

## What if I were the Prime Minister of Canada...

If I were the Prime Minister of Canada, I would reconsider the pre-election promise that I made of legalizing marijuana and whether it is a good choice for Canadians or not.

According to a survey commissioned by Health Canada, there are roughly 500,000 cannabis users in Canada over the age of 25. As of last year, only about 24,000 of those were registered under the federal government's mail order medical pot system. What do the 476,000 Canadians use marijuana for and how do they get it? I can only assume that the rest of the 476,000 Canadians are either using it without the medical care of doctors or using it without medical conditions. Health Canada states that using marijuana can affect your motor skills, including your ability to drive. It can also increase anxiety and cause panic attacks, and in some cases cause paranoia and hallucinations. Marijuana contains hundreds of substances, some of which can affect the proper functioning of the brain and central nervous system.

Using marijuana can cause an addiction, which could lead to psychological disorder and family dysfunctions. Smoking marijuana can cause lung cancer, respiratory diseases, and heart diseases. Canadians who use medical marijuana to ease their pain and sufferings, as there is no cure for their diseases or medical conditions can use prescription drugs that do the same such as: Sativex, Dronabinol, Methadone, and

Nabilone. Is there a need for easy access to marijuana without prescription?

The impact of legalized marijuana in Colorado has resulted in the majority of Driving Under the Influence drug arrests. In 2012, roughly 11% of Colorado's youth were using marijuana comparing to the national average of 8%. Drug-related student suspensions and expulsions increased by 32% from previous years. At the same time, about 30% of college age students in Colorado were using marijuana comparing to the national average of 20%. Colorado becomes the third in the nation and 42% above the national average. Between 2011 and 2013, there was a 57% increase on marijuana-related emergency room visits. Hospital treatments that are related to marijuana have increased to 82% since 2008.

Looking at Chinese History, opium was first introduced to China by Turkish and Arab traders in the early 7<sup>th</sup> century. It was used to relieve tension and pain. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the practice of smoking opium with tobacco spread from Southeast Asia, which caused a greater demand for opium. Opium addiction grew so high in China that it affected the imperial troops and the official classes. As a result of the First Opium War, Hong Kong became a colony of Britain in 1841. What if legalizing marijuana in Canada could cause a higher addiction rate as what had happened to the Chinese? What will become of our country if the Chinese opium crisis repeats in Canada?

Canada is a multicultural country. Some cultures are good to embrace but others may have to be tolerated and not be publicly discussed in the name of peace because I believe that some rules cannot be bent to maintain fairness and prevent social chaos. For example, some cultures accept tax evasion and bribery as a way of life. Legalizing marijuana may allow trade people to easily evade tax and government officials to accept bribes. Look at gun control problems in the U.S.A, Europe with no border, and tax evasion in Greece. What will happen to Canada?

Thinking back, I shouldn't have made this issue a political promise, as I have not carefully thought of the negative consequences of my actions.