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Pot Unit Told: Legalize It

WASHINGTON (AP)—A National Commission on Marijuana and Dangerous Drugs was told today marijuana probably was dangerous but should be legalized.

The testimony followed the claims yesterday of two doctors that the drug produced distortion of perception and reality in test subjects and the opinion of another doctor that alcohol produces similar results.

Like Prohibition

John Kaplan, a law professor at Stanford University, told the commission today in prepared testimony that he believed marijuana to be dangerous but added research since 1894 had yet to show how dangerous the drug may be.

"If the marijuana laws worked," he said, "I would be strongly in favor of them but they, like Prohibition, do not work. They divide the young from the old and are propelling us to a national crisis of confidence of major dimen-

sions. Therefore they must go."

Yesterday, Drs. Harold Kolansky and William Moore outlined their heavily publicized study of 38 psychiatric patients which they said showed marijuana "produces a brain syndrome marked by distortion of perception and reality which leads . . ." to impaired judgment, lagging attention spans, slowing of a sense of time and trouble in talking.

They concluded that the mental problems observed in their patients resulted from marijuana smoking and recommended a "get tough" policy to control the drug.

Honors Students Too?

But Dr. Bertram S. Brown, director of the National Institute of Mental Health and also a witness before the commission, said in an interview that it probably would be possible to find 38 marijuana smokers who had graduated from college with honors.

Brown told the commission he was not ready to recommend legalizing the drug but "I do know that the present penalty structure itself is already out of keeping with what we know about the drug."

The Kolansky-Moore findings also were disputed by drug expert Dr. Norman Zinberg of Harvard. He said the findings, first disclosed in April, would be hard not to apply to a group of college beer drinkers.

The crux of the criticism of the Kolansky-Moore study is whether their observation of 38 highly selected individuals with mental disorders can apply to marijuana users.

The 13-member commission, appointed by President Nixon, is gathering opinion and research for recommendations it will make next March. But Nixon has said he will not support a recommendation that marijuana be legalized.