

of the effects of marihuana are now in progress at the National Institute of Mental Health.

Your interest in this matter is appreciated and I hope these remarks can be used to set the record straight.

Sincerely yours,

JAMES L. GODDARD, M.D.,
Commissioner of Food and Drugs.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D.C., October 24, 1967.

DR. JAMES L. GODDARD,
Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR DR. GODDARD: This is to acknowledge and thank you for your letter of October 20th with accompanying information regarding your recent remarks on marijuana.

As you may remember, my letter of October 19th included a specific request that you forward to me a summary of experimental work on which your conclusions were based. Since your letter made no reference to my request, am I to assume from your reply that your expression was not based on a comprehensive study, but, rather, on the views of colleagues whose works have been published in scientific literature and on your insight as a physician and father?

Your credentials as a physician and parent may be admirable. But I am concerned that they and the published studies of colleagues may not be adequate scientific evidence upon which to base so weighty a judgment for one who occupies such a responsible position in government.

In your letter to me you state your feeling that "present penalties imposed for use and possession of marijuana are disproportionate to the hazards presented by the drug". And yet you also say, "... we don't know what the long term effects of smoking marijuana or using marijuana in other forms might be ...". If our knowledge is incomplete, is it sufficient upon which to base your feeling—whether that feeling is personal or official?

Any relaxation of penalties as established by present law must be founded on detailed and scientific information and official conclusions. Your call for more long term research to detect any possible serious side effects from chronic usage of marijuana would seem to suggest that such studies and conclusions do not exist. Why, then, has the Food and Drug Administration not seen that such studies of the effects of the drug are made?

Does not the Bureau of Drug Abuse Control have the responsibility to initiate and conduct programs designed to emphasize the social, physiological, and psychological aspects of drug abuse control? Are you satisfied with no more than an "understanding" that the National Institute of Mental Health is conducting further studies?

I would like to know whether or not you consider the Food and Drug Administration to have a prime interest in such research. I would like to know what research has been completed and what conclusions, if any, have been reached. What studies are now under way? If none have been completed or none are under way, then I would appreciate your opinion on what agency or agencies should be actively engaged in research on marijuana, what you have done to see that such studies are undertaken, and what, if any, reasons or circumstances have prevented such research from being conducted.

I appreciate your prompt response to my earlier letter, and I trust you will agree that the sooner the above questions are satisfactorily answered, the better for everyone concerned. In this I speak not only as a member of the House Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee, but as one who is sorely worried by the possibility that any misinterpretation of the facts in this matter may lead to disaster for even one individual who might have read into your earlier remarks a license to indulge in the traffic or use of marijuana.

Sincerely yours,

CLARENCE J. BROWN, Jr.,
Member of Congress.