Chapter 4. Patterns and Extent of Cannabis Use

SOCIAL HISTORY OF CANNABIS USE IN NORTH AMERICA

Popular use of cannabis by Europeans and North Americans is a phenomenon of the second third of the twentieth century. The development of popular North American use of cannabis does not appear to have begun until the turn of this century in the southern United States. There was a slow spread of use in North America up to the 1950s and 1960s when the incidence of use began to increase sharply. This development was followed by the diffusion of cannabis use to Europe and areas of European influence and settlement, such as Australia and New Zealand.

Mexican migrant workers are reported to have introduced cannabis smoking into the southwestern American states by around 1910. Marijuana (originally a Mexican word) had been used in Mexico since at least the late 1800s and was widely available throughout that country in the first part of this century. The Mexican migratory labourers spread the cannabis smoking practice to many Mexican-Americans and to some of the cowboys they encountered, probably in Texas. About 1915 some American soldiers and civilians experimented with cannabis after contact with Pancho Villa's army which was reputedly composed of devoted marijuana smokers. Other American soldiers were introduced to cannabis in the American controlled Panama Canal Zone around 1922. A United States Army study conducted in 1931 and 1932 found that 20% of the American personnel in one of the Panama bases smoked marijuana.

The first American city where marijuana use was a publically identifiable social phenomenon was New Orleans, where the drug was introduced about 1910 and where it had become quite popular by the mid-twenties. This development has been attributed to both the diffusion of the marijuana smoking practice from Mexican-Americans to blacks and to the influence of visiting American and Latin-American sailors who had experimented with cannabis elsewhere. Some of these sailors imported the drug to New Orleans from such cities as Havana, Tampico, and Vera Cruz, buying it for around ten dollars a kilogram (2.2 pounds) and selling it for up to five times that amount in the United States. Throughout the twenties and thirties New Orleans served as the major American marijuana distribution centre with the drug being shipped up the Mississippi to other large urban areas. Mezz Mezzrow, a white jazz musician writing of the American twenties, noted, "...the real jazz, like the real marijuana, comes from the bayou country."

Black jazz musicians were among the first to smoke marijuana in New Orleans. Their appreciation of the drug was soon transmitted to their fans, fellow musicians, and other lower class urban blacks throughout the United States. Marijuana diffusion across racial boundaries to
white jazz musicians and other members of the entertainment industry and the criminal fringe associated with that industry generally occurred in the early 1930s, although white jazz musicians in Chicago and Detroit had used the drug at an earlier date. The prohibition of alcohol by the Volstead Act in 1919 is also said to have contributed to the spread of marijuana during the 1920s and early 1930s.

The use of marijuana was also noticed in Canada during the 1930s. According to an article in a 1934 edition of the Canadian Medical Association Journal, marijuana was being used in Ottawa, Toronto, Montreal and Windsor and was reported as being "...very popular on the Pacific coast"! The drug was usually imported from southern places as Detroit, New York, Kingston (Jamaica) and West Africa, and was sold at prices of around one dollar for a marijuana cigarette.

The use of cannabis was prohibited in Canada through its inclusion in the schedule of the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act, 1923. However, some medicinal preparations containing cannabis were still available for a number of years; several over-the-counter remedies (primarily cough syrups and corn removers) were sold until 1939 and a few prescription compounds were available until the 1950s. (See previous chapter, Cannabis and Its Effects.)

In 1938 Fiorello La Guardia, as mayor of New York, asked the New York Academy of Medicine to inquire into the use of marijuana in that city. The report of the committee that was subsequently appointed, popularly known as the La Guardia Report, was published in 1944. The summary of this report states:

...the Committee came to the conclusion that marijuana distribution and usage is found mainly in Harlem, the population of which is predominantly Negro and Latin-American, and to less extent in the Broadway area....The local supply comes from individual peddlers and from "tea-pads", which are establishments for marijuana smoking...a conservative estimate being that there are some 500 peddlers and 500 "tea-pads" in Harlem. The marijuana users with whom contact was made in this study were persons without steady employment. The majority fall in the age group of 20 to 30 years. Idle and lacking initiative, they suffer boredom and seek distraction. Smoking is indulged in for the sake of conviviality and sociality because it affords a temporary feeling of adequacy in meeting disturbing situations. The confirmed user smokes 6 to 10 cigarettes a day. The effects are easily recognized by the smoker, the desirable stage being what is known as "high". When this is reached the smoking is stopped....

In most instances, the behavior of the smoker is of a friendly, sociable character. Aggressiveness and belligerency are not commonly seen....
The marijuana user does not come from the hardened criminal class and there was found no direct relationship between the commission of aims of violence and marijuana.  

Prior to the Second World War marijuana smoking in the United States was primarily restricted to underprivileged, minority and marginal groups such as Mexican- and Spanish-Americans, blacks, sailors, musicians, criminals, and a few individuals on the bohemian fringe. During World War II, however, many soldiers of middle class origins were introduced to cannabis through their association with marijuana smokers in the American Army. Their return to college campuses under the GI Bill at the conclusion of the war further contributed to the spread of marijuana use. The acceptance and publicizing of the drug by members of the Beat movement (including such widely read authors as Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs and Allen Ginsberg) during the fifties, and the accompanying growth of a white middle class audience for jazz music also played a role in the diffusion of cannabis-smoking. Polsky has even suggested that:

The "beats" most enduring imprint on American culture appears, in retrospect, to have been precisely this diffusion of marijuana use to many circles of middle-and upper-class whites outside the jazz world.

