

provided the authority for us to audit the books of all firms, not only manufacturers but wholesalers. We are also required to check pharmacies. Now, that is a tremendous undertaking. There are 55,000 pharmacies in the U.S.A. alone and, to audit their recordkeeping practices, we have asked the States to assist us and we have effected contracts with 18 States to date to have the State board of pharmacies audit prescription practices, the recordkeeping practices of local pharmacies. So the program is proceeding and we think the main thrust of it is at those who divert, illegally produce, or legally produce and supply to those who are not in the normal channels of distribution these drugs that can be abused.

Mr. GROSSMAN. Dr. Goddard, getting back to your purported comments, I am particularly concerned about this marihuana question. I wonder if I could read to you from the task force report on drug abuse from the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice. It says:

The inadequate data available today—
on marihuana—

indicate that risk of crime, accidents, and suicide . . . are not likely to be greater than those associated with alcohol and may be less. If the equivalence between alcohol and marijuana is to be accepted as the operating assumption until more facts are at hand—and we think that is a prudent position to take—it follows that a public debate is in order with regard to the best regulation of marijuana.

Would you care to comment on that?

Dr. GODDARD. Well, I have commented a number of times as to the dangers of comparing these two. They are different drugs. One is a depressant, by and large. The other, marihuana, is primarily a hallucinogen, although it does have certain depressing properties depending on the dosage level and the individual availability. Now, I hesitate to draw these comparisons, but I am asked to do so. So I say, well, it's dangerous for people under the influence of alcohol or marihuana to operate heavy equipment or drive a vehicle. The latter distorts your perception of time and the former dulls your ability to handle this heavy equipment, which calls for fine coordination at low speeds. Even beyond that there are certain circumstances under which a drug is used, whether it be alcohol or marihuana, the amount one consumes, the amount one drinks or smokes, the personality of a user is a factor. The user's previous experience with either alcohol or marihuana is important. The inexperienced drinker does not know the signs and can go too far, just as, I am told, the inexperienced user of marihuana can go too far and get into a panic state. Now, these are some of the comparisons that can be made between these two.

If you are talking about comparisons with respect to a health problem, I think there is no question we have more clearly defined the health problem that exists with respect to alcohol: 11,000 deaths a year attributed to cirrhosis; the fatalities that occur as a result of highway accidents caused by people who have ingested too freely, the number of estimated alcoholics in our society—four and a half to five million; the number of heavy drinkers, that many more again, another four and a half or five million. There are approximately 70 million users of alcohol in society. We know the social costs in gross terms of alcohol. We do not have these kinds of data for marihuana.