

# Marijuana use *June* growing fastest

TORONTO (CP) — The use of marijuana has grown at a faster pace than other stimulants such as alcohol and pep pills, an annual survey by the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario shows.

The survey, released this week, shows marijuana use has increased to 8.6 per cent from the 5.8 per cent last year based on a survey of 1,059 adults over 18 years and an additional 100 males, aged 18 to 20.

More males (87.1 per cent) than females (76.5) reported alcohol consumption, while more females (17.3 per cent) than males (9.4 per cent) reported using tranquilizers.

The additional 100 males were surveyed to verify findings which showed males aged 18 to 20 consumed the most alcohol and marijuana. Of this group, 93 per cent reported consuming alcohol, 41 per cent used marijuana and six per cent used stimulants or pep pills.

Of the survey's total participants who reported consuming alcohol, 13.1 per cent said they drank daily in the last 12 months, 51.5 per cent said they had five or more drinks at one sitting and 40 per cent had become 'high' or 'tight' at least once.

Consumption of alcohol was most common among: French-speaking individuals (92 per cent); those having a university education (90 per cent); those in professional or executive positions (89.5 per cent) and in sales or clerical occupations (89.8 per cent); and those earning \$15,000 or more per year (88.9 per cent).

This survey included only Ontario households and excluded skid-road inhabitants and persons living in prisons, hospitals, university residences and military establishments.

"This probably means that the survey statistics underestimate the extent of alcohol and drug use by Ontario's total population," the foundation said.

# Monkeys build drug tolerance

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**GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP)** — Monkeys quickly build up a tolerance to marijuana so that even massive doses have little effect on their co-ordination, and the same effect could be expected in human smokers, says a University of Florida researcher.

Marc Branch, a psychology professor, is in the fourth year of experiments with monkeys. He injects some with THC, the active chemical ingredient in marijuana, and compares their ability to perform simple tasks with un-drugged monkeys.

"Tolerance to marijuana can get very large," Branch said. "Doses that initially suppress behavior the first three or four times, later will have no effect."

He said a "reverse tolerance" reported by some frequent marijuana smokers, who say they require less of the drug the longer they use it, can be attributed to increased skill at administering the drug rather than to any chemical effect.

Branch said he found that monkeys learn to func-

tion under the effects of marijuana more quickly if they are required to perform a fixed amount of work rather than a variable amount.

It also appears they build up a tolerance to the motor effects of the drug on such things as co-ordination and balance, but not to the sensory effects, he said.

Of course, Branch said, monkeys are sheltered from extraneous distractions during the controlled laboratory tests, which is quite different from a drugged person trying to drive an automobile.

Until recently, Branch concentrated on tolerance to marijuana, but now he is researching with cocaine, amphetamines and morphine.

Most monkeys are given a drug daily for 45 to 60 days, but one monkey was given amphetamines for 160 days.

"By the end of the test it was difficult to tell him from the normal monkeys," Branch said.



**Bob  
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# Alberta's strange justice

It must be a strange kind of justice being handed out in Alberta courts when statistics show this province imposes the hardest sentences in Canada for marijuana possession.

If the most recent available statistics from the Federal Department of Health and Welfare are to be relied on, the number of discharges relating to drug offences in Alberta fall far behind those of other provinces.

In a half-hearted effort to decriminalize current marijuana laws the federal government brought, in 1972, an amendment to the criminal code giving the judiciary discretionary powers relating to first-time drug offenders.

The amendment provided for an absolute or conditional discharge which allowed offenders to be convicted of possession without having the stigma of a criminal record.

In essence, drug offenders such as marijuana smokers don't necessarily have to be given records branding them as

Depending on the attitude of presiding judges a substantial fine — akin to offences such as minor traffic infractions — can be considered enough of a deterrent.

In provinces such as Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan the amendment has produced on the part of the judiciary a greater emphasis towards decriminalization.

Department of Health and Welfare statistics show that in 1976 38 per cent of those convicted for drug possession in Ontario were given discharges. Manitoba showed a discharge ratio of 37 per cent while Saskatchewan registered 24 per cent. Most of the possession convictions are believed to be related to marijuana.

In Alberta three per cent of those convictions for drug offences were granted discharges.

A total of 6,683 people were given a criminal record for drug possession. A mere 217 received the discretionary discharge. And that only accounts for one year.

Assuming those statistics accurately reflect current judicial thinking, it seems almost inconceivable that we should insist on enforcing so-called justice with such rigor.

At a time when the decriminalization of minor drug offences is being favored by many influencing groups including all major political parties, why should the judiciary of Alberta adopt what is blatantly a harsh attitude?

It may well be that there has been a radical change of heart during the past 18 months. It may well be that the judiciary is aware that Prime Minister Trudeau has gone on record saying he wants to push ahead with legislation that would remove marijuana possession from the criminal code. And that the other political parties have voiced support, in principal, to the move.

Specialists in drug laws have said decriminalization will hardly open up the floodgates to a tidal wave of drug use.

Those may well be considerations that

could be assumed to be taken under advisement when young — or old — appear before the courts on minor drug charges.

However, one only has to spend a day in provincial court listening to minor possession cases to determine the justice of a system that relies to at least some extent on the current mood of the judge.

True, decriminalization is seeping in through the courts. Few offenders are liable to end-up with the possible jail term that's written into possession convictions, but then again, how much good can be attained by refusing to grant discharges?

Perhaps, if as anti-marijuana laws activist Keith Stroup recently suggested, that offender prostrate themselves before judges promising never to commit the same crime, perhaps then a more favorable view will be taken.

But regardless of a solution such as that, there can be little love for a system that turns a room of justice into a sausage factory that churns out fines and convictions merely for the sake of doing so.