By the early sixties marijuana use was well established in many American universities and among many high school aged youths. In Canada, however, cannabis use was still rare. One study sponsored by the Narcotic Addiction Foundation of British Columbia states that marijuana smoking was en vogue among aspiring artists in Greater Vancouver around 1958. But in 1961 an article in Addictions (a journal published by the Addiction Research Foundation of Ontario) was still able to report that marijuana "...does not appear to be a problem [in Canada]".9 To some degree, however, this conclusion may have been a consequence of the clandestine use of the drug and of the paucity of media attention. The authors of one field study of marijuana use in the Toronto area (conducted in late 1965 and early 1966 but designed to cover the previous five years) estimated that there were 2,900 cannabis users in the city. Based on their extensive interviews with one hundred persons they reported that this population was composed of three categories of users: "The Beats", who were usually under twenty-five and inhabited "the Village" section of downtown Toronto; "The Swingers", who were mainly criminals, members of the criminal fringe and entertainers between the ages of thirty and forty-five; and "The Squares", who were upper-middle class, well-educated professionals between thirty-five and fifty years of age. These researchers suggest that the development of marijuana smoking by the beats had been primarily responsible for the doubling of the population of cannabis users in Toronto between 1960 and 1965. But it is apparent, from their data, that there was considerable marijuana use in Toronto in the early and mid-fifties. They found, for example, that "...65% of the [Swingers] had used Marihuana for at least ten years" and the Squares "...reported that they had experimented with Marihuana in various parts of..."
North America and Europe for the past ten years."

The American involvement in the Vietnamese War has been another factor in the rapid proliferation of cannabis use in the United States during the past few years. Widespread consumption of cannabis among American forces in Vietnam, where potent marijuana is readily and inexpensively available, first came to public attention in 1967. A survey conducted among enlisted men at that time found that just over 30% of the respondents had used marijuana and that nearly two-thirds of these began their use while in Vietnam. While extent of use estimates have ranged as high as 75%,9° a recent and reliable United States House of Representative Armed Services Special Subcommittee report stated that between 50 and 60% of the soldiers stationed in Vietnam had at least experimented with marijuana.

By the mid and late sixties—due, in part, to the evolution of the psychedelic ethos, the growth of underground newspapers, and the mass media's attention to the drug—cannabis use had spread to most sectors of American society. This diffusion process was repeated in Canada by the end of the decade.

Throughout the United States (particularly the southern and west coast states) and British Columbia the most commonly used form of cannabis is marijuana. In eastern Canada hashish predominates, and marijuana (except during the early autumn when illicit domestic crops are harvested) is increasingly less available in quantities sufficient to meet the local demand. Hashish was reported as the "most readily available" drug by three times as many Canadian cannabis-using university students as those who named marijuana as the "most readily available", British Columbia being the only region where marijuana was claimed to be more easily available than hashish. In the Commissions's high school survey a nearly equal number of cannabis-using students reported that marijuana was as available as hashish nationally and, regionally, in the Atlantic and Prairie provinces and Quebec. Most Ontario respondents, however, stated that hashish was more "readily available" than marijuana while the reverse was true in the case of British Columbia." Hashish, of course, is usually several times more potent (and expensive) than marijuana on a per unit weight basis, but the patterns of use, the social characteristics of the users, the effects of the drug, and the avenues of initiation are essentially the same for both.

THE SOCIAL CAREER OF THE CANNABIS USER

Becker has discussed the processes by which individuals come to experiment with cannabis
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and by which some come to be regular users. He has applied the concept of 'social career' to the phenomenon of cannabis use. He posits a sequence of three stages that may be passed through—beginner, occasional user and regular user—and attempts to explain the necessary conditions for movement in either direction between the stages. In this discussion, we will, to a large extent, make use of Becker's model.

Becoming a cannabis user depends on a willingness to try the drug. While novices may be initially apprehensive about such experimentation, they have all previously heard about marijuana or hashish, and the primary motivation for initial use in North America is overwhelmingly reported to be curiosity. A willingness to try cannabis, however, is only likely to develop, Becker suggests, if an individual effectively deals with three mechanisms of social control that may restrict his career advancement: limited availability, the need for secrecy, and public definitions of the act which render it immoral. The user's progression through the various cannabis career stages depends on his successfully neutralizing these controls.

