

VAN DIE REDAKSIE : EDITORIAL

THE DRUG ADDICT'S VADE-MECUM

'How to become a junky in 6 easy lessons.' That should be the title of many of the piously well-meant articles in newspapers and magazines. That we do have a drug addiction problem on our hands no one will deny, and it behoves us to give the matter our fullest attention, but there is no need to turn articles about drug addicts into do-it-yourself manuals on the subject. A few years ago, before the increasing permissiveness made such subterfuge a bit pointless, sex was the target of the do-gooder. Under cover of teaching a new understanding of sex, or of exposing the evils that exist in nightclubs and around our back-streets, the most luridly detailed stories were published, no doubt to the delight of that section of the population which wallows in such literature.

Now the back pages of newspapers have to a large extent abandoned sex in favour of drugs. Unfortunately, drug addiction is such an actual problem, and so much to the fore in discussions by various responsible bodies, that there is no need for the news media to ban it to the back page. Full supplements are perfectly in order. We do not for one moment suggest that the articles are not serious attempts at grappling with a situation, and a number of newspapers have already made important contributions to our knowledge and understanding of the world of the addict. One must not negate the value of such fact-finding articles by responsible journalists, but we do wish to warn against a naive assumption that the publications will only be read by those members of society who intend to combat the evil of drugs.

In a recently published collection of important photographs taken throughout the world there appears a shot of an addict in the act of giving himself an intravenous injection. The quality of the photograph is perfect and had it not been for the subject, we would have been inclined to award it very nearly full marks. Would our reaction have been the same if a near-perfect photograph of a man being hanged had appeared in this collection illustrating the photographer's art?

DOELTREFFENDE TEENMAATREËLS

Aansluitend by die gedagte wat ons hierbo uitgespreek het oor die gevaarlike en potensiele gevaarlike maniere waarop die misbruik van dwelmmiddels bespreek en wêreldkundig gemaak word, moet ons die volgende punt onder die aandag bring: Die (geregverdigde?) ongelooft wat daar by medici bestaan om waarde te heg aan berigte wat 'n veld raak waar mediese optrede verwag kan word.

Dit is ongetwyfeld waar dat sensasieberigte en oordrywing in groot mate vir hierdie houding by medici verantwoordelik is. Wat verdowingsmiddels betref, is berigte hieroor nie uitsonderings nie. Tog sal dit ewe onverstandig wees om berigte oor hierdie euwel met 'n skouerophalende: 'Dit is wat die koerante sê,' af te maak.

Dat daar in die afgelope dekade 'n ontsaglike toename in die gebruik van dwelmmiddels in die Westerse wêreld

The average citizen has very little knowledge of syringes, the sterilization of equipment and the choice of the correct needle for intravenous injections. Any drug addict who feels him- or herself a little uncertain as to how intravenous administration should be conducted, need only find back numbers of various magazines and newspapers in order to gain the most detailed factual information. In one publication various means of obtaining drugs are even carefully spelled out; to the extent of enumerating the most commonly used contact signs between junkies and pushers. The new-found addict or the potential drug user who wishes to experiment need not long be a novice—all the necessary instruction is available from impeccable sources.

Let us also now make a plea to the authorities to give careful consideration to all the pros and cons before inaugurating clinics for drug addicts. We must not, in our attempt at salvaging these unhappy souls, unconsciously create a pusher's paradise. Unless the control in such a clinic is very strict, it will merely mean that the leg-work of the supplier of the drugs will be done for him. Instead of having to visit various contact points he will, wonder on wonder, find a whole community of known drug abusers under one roof. A game of wits will develop between the pushers and the superintendents, to see who can outsmart the other; and not wanting to insult our colleagues who will be running such clinics, we must nevertheless admit that when the chips are down, we will be inclined to put our money on the pushers for a win and a place. The ingenuity of the underworld is almost legendary, and one must not underestimate one's opponents.

Let us all fight drug addiction with every means at our disposal. It is a dangerous and increasing evil. But please, let us not be naive and think that good intentions and firm resolutions are enough, for they are not, and if that is all we are going to offer as defense against the drug distributors they will run rings around us.

was, is onteenseglik waar. 'n Kommissie van ondersoek het ons gehelp om die omvang van hierdie euwel by ons eie jeug en in ons eie gemeenskap te besef. Indien oorsese voorbeelde vir ons 'n les kan wees, het die omvang eerder toegeneem as afgeneem sedert die kommissie sy ondersoek voltooi en sy verslag uitgebring het.

Ondanks alles wat geskryf en gesê is oor dwelmmiddels, is dit ook 'n feit dat verdere studie en ondersoek nodig is om hierdie bedreiging doeltreffend te bestry. Ons is bewus daarvan dat sulke ondersoekte reeds aan die gang is, maar glo ook dat die veld en omvang van hierdie ondersoekte uitgebrei en vermenigvuldig moet word indien ons werklik met erns wil wal gooi en met effektiewe teenmaatreëls wil kom.

