

SASO Debate On Legalising Drugs

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SASO

The Scottish Association for the study of offending

Debate 05/10/06

The following is a personal report from Ian McDonald, Panel Member, North Ayrshire.

"This house believes that prohibited drugs should now be legalised"

For the motion Dr Richard Simpson (ex Minister)
 Inspector Jim Duffy Chairman Scottish Police Federation

Against the motion Graeme Pearson Director Scottish Drug Enforcement Agency
 Sports Writer (sorry did not catch his name).

Points Made For The Motion

Making drugs illegal is interference in peoples lives and does away with freedom of choice.

Prohibition does not work, drugs is the largest market in the world. Currently 50,000 drug users in Scotland. In July 2004 100% of prisoners entering Polmont tested positive.

There is currently no product control, and a rise in users contacting Hepatitis C so we are not protecting the health of the 50,000 users.

Cannabis is perfectly safe

Dealers give out heroin instead of cannabis

If drugs were legalised tax could be collected

By legalising drugs it would free up policemen to fight other crime

Portugal has legalised drugs without any increase in users

Points against the Motion

Enforcement does have an effect. 3 years ago there was 55,000 drugs users in Scotland now there are 50,000.

Cannabis sold now is much stronger than it was in the sixties and seventies and has a detrimental effect on a user's health

Legalising drugs would pass on the burden from the police to the health service

It would confuse youngsters into believing that drug use was safe

Portugal has now the highest rate of cannabis use in Europe as well as a 20% rise in cocaine use since the legalising of drugs.

If the decision was made to legalise all the drugs available today what about the drugs of the future as new drugs come onto the market all the time?

While drugs can't be completely eliminated a three pronged attack by Enforcement, Health and Education can make a difference

There were approximately 70 people there. Only 14 supported the motion to legalise drugs.

While I did not agree with the motion I think it was a great subject for a debate as the issue of drug misuse is one that affects the whole of society therefore every one of us should give it some thought.