

STATE PASSES ADDICT LAW

**New York statute calls for compulsory
confinement for as long as three years**

New York has enacted a law for compulsory treatment of narcotics addicts. Under the statute, addicts can be confined for up to three years, whether or not they have been convicted of a crime.

The state's politically divided legislature—the Senate is controlled by the Republicans and the Assembly by the Democrats—approved Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's \$81-million proposal by lopsided majorities, despite grave doubts about its practicality voiced even by its supporters. The measure's opponents charged that involuntary internment violates the individual's civil rights, guaranteed under the Constitution.

The New York program is patterned after one enacted in California in 1961 that so far has withstood court challenges based on the civil rights argument. But the New York law is also expected to face legal attack.

A companion administration bill to set higher penalties for heroin "pushers" was also passed by the State Assembly and is awaiting Senate action. It provides for punishment of ten to 20 years' imprisonment for sale

of the drug to a minor, and seven-to-15-year jail sentences for sale of heroin to an adult.

Figures on narcotics addiction are notoriously "spongy," but New York State is believed to harbor more than half of the nation's 57,000 addicts known to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. Estimates have put the state's actual number of addicts at as high as 60,000—most of them living in New York City.

The implementation of the newly enacted law depends in part on the outcome of November's political race. Although the governor put a \$81-million price tag on his package, he has not yet taken the necessary steps for putting it in his budget. But he is expected to request \$6 million in supplemental appropriations later in the present legislative session to finance the Narcotic Addiction Control Commission, which will plan and operate the commitment program, beginning next April 1.

For the additional \$75 million needed to build new facilities, Governor Rockefeller will ask the federal government to assume two thirds of the cost under a formula similar to that used in urban renewal. "Human renewal," he declared, "should command at least as much support as urban renewal." A state bond issue is also under consideration as a possible source of funds.

Many legislators attacked the bill with words as harsh as "fraud" and "political gimmick," but grudgingly voted for it anyway, on the grounds that it was better than nothing. As Democratic Assemblyman Max Turshen of Brooklyn said, "We haven't got the medical answer, but we've got to keep these people off the streets." Sen. Manfred Ohrenstein (D-Manhattan),

Medical Officials Stress that Danger

Reports to the Food and Drug Administration during the past year have indicated a marked increase in the illegal use of both hallucinogenic and stimulant drugs throughout the U.S.—particularly on and around college campuses. As a result, the FDA Commissioner, Dr. James L. Goddard, urges that "concerted action" be taken by the nation's educational institutions, as well as by chemical suppliers, to help the government crack down on clandestine use of the drugs.

LSD-25, psilocybin, and mescaline are the hallucinogenic drugs most often illegally used, he noted in a stern letter sent to more than 2,000 colleges and universities. He said that LSD-25 is the most dangerous, since as little as

100 μ g can produce hallucinations that last for hours or days.

Dr. Goddard asked the school officials to report illegal drug use to the FDA. "You may wish to institute other appropriate measures, such as an inspection program, laboratory supervision, or special counseling." Otherwise, he warned, "an untold number of our students may suffer permanent mental or physical injury."

Meanwhile, the New York County Medical Society called on the state to enact much harsher penalties for distribution of LSD-25, which a spokesman called "the most dangerous drug on the illicit market—more dangerous than heroin because a single use may cause permanent personality derange-

*Dr. Louria of New York County
society urges state law to curb LSD misuse.*





Governor Rockefeller urged law affecting an estimated 60,000 narcotics users.

who voted against the measure, insisted that there was no evidence that such a program could work, and accused the bill's supporters of "creating a leper colony in the 20th century."

California's experience is still too short for firm conclusions. But after four years, its backers feel a ray of hope in these statistics: Of the state's estimated 20,000 addicts, about 5,300 have been exposed to the program.

There are 24 graduates believed cured, 200 AWOL and in hiding, 2,100 still in internment, and 3,000 under aftercare supervision. Besides the 24, slightly more than half of those in treatment are "clean" for from one day to six months. No one expects these statistics to hold up, but California officials will regard their program a success if 30% are "clean" after a year.

In New York, even critics of the new law were encouraged by the appointment of Lawrence W. Pierce, a Negro attorney and youth worker, as the narcotics commission's chairman. His reputation for dedication and an even temper give promise of a flexible, humane administration of the New York program.

New York's involuntary commitment law will, in effect, amplify and supplant a 1962 law that was designed to get addicts into voluntary treatment either after arrest or on the initiative of family members. Of the eligible arrested addicts—usually people charged with possession of narcotics or with a relatively minor offense—fewer than one fourth have gone into the program, which has room for a maximum of about 700 at a time, and fewer than one third who started treatment finished it. Of all those exposed to the voluntary program, about 80% have been rearrested on new narcotics- or addiction-related charges.

The new law allows commitment of persons who have not been arrested, on the initiation of "anyone who, in good faith, believes a person is an addict," as well as those who have been formally arraigned. Some addicts accused of felonies could be certified to the program if a district attorney agreed. ■

of LSD Are No Illusion

ment." The society's recommendations include one calling for a downgrading of the penalties for possession of marijuana, in recognition of the fact that it is only "a mild hallucinogen that should be removed from the opiate-cocaine category."

Although the chairman of the society's special narcotics subcommittee, Dr. Donald B. Louria of Cornell University Medical College and Bellevue Hospital Center, is also head of Governor Rockefeller's advisory Council on Drug Addiction, no state action on LSD is contemplated this year. But it could become part of the Rockefeller administration's legislative program next year if the governor is re-elected. The views of the 7,300-member coun-

ty society are influential in Albany, and the 1966 Rockefeller narcotics program reflected recommendations made by the society last year.

The medical society's statement cited as examples of the drugs' grave dangers 75 persons treated last year in Bellevue for serious psychiatric effects from using LSD. Of the 52 whose cases Dr. Louria's subcommittee was able to study in detail, half had taken LSD only once. All had experienced abject terror. Nine had "uncontrolled violent urges, including homicide attempts by two."

Present New York State law on the hallucinogens is ambiguous. One statute, which can be interpreted to cover them although they are not specifically

named, makes their illicit manufacture or sale a felony and possession of them a misdemeanor. At the federal level, the possession of LSD carries no penalty at all.

LSD, like psilocybin, peyote, mescaline, and dimethyltryptamine, is now an "in" drug for a relatively small fringe group of thrill-seekers, Dr. Goddard points out.

Although a number of promising leads in treating frigidity, sexual perversion, alcoholism, and some neuroses have come out of LSD research, the New York County Medical Society report stated flatly: "There are at present no indications for use of LSD except in a strictly controlled experimental setting." ■