At one time, beginning a cannabis career required gaining access to a relatively esoteric and unconventional group through which the drug could be obtained. The present widespread use of marijuana and hashish has reduced the need for such affiliations, and availability does not now constitute a major problem for those who are willing to try the drug, particularly for those living in large urban communities. Cannabis products are readily available in most high schools and universities, and regular users (who can serve as likely sources of supply) are publicly recognized as such. One survey (specifically designed to test Becker's hypotheses) conducted among one hundred and thirty-six randomly selected students at Sir George Williams University in Montreal in 1969 found that nearly two-thirds of the non-cannabis using students knew someone from whom they could obtain marijuana or hashish. Only ten per cent of these non-users "felt that it was impossible to obtain marijuana" while thirty-five per cent of these same students stated that cannabis would be "very easy" to secure. Consequently, it appears that active participation in a cannabis-using group is no longer a prerequisite for initial experimentation, although most persons still try the drug in a social rather than private setting.

A second condition a beginner must overcome if marijuana or hashish use is to be risked is the fear that one may suffer negative sanctions as a consequence of others discovering his cannabis consumption. This need for secrecy, which a novice may feel makes such a course of action inexpedient, is challenged, in Becker's words:

...by the sight of others—more experienced users—who apparently feel there is little or no
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danger and appear to engage in the activity with impunity....Participa-tion with other users thus furnishes the beginner with the rationalizations with which first to attempt the act.12

The widespread use of drugs in North American high schools and universities and the increasingly tolerant attitude displayed by officials in these institu-tions (particularly, but not exclusively, at the college level) has generally diminished the need for secrecy; those prone to react negatively have, in the past few years, been reduced, for students, almost exclusively to parents and the police. Cannabis use is still rarely public or publicized, but the fear of exposure and the need for deliberate concealment of the experience is no longer a matter of major concern, even for beginners.'

Conventional attitudes which characterize drug users as irresponsible and irrational must also be neutralized if one is to try cannabis. This concern on the part of the potential user, like the other mechanisms of social control which restrict such experimentation, seems to have recently lost much of its inhibitory force for many of our people, particularly the young. The dimin-ishing impact of conventional morality is likely due, in the first place, to the fact that marijuana and hashish smokers are viewed differently from 'hard drug' users by most young people] and, in the second, to their direct knowledge of cannabis-using friends and acquaintances who do not exhibit socially or personally adverse effects as a consequence of their consumption. As most cannabis beginners are initiated by experienced friends and many have had an opportunity to witness actual use by others prior to their own first use (approximately 30% of the non-using population according to one American survey'), the traditional wisdom regarding the effects of the drug is challenged and, very often, successfully overcome. By way of illustration, the Sir George Williams University survey found that only 10% of non-users claimed 'immorality' as their primary rationale for abstention, and the authors of this study concluded that "Nile control of immorality...cannot be viewed as an active obstacle to participation in the counter-institution [of cannabis-smoking]."110,lel

Goode has suggested five interrelated factors, independent of opportunity, that affect the likelihood of an individual trying cannabis:

(1) The initiate's perception of danger (or the lack thereof) in marijuana use;
(2) His perception of its benefits;
(3) His attitude towards users;
(4) His closeness to marijuana's endorsers;
(5) His closeness to the individual trying to turn him on.31
Forty-six per cent of Goode's 200 marijuana-using respondents had, in fact, refused opportunities to try marijuana prior to their actual initial use, the first and last variables (that is to say, the initiate's perception of relative danger and his closeness to his initiator) being the ones most often cited as inhibiting factors. In this regard, 'trust' in the person(s) offering the drug is often reported as a major factor in the decision to try cannabis.

First use, when it does occur, is almost always a social event (usually involving close friends who are experienced users) and generally takes place on weekends or in the evenings in a residential location. According to the Sir George Williams University survey, nearly two-thirds of the cannabis-using students reported that they "felt no different than at any other time" on the occasion of their initial use, while only 17% reported any familial or personal problems or feelings of depression or unusual boredom at that time. This initiation process is often viewed as a highly significant event in the lives of those who become regular users. It is, as Goode suggests:

...a kind of milestone, a rite de passage; it is often seen as a part of "growing up" for many adolescents....Its importance in one's life is overshadowed only by (and is similar to) losing one's virginity.

Continuation of cannabis use beyond the initial stage is dependent on an individual's completion of a normal, but essential, learning process. While cannabis is smoked for pleasure, enjoyment is neither immediate nor automatic. Initially, a certain technique must be mastered so that the desired 'high' can be achieved. The learning of the correct inhalation procedure (which is usually quite different from cigarette smoking), so as to produce the symptoms of the cannabis 'high', constitutes the first step to becoming an occasional or regular user. Many regular users report that they did not get 'high' during their first few trials but most, if they learn the modes of effective inhalation through personal instruction, popular media presentations, or observation and imitation of other users, will eventually experience the effects of the drug.

Since these effects are very rarely self-evident, the perception of them as the 'high' is a second step in this conversion process. So not only must a new user learn how to correctly administer the drug, but he must also learn, generally through participation with more experienced users who help him to such a perception, to recognize the effects of the drug and relate them to his use of cannabis.

