where drugs are easy to obtain and of the temptation to "easy money" in smuggling these between foreign countries or into their own. Nor do we forget notable work done against drugs by some of them.

You will be interested in a resume of Miss Moorhead's article in the Foreign Policy Report of April 6, 1946. Before World War II international control of opium and other dangerous drugs was recognised as one of the most successful actions of the League of Nations. Opium treaties (conventions) were ratified by sixty-seven nations; estimates for medical needs were made; all legal international trade in narcotic drugs supervised and sanctions applied. Narcotic Drug control was a notable example of international co-operation so wisely established in time of peace that it withstood the shock of war.

Advance was made during the war and a meeting held in Washington in 1942. The Judd resolution requested the State Department to urge all opium producing nations to limit production and growth to medical and scientific

needs of the world. Afghanistan replied to the note, sent by the U.S.A. to countries concerned, that its opium production was to cease. Iran, which had signed none of the League conventions, did not reply, but in March, 1946, the Prime Minister in a radio address said in regard to "The problem of opium and its production. The smoking of opium is practised to such an extent that it will endanger the health of coming generations. I have issued orders for a commission to be appointed to study the problem and submit a report and proposals so that the necessary action can be taken to stop production of opium and the smoking of this deadly poison." On April 10 the Council of Ministers approved a decree to prohibit cultivation for this year.

In Japan the measures taken by the military were swift and effective. Germany presents a more complicated problem. Britain and the Netherlands said that when their Far East territories were freed, opium monopolies would cease and they would forbid opium smoking.

Most of the League Narcotics work was moved to Washington, D.C., during the war. The new Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations now takes over. It will, first: aid in establishing narcotic control systems broken by the war, and second: resume reports and statistics for the International organization. The member nations are fifteen: China, France, U.K., U.S.S.R., U.S.A., Canada, Egypt, India, Iran, Mexico, Netherlands, Peru, Poland Turkey and Yugoslavia. Many new problems and complications face this commission. A new start will have to be made and much original thinking will have to be done before the solution for the basic problem, how to insure that enough raw material for global medical and scientific supplies of narcotics is produced and at the same time to insure that no surplus production is permitted so as to prevent abuse of this essential material. (End of resume.)

China's efforts against opium continue and a death penalty is inflicted for persistent law violations. In Lebanon and Syria increased planting of hasheesh in almost inaccessible places is reported. Iran has a new society with the double purpose of combating opium and alcohol. Egypt's Narcotic Bureau has lost, through retirement, Major-General Russell Pasha, who has done a notable service for Egypt and the world. This will add to the difficulty of protecting that country from its own and its neighbours' drugs.

Hon. H. J. Anslinger, Commissioner of Narcotics in U.S.A., states, "That crime and narcotics are interwoven is illustrated by the fact that narcotic drug violators head the list of all criminals in the United States having previous fingerprint records, which in-

clude crimes ranging from vagrancy to robbery—and other serious offences."

It was an inspiration recently to visit Mrs. Hess whose Bulletins give such information on Medical Temperance and whose special issues of the Union Signal on Social Hygiene and Narcotics are most valuable. I quote from the former: "The Journal of the American Medical Association, July 13, 1946, issued a strong warning about the danger of addiction to Demerol. A wave of addiction is feared because of reckless statements made in a recent widely circulated magazine article. Demerol was placed under Federal Narcotic control by the Congress, July 1, 1944, because it has addiction properties similar to morphine."

Let us emphasize the dangers of self-prescription, of sleeping potions, of painkillers, and other unknown medicines, many of which contain narcotics and are habit-forming. Students and the public at large often display amazing ignorance as to narcotics—what they are and what they do. They should have the information which will lead to personal abstinence and to a feeling of responsibility for the protection of others by proper laws and their enforcement. Let us not forget that alcohol and nicotine are narcotic drugs.

I would quote again the inspiring words of Cora F. Stoddard: "The new world that is now in the making requires strong, healthy bodies, clear minds, vision, self-control. There is not place in it for the muddling and stupefying effects of a narcotic drug like alcohol in the serious relations of business, of labour, of transportation, of social justice, of self-government. The new era calls for a sense of responsibility, for unselfishness in promoting the common good, for the self-control that deliberately chooses the best and passes by what will weaken, in order that out of the inheritance of many ages and many lands may come nations where liberty and justice, opportunity and capability shall walk hand in hand."

May your special Narcotic Week reach and teach many people! The Christ, "Whose we are and Whom we serve," can give the wisdom and tact for this work.

Yours in the White Ribbon Service,
LORETTA M. HOYMAN.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

LOST, GREEN BANNER COVER

Left at Convention Hall, or taken by mistake, a green banner cover with leather handle and two leather straps. Would anyone knowing its whereabouts, please communicate with the Dominion Recording Secretary, Mrs. V. Underhill, Lakings Road, Yelverton, Blenheim?