

doing anything else, they showed some mental deterioration. You can find that with people who do nothing but eat for 20 years let alone people who only use alcohol, that is the excessive use of any piece of chemical intake, even bread and milk is not particularly good for you. We know that *cannabis* has been used for a very long period; we have accounts of the way in which it is used to energize during work and to relax after work. It is my considered opinion at present, and this is not proved because we haven't had instances of where we could follow children whose known situation was, well, authenticated into adult life where we could control all the other aspects of their lives so as to discuss this. But it is my considered opinion at present that marihuana is not harmful unless it is taken in enormous and excessive amounts. I believe that we are damaging this country, damaging our law, our whole law enforcement situation, damaging the trust between the older people and younger people by its prohibition, and this is far more serious than any damage that might be done to a few overusers, because you can get damage from any kind of overuse.

Senator JAVITS. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Senator NELSON. It should be noted at this point in the record that the subject of marihuana is not under consideration by this subcommittee. As Senator Javits suggests, this subject is peripheral to the purpose of today's hearing dealing with the use of prescription psychotropic drugs. Please proceed, Dr. Mead.

Dr. MEAD. Now, I noticed in reading earlier testimony before this committee, that the question of side effects in terms of health damage to organs of the body or something of the sort still didn't play as important a role as this question of either the possibility of addiction, overdependence on drugs, which is related to addiction, and the whole moral question of whether it is right to help people escape. That is the reason that I have initially begun by raising these questions. You have discussed psychotropic drugs which are overprescribed, but so are a great many other drugs. When we talk about the side effects of psychotropic drugs we tend to be heavily influenced by the moral and religious and traditional issues involved. I would say at present that our general evidence of the good effects of psychotropic drugs is in the treatment of mental illness. This includes, if you take the hospitalized population a very large proportion of people in this country now who at some point or other are referred to a mental hospital because we have no other way of dealing with various forms of maladjustments. Instead of condemning hundreds of thousands of people to a life which permitted no recovery, these drugs have been exceedingly useful in permitting their treatment.

Senator NELSON. We have already had testimony, which I understand you have read, on the psychotropics. I cannot recall the statistics but they are very dramatic.

That is, we have cut the population of the mental hospitals by some dramatic figure, more than half, something like that, since the psychotropic drugs came into the marketplace sometime in the mid-1930's. I have forgotten the statistics but they are in the record. The testimony was that this has had a dramatic, positive, helpful effect upon the practice of psychiatry, that for the first time psychiatrists were able to get patients who were condemned to a lifetime within an institution out of the institution, so that they could be maintained in a reasonable