Continuation, beyond the experimental stage, is dependent on one further condition, a third
Since cannabis smoking may not be inherently pleasurable, the novice user must usually learn to enjoy the effects he has come to recognize as cannabis-induced. Such learning is the result of early cannabis 'highs' being interpreted as pleasurable, according to group definitions. Since the naive user may initially perceive the drug's effects as frightening or at least ambiguous, a redefinition of the sensations as pleasurable is a necessary condition for continued use by these persons. This redefinition usually occurs through interaction with more experienced smokers who minimize the seriousness of unpleasant feelings, assure the novice of their ephemeral nature, and direct his attention to the more immediately pleasurable effects. As Becker has noted, "The taste for such experience is a socially acquired one, not different in kind from acquired tastes for oysters or dry martinis."

Assuming its availability, becoming a cannabis user thus depends on a willingness to try the drug, learning how to smoke so as to produce the desired sensations (the 'high'), learning to recognize the 'high', and learning to enjoy these effects and to define them as pleasurable. This procedure is essentially the same as any normal learning process through association with others and, given availability of the drug, "it becomes apparent", as Matza has observed, "that anyone can become a marijuana user and that no one has,"

Many cannabis users do not continue their consumption beyond the beginner's stage. It is difficult to state what proportion of those who experiment with cannabis do not persist in their use of the drug, but several surveys have indicated that between 20 and nearly 50% of those respondents who had ever used cannabis discontinued such use after a few trials. The Commission's own survey research found that just over one-quarter of those university students who had smoked cannabis had stopped use within one academic year, or in less than nine months. The lack of longitudinal studies of cannabis users, however, makes it impossible to determine whether the abstention patterns reported in these surveys were permanent or a function of the particular points in time at which the surveys were conducted.

The Sir George Williams University (S.G.W.U.) survey and other investigations have found that the termination of cannabis use at the beginner's stage often appears to be a consequence of not appreciating or learning to appreciate the effects of the drug, being predisposed to resist its effects, or the result of having satisfied a mild curiosity. The S.G.W.U. survey, for example, found that 95% of those who had stopped using cannabis (over 90% of these persons having done so "after only a handful of instances in the duration of a week or two") explained their abstention by describing the experience as ineffectual or uninteresting. Biernacki and Davis, based on their study of ex-marijuana users in San Francisco, further suggest that beginners may also terminate their use of cannabis as a consequence of perceived effects that are subjectively defined as unpleasant or, in some instances, as a result of the using situation or fellow smokers being viewed negatively.
Marijuana or hashish users who have learned to enjoy the 'high' often progress to the occasional user career stage. This stage is characterized by the irregular or chance use of cannabis, the individual's consumption pattern being a function of the drug's availability. When others offer him cannabis he may smoke it, but he probably does not go out of his way to procure the drug, nor does he attempt to ensure a constant or regular supply (or 'stash') for himself. The need for secrecy, however, may still be a source of some concern; but through participation with other users, an individual, in Becker's words, "...comes to realize that, although it may be true that sanctions would be applied if non-users found out, they need never find out." Prudence, discretion, and an absence of bad luck are usually sufficient to guarantee that the occasional cannabis user will not experience public exposure.

Continued interaction with other cannabis smokers also provides the occasional user with a set of justifications to overcome the influence of conventional morality. Use of the drug is rationalized as relatively innocuous or even beneficial, and his occasional use pattern assures the user that he is in control of the drug.

It is probable that about half of those Canadians who have used cannabis are, or at some time were, occasional users. Some of these terminate their cannabis use at this stage, usually as a result of changes in their life-situation or those of their smoking acquaintances (such as marriage or a change in residence or job) rather than as a consequence of any deliberate decision. Others, however, progress to more regular patterns of consumption. These persons, because of their systematic and regular smoking patterns, require a more stable source of supply than users dependent on chance developments. Procuring such a supply ordinarily assumes the purchase of marijuana or hashish from a 'dealer'. At one time such purchases required direct involvement in a cannabis-using group through which one could gain an introduction to dealers, having established oneself as trustworthy. While such considerations are no longer as important in securing a cannabis supply, it remains true that most regular users associate primarily with other users and are at least peripherally involved in a drug-using scene.

Whereas secrecy may have been almost a necessity to regular cannabis users as recently as five years ago, for many today public exposure is no longer a major source of anxiety. The fear of arrest still exists for some regular hashish and marijuana smokers, but in most Canadian cities illicit drug users believe that the attention of the police is primarily directed towards traffickers and users of more socially disapproved drugs such as heroin and LSD. Consequently, many cannabis users, despite the fact that they present themselves as such, feel relatively safe, although they continue to exercise caution in regard to their locations of actual use.
Most regular users, however, particularly those who live with their parents or have conventional jobs, are probably anxious about being publicly identified as cannabis users. Concealment of their use, not only from the police but from anyone else who may censure them, is a matter of continual concern. The risk of such disclosure is most often controlled through the compartmentalization of the user's daily activities so that cannabis use is reserved for those settings where potentially disapproving non-users are unlikely to intrude. Consequently, the more routine and frequent an individual's cannabis use, the more he is likely to reduce his social contacts with non-users. Since such interaction, however, can rarely be eliminated totally, the regular user will have to develop additional protective techniques, beyond avoidance, if he is to continue this style of use. Becker, in discussing one mode of resolving this dilemma, suggests that the user learns:

...to control the drug's effects while in the company of non-users, so that they can be fooled and the secret successfully kept even though one continues participation with them....

The typical experience is one in which the user finds himself in a position where he must do something while he is high that he is quite sure he cannot do in that condition. To his surprise, he finds he can do it and can hide from others the fact that he is under the drug's influence.

Regular consumption of cannabis may lead to some anxiety in the user regarding the possibility that he is dependent on the drug or that his continual use of it interferes with his routine obligations or activities. For a very small minority of regular users these concerns are sufficient to lead to a decrease or termination of cannabis consumption. Most users, however, either abstain for a few days to test their possible dependence on the drug or satisfy themselves from personal experience that their use of the drug does not produce effects to which they object. In those situations where adverse effects do occur, users appear to either deliberately control future consumption or view their cannabis-related activities as more important or meaningful than those displaced by such use.

Goode suggests that, "We may take it as an axiom that everywhere and at all times, marijuana is smoked in order to attain the high.' While this is certainly true, regular users' rationales for their continued consumption of marijuana or hashish are somewhat more complex. Besides the production of the 'high', the most frequently mentioned reasons for continued use are the attaining of pleasure or an improved mood; the relief of tension and depression or as an adjunct to relaxation; heightened awareness, perception, or sensitivity; increased sociability or fellowship; and to assist in introspective or reflective
Continued, regular consumption of marijuana or hashish, as is the case with experimental and occasional use, depends on a favourable interpretation of the cannabis-induced 'high'. Some experienced cannabis users have suffered acute anxiety or depression reactions to cannabis smoking, usually as a consequence of ingesting more cannabis than they ordinarily use or as a result of using cannabis that is more potent than they anticipated. Adverse reactions may also occur, however, as a function of drug mixtures (cannabis and alcohol or some cold pills, for example) or anxiety-producing settings, moods or companions. The user, on such occasion, may decide to exercise more caution in the future (by reducing the amount or frequency of his consumption, or by avoiding those situations or persons likely to precipitate adverse sensations), or he may decide that the experience is no longer capable of producing pleasure. If the latter occurs, the smoker may cease using cannabis permanently or until such time as he redefines the drug as potentially pleasurable once again. Deliberate abstention from use of this drug on the part of regular smokers may also occur as the result of a personal crisis which causes an individual to question his lifestyle and identity as a drug user. If continued consumption is felt to be detrimental to, or in conflict with, his preferred existence or self-image, his cannabis use may be deliberately arrested.'6

Biernacki and Davis, in discussing the complexities of voluntary abstention from cannabis consumption, suggest that:

...the reasons, conditions and processes of termination appear to be inextricably tied in with the levels and styles of use to which [the user has] put the drug. And, to complicate the equation further, both prior mode of use and manner of termination seem,...in turn, to be intimately related to the general life career pattern of the individual, most especially the range and depth of his commitments and involvements in such other institutional spheres as work, school and family 16

Continuation of use (given availability of the drug), is for most cannabis smokers, however, contingent on the user being able, in Becker's words, "...to answer 'Yes' to the question: 'Is it fun?'
Many investigators of cannabis smoking have attempted to develop categories with which to differentiate users. Some define these classifications in terms of total number of uses of the drug (often within a fixed time period such as six months or a year). Others utilize a set of frequency-per-unit-time criteria, such as times per week or times per month. Still others define categories by means of descriptive adjectives, with highly variable criteria. Thus, the following labels have been employed to describe use patterns of cannabis or cannabis and other drugs: occasional, casual, light, experimental, intensive, recreational, taster, once, non-continued use, irregular, first use, infrequent, beginner, limited, moderate, regular, habitual, frequent, heavy, light-moderate, moderate-heavy, interstitial, psychedelic subcultural, professional pothead, frequent intensive, seldom, often, early use, head, addictive, moderate-mixed drug, extreme, seekers, fairly heavy, continuing heavy, pro-longed heavy, regular heavy, and chronic. Some studies, in fact, do not specify criteria and others distinguish between users on the basis of such factors as subcultural involvement, availability of a source, meaning of the experience, and combinations of drugs used.

Terminological diversity of this nature renders it very difficult to compare the findings of various studies. Some user distinctions, however, are required since the meaning or significance of the phenomenon for any individual is closely associated with both the social context of his cannabis use and the frequency with which he uses the drug. For these reasons, in this section we set out a typology of cannabis users based, primarily, on frequency and regularity of consumption. It should be recognized, however, that frequency and regularity of use are continuous rather than discrete variables, and that the levels-of-use categories are arbitrarily constructed for purposes of analysis.

Cannabis smokers who have learned to recognize the 'high' and to experience it as a state sufficiently desirable to warrant continued use of the drug, (in other words, post-experimental users), may be divided into three categories. These categories are related to the post-beginner stages of the cannabis career described earlier and, as such, can be conceived of as identifiable gradations of increasing personal involvement with drugs and drug-related activities. There is no reason to believe, however, that a marijuana or hashish user remains permanently tied to any particular level of use.

The first level of continued consumption can be called occasional use. The pattern of use, in this case, is episodic and fortuitous, the individual's consumption being dependent on chance developments (usually invitations to share others' marijuana or hashish) since he does not ensure control of drug supplies in order to establish a regular consumption pattern. Although the occasional user maintains an interest in or, at least, an openness to cannabis use, his marginal status with reference to drug-using groups and his failure (or inability) to ensure a relatively regular, personal supply severely limit his involvement with the world of drugs. Cannabis, for the occasional user, is a pleasant diversion, but its use is not deliberately pursued as it is of little
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importance in his life.

Although there are marked variations in the frequency criteria employed by different surveys, for comparative purposes occasional users are here defined as those who consume marijuana or hashish once a month or less. More cannabis smokers surveyed by the Commission fell into this category of use than any other. Twenty-nine per cent of Canadian cannabis-using second-ary school students, 39% of the cannabis-using university students and 46% of those cannabis users interviewed in the national household survey can be defined as occasional users.4""7 Some of these persons, of course, are not stabilized occasional users. But what proportions will discontinue cannabis use or progress to increased levels of consumption cannot be ascertained at this time.

The second and third levels of use both involve the regular consumption of cannabis, and both, consequently, depend on the user's establishing a relatively reliable marijuana or hashish source. The first type of these regular smokers can be referred to as moderate-regular users.181Biernacki and Davis, in discussing this style of use, noted that:

The most distinguishing characteristic of this mode is that use is regulated or scheduled so that the perceived effects or after-effects of the drug do not interfere with other activities in which the user is engaged. That is, the [moderate-regular] user finds the use of marijuana pleasurable, but also defines it as incompatible with other investments and commitments emanating from his total life situation ....[Consequently] his use of the drug is typically restricted to leisure settings and hours.l6

These moderate-regular users may limit their consumption to special occa-sions or may use the drug as frequently as several times a week. For analytical comparisons, however, this category has been defined so as to include all of those persons who regularly use cannabis more than once a month but not more than once a week. According to the Commission's surveys, nearly 29% of the cannabis-using high school students and 22% of those in university are moderate-regular users.":49 Individuals smoking cannabis at the moderate-regular level generally do so freely and non-compulsively in a recreational context.""2986 With this style of use, persons usually smoke as an aid or adjunct to (rather than replacement of) their participation in or enjoyment of such activities or events as movies, concerts, small parties, sex, music and meals. While such individuals are definitely involved in a drug-using milieu, the use of cannabis itself is not of primary importance, and the drug has a relatively superficial impact on the user's life. Other drugs, particularly the hallucinogens, may be tried (although this is certainly not inevitable), probably as a natural consequence of greater involvement in milieus where such drugs are available and their use ac-cepted.".31•64.29 Such use, if and when it
does occur, is likely to be of a moderate, experimental nature."

The third pattern of cannabis consumption is heavy-regular use. This level of use, for our purposes, includes all those who regularly smoke cannabis from twice a week to several times a day. Only 6% of the cannabis-using Canadian high school and university students surveyed by the Commission used the drug as frequently as several times a week, and an additional 1% of the cannabis-using high school students and 3% of the cannabis-using university students claimed to smoke every day.48,49

For heavy-regular users cannabis constitutes a focal, undisguised part of a lifestyle. Marijuana or hashish is smoked casually, without scheduling or ritualization, the drug being incorporated into daily behaviour and experience. For some, smoking may begin upon arising each morning and continue throughout the day,29 but this is a relatively rare style of use. The heavy-regular user, unlike cannabis smokers who indulge less frequently, generally demonstrates little concern with secrecy or concealment.' This is most likely a result of his reduction or elimination of social contacts with conventional society and his nearly complete involvement with other drug users and the illicit drug market in which he is often an active participant.12,1-6,22,31,79

The exclusive consumption of cannabis on a daily basis is relatively unusual in North America, as individuals who use marijuana or hashish this frequently are ordinarily involved in a pattern of multiple-drug use. Several studies have demonstrated an association between the heavy smoking of cannabis and the occasional use of hallucinogens,31•64 and every recent survey of young users of opiates and amphetamines has found almost universal prior (and occasional-continued) use of cannabis substances. While use of these other drugs is, in most cases, temporary or episodic, these heavy-regular cannabis users express a stronger commitment to the continued use of marijuana or hashish than any other category of users.64•29 For these individuals cannabis use has become a normal aspect of their everyday life, an integral part of their routine existence.

CANNABIS-USING POPULATIONS

Marijuana and hashish are smoked primarily, although certainly not exclusively, by the young—university and high school students and others in this age bracket no longer attending academic institutions. During the mid-sixties Canadian cannabis use was concentrated on college campuses. Since then, of course, the practice has widely diffused to high school students and the adult world as well as to 'hippie' or 'street' persons. University students,
however, continue to have a higher incidence of use than any other institutional population, and the Commission's survey of this population suggests that the proportion of cannabis smokers in Canadian colleges is still rising.

Suchman suggests that the behavioural and attitudinal differences that he found to exist between university cannabis users and non-users reflect a recent cultural development among North American youth. For Suchman, mari-juana use is seen as only one component of a newly evolving value system which has been termed the "hang-loose ethic". The position was initially advanced by Simmons and Winograd:

One of the fundamental characteristics of the hang-loose ethic is that it is irreverent. It repudiates or at least questions, such cornerstones of conventional society as Christianity, "my country right or wrong", the sanctity of marriage and pre-marital chastity, civil obedience, the accumulation of wealth, the right and even competence of parents, the schools, and the government to head and make decisions for everyone—in sum, the Establishment."

While it remains true that college cannabis users and non-users can be socially differentiated by a number of variables, the extreme differences noted by Suchman apropos of the "hang-loose ethic" are not as likely to be found today as they were at the time of his survey in 1967 because of the rapid spread in use of the drug and acceptance of the ethic since that date.

Apart from some minor variations in the conclusions reached by various investigators of university cannabis users, there has emerged, generally speak-ing, a consistent portrait of the social characteristics of these students. Dr. Joel Hochman, in testimony delivered to the California State Assembly in March of 1971, summarized his own extensive research while presenting the following description of the differences between cannabis users and non-users on contemporary college campuses:

In summary, our findings, which have since been affirmed by other investigators, largely failed to discriminate users from non-users in their achievement or adaptation....

...we, and others, however, have determined that there have been definable differences between users and non-users of marijuana with regard to their personalities and values. Most simply, users have been more alienated, anti-authoritarian, now-oriented, stimulus seeking,
self-critical, dissatisfied and non-traditional than non-users. They have also been more politically active and liberal. Further, they have also been more sexually experienced, far less likely to be living at home, more likely to be living communally or cohabiting without benefit of matrimony. Finally, they have been definitely inclined to experiment with a wide variety of drugs, though no regular pattern of use occurs except the use of marijuana. However, the reason I use the past tense is important. Evidence is rapidly accumulating which indicates that as the use of marijuana has spread, these differences between users and non-users have become less distinct. Those who began smoking marijuana before 1969 were characterizable as psychologically and philosophically different from the average young citizen. But these differences seem to be fading rapidly, as the drug's use is increasingly absorbed into society. As use has spread, the differences between those who use it and those who don't are likely to become increasingly even less distinct.

The trends suggested in Dr. Hochman's statement are, for the most part, also valid in Canada with reference to both university and high school students. While the college campus was once (and may still be) the main locus of cannabis introductions, as the drug's use has diffused increasing numbers of young persons are being initiated while they are in high school. Unfortunately, there are no Canadian surveys, as yet, of the extent of cannabis use in grade or primary schools. According to the Commission's high school survey, however, it is apparent that apart from British Columbia, where some leveling in the rate of acceleration had occurred in 1970, the incidence of marijuana or hashish use in Canadian high schools has been rising at an accelerating rate for several years.

While most media, social research and law enforcement attention has been focused on the use of drugs by young persons, there is increasing evidence that otherwise conventional North American adults are also smoking marijuana or hashish. Their numbers are certainly increasing (particularly as persons with high school or college cannabis experience mature), and although only 3.4% of those interviewed in the national household survey reported that they had used the drug by April of 1970 this still represents approximately half a million persons. Unfortunately, however, this sizable population of users has not been investigated as thoroughly as either the high school or college populations; but the accumulated evidence, to this date, does suggest that it is primarily a middle and upper-middle class phenomenon found mainly among those in their twenties and thirties. Generally speaking, it appears that except for age the social characteristics of marijuana or hashish smoking adults are similar to those of cannabis-using students. As in the case of student populations, it is possible that any major distinguishing features between users and non-users will tend to disappear as the proportion of cannabis consumers continues to grow. Cisin and Manheimer, in concluding their report on their extensive surveys of marijuana use in two California communities, indicate the dangers in attempting to differentiate adult users from non-users by any socio-demographic factors when they note that:

Simplistic generalizations about marijuana use in various population groups may be appealing,
but at least as far as static analysis can go, there are very few characteristics that, taken alone, consistently predict marijuana use. Certainly, males are more likely than females, the young are more likely than the old, and the unmarried are more likely than the married, to have used marijuana. But the probabilities of use...are subtly affected by specific combinations of these characteristics, whose relative importance varies from one location to another.25

There are some cannabis smokers (of high school, college and adult ages) whose highly mobile lifestyle mitigates against the utilization of random survey modes of analysis. It is for this reason (and because they are geographically concentrated and rarely attend high schools and colleges) that they were generally 'missed' by the sampling techniques employed by the Commission and other general surveys. Consequently these persons (occasionally referred to as 'hippies', 'freaks', or 'street people') have ordinarily been studied through the use of more anthropological techniques which usually involve the employment of participant-observers who carefully record their daily impressions of the group under study and often engage in lengthy semi-structured interviews with the individuals they are observing. This method of analysis rarely permits the construction of statistical data but, in cases of extensive and thorough investigation, does allow for reliable generalizations about these populations.

It is difficult to capture the diverse elements included in this population with a single phrase or rubric. It appears, however, that the adjective "street"— which serves to indicate the locus of many of these persons' activities and is a natural, indigenous expression, rather than externally imposed—is the most appropriate means of describing this lifestyle and those who follow it. Some similar groups—communards (persons inhabiting communes, usually rural) and many school drop-outs—may not be 'street people' in the sense in which the term is conventionally employed; but these individuals share many of the basic social characteristics of persons in the street scene (such as a relatively young age and voluntary unemployment or non-traditional employment) and, consequently, will be included in this discussion.

The street, in many ways, is a state of mind connoting freedom, transience, physical mobility, spontaneity, immediacy and day-to-day living, physically, it is usually a public or semi-public area (a park, shopping centre, mall, square, tavern or actual thoroughfare) in which 'street people' (as well as others) congregate to meet, talk, make future arrangements and, sometimes, use or exchange drugs. 'Street people' are almost all cannabis smokers (most have had some multiple drug experience), and for some of them (particularly during the summer months) the street is their home or, at least, the address at which they are most likely to be found. Carey, in discussing the role of Telegraph Avenue ('the Avenue') in Berkeley, California for members of the street scene, has noted that:
...the Avenue constitutes their "living room" or, more precisely, a "playroom". For these people, such living arrangements as do exist are quite irregular. They may be sleeping in cars, in laundromats, or in the apartment of someone who has been kind enough to put them up for a while. They view the Avenue, or certain parts of it, much as delinquent youth view their street comers.23

Because of the lack of any surveys, the constantly changing dimensions of the population, and the necessary imprecision involved in defining who is to be included in this scene, it is extremely difficult to even guess the number of street-people in North America. Yablonsky, in the heyday of the hippie phenomenon, calculated that there were "...about 200,000 core visible and identifiable total hippie drop-outs in the United States".1°2 No Canadian estimates are available although the numbers of such personsid has most likely increased in both the United States and Canada since Yablonsky's 1968 estimate. While there are many scenes in any city, the demographic focus of an urban street scene is usually a low-cost housing area or public facility relatively near the city centre. During the summer of 1970, Fourth Avenue and Seventh Avenue ("Chemical Row") in Kitsilano, and Gastown represented the major street scenes in Vancouver,' while Yorkville has been the Toronto bohemian enclave since the 1950s." The Winnipeg and Halifax scenes are centred in downtown parks, Memorial and Victoria respectively, while Ottawa street people tend to congregate in the very centre of the city along a public shopping mall and the grounds of the National Arts Centre.

The Montreal scenes are linguistically and culturally divided. French-speaking 'street people' are most readily observable in Carre St. Louis and Old Montreal, while younger users (many of whom live with their parents and whose attachment to the street would terminate or be severely curtailed with the re-opening of schools in September) tend to congregate at La Ronde (the amusement site at Man and His World, formerly Expo '67).5° English-speaking individuals are more likely to be found in the downtown Milton-Park area (known as the 'Ghetto') just east of McGill University's7 and in the area immediately adjacent to Sir George Williams University. During the winter months, when public parks are less accessible and the size of the transient population diminishes, these scenes move indoors as coffee houses and taverns tend to replace the outdoor sites as foci of fraternization.

'Street people' may range in age from thirteen or fourteen (during the summer months) to the mid-thirties or even older, but most are between eighteen and twenty-four years old with the average age for males being about twenty-one and, perhaps, slightly younger for females. There are about two males to every female although in some scenes 'greasers' and 'bikers', for example) males are even more over-represented. Most of these persons have at least temporarily separated from their families. In many cases there are histories of parental alcoholism or broken homes, and their pre-street home life is often viewed by them as an unhappy, authoritarian and stifling environment. (In one British Columbia study, however, high school drop-outs were found to have more frequently discussed such subjects as choice of friends, dating, sex, birth control and drugs with their parents than those persons who were still
in school!) Somewhat related is the fact that most street people are either areligious or have renounced their parents' religion and substituted, instead, an interest in Eastern or esoteric religions or philso-phies. Smart and Jackson, in their discussion of the hippies in Toronto's Yorkville in 1967-68, have observed that:

Yorkville hippies are interested in oriental religions, but what passes for sophisti-cation in this area is extremely superficial knowledge....The Yorkville religious practices are mostly displays of ritual with little theological content....In fact, hippies seem taken with any religion or interest which is exotic and in contrast with the mores of western society. These exotic interests include: witchcraft, hypnotism, astrology, and numerology.88

Except for a few successful drug dealers, 'street people' tend to be voluntar-ily, if temporarily, impoverished. But various studies of these persons have found that the majority come from middle-class homes and have at least finished high school.5,69,82,88,95,98,102 These reports, however, probably reflect the dates at which this research was conducted (between 1967 and 1969), as recent Commission field studies carried out in major cities across Canada suggest that as the hippie ethos has attenuated in importance, increasing numbers of more poorly educated persons from working class backgrounds have been attracted to the street."

During the summer street people's ranks are swelled by students, but those who remain once school re-opens are ordinarily unemployed (and often survive on welfare) or engaged in primarily menial or craft-related tasks (on a full or part-time basis) for small remuneration. Some are involved in trafficking (either to finance their own drug purchases, to supplement their welfare payments, or as a career) or panhandling, and