THE FOUR-DAY WEEK

There used to be a time when the average manual worker could expect to work a fifty- or sixty-hour week, and had to accept that only Sundays, and not always those, were his own. We need not here consider the various reasons for the gradual realization that social rights and also general efficiency demand a shorter week and more leisure. By and large the world has come to accept the five-day week as the norm for most artisans as well as professionals. There are a few diehards who, from choice, conviction or necessity, still prefer to give service on Saturdays and to some extent on Sundays, but they are fast becoming the minority.

The actual number of hours which should constitute a full working week has been discussed by various authorities at different times, and the outcome of their arguments for and against a fairly standard forty-hour week have to a large extent depended on the particular group they were addressing. On the whole, it seems as if forty hours have become the accepted norm, and any deviation from this figure, either up or down, has to be specially motivated in the light of particular circumstances. Thus there is reason to believe that the week of a full-time medical officer will be regarded as fifty hours for purposes of negotiation of salaries.

Now a new concept is raising its head—the four-day week. Already some 60 industries in the United States of America are operating on such a shortened week, although they still adhere to the basis of 40 hours. This means that each working day will constitute 10 hours—a long stretch if the work entails heavy manual labour. More and more firms are considering a change-over to such a system of a three-day weekend, and various arguments have been put forward as motivation for the new arrangement.

From the point of view of the employer there are certain advantages which cannot be negated. At the moment the standard two-day weekend is just too short to allow workers to travel any distance in order to visit friends or relatives, and two days are not quite enough to justify the trouble of arranging a seaside weekend in a caravan or cottage. The result is that a certain number of employees inevitably add their own AWOL day or two to the official weekend in order to attend a function in a distant town. The resultant absenteeism on Mondays, or Fridays, causes considerable disruption of the work schedules of factories, for not only is the work of the particular employee not completed, other workers also have to remain idle if their production is dependent upon being supplied with material by their absent colleague. This is one of the main reasons why employers have given way to the demand for a four-day week. By insisting on a continued 40-hours production, they find that the over-all efficiency during the four days is so much higher that most of the drawbacks can be accepted.

Under such a system no employee can any longer make a legitimate plea for an extra day off because he has to visit a distant sick relative. Unless it is a matter of great urgency, he can wait for another day or two and use his extended weekend. One may safely envisage that the shorter week will also put an end to the system of

occasional leave which most firms allow their employees.

The obverse side of the coin, however, requires careful consideration. What will be the effect of so much leisure on the community as a whole? There are three aspects which must be borne in mind. In the first place, a watchful eye should be kept that the gross national product of the country does not show a decline; should this be the case the three-day weekend would either have to be abandoned or the workers would have to be assisted to make better use of their working hours. Secondly, the use of the additional leisure would have to be very carefully controlled in order to ensure that the idleness did not interfere with the general well being of the population. Leisure has always been a difficult problem and there is no doubt that not everyone is able to put it to good use. Unless the state, under a four-day week system, makes absolutely certain that there are sufficient facilities for everybody to spend their leisure time pleasantly and profitably, it may well prove to be a dangerous condition not easily controlled.

Some people will obviously possess the innate ability to spend their free time to the best advantage and the possibility of having sufficient time to reflect and to have restful discussions with friends could be the beginning of another golden age of intellectualism, such as Athens enjoyed during her period of greatest achievement. Others will spend their weekends mindlessly, and provided they do not become dangerously bored, there is no reason to object to such an attitude, as long as idleness does not lead to violence bred by sheer frustration.

A third problem to consider is the position of the few people who, by the very nature of their work, cannot ever hope to fit into a system whereby they work only four out of seven days—doctors, for instance. There may well develop a slow but serious resentment towards the 'privileged' workers who can rest for three days over the weekend, and if such resentment is allowed to grow unchecked, it could eventually lead to clashes which might destroy our new-found classless society system. We will have come almost full circle, so that the intellectuals and professional men who were formerly regarded as members of the upper middle class and even sometimes of the aristocracy, will now be the ones who work the long hours which used to be the lot of the unskilled labourer. If mechanization advances even further, so that a three- and even two-day week can be considered, we will have reached the era where the worker rests while his intellectual compatriot earns his bread by means of back-breaking hours of hard work.

Should a four-day week ever be contemplated for this country, the first and most urgent consideration would have to be the exploitation of every possible facility for the use of leisure which our fair climate can offer. Whereas up to now the accent has been on good working conditions when a new factory is designed, with perhaps a passing thought given to recreational facilities, the accent will have to be reversed, and first of all it must be ensured that the long weekends will not result in disaster for the industry in question as well as for the country as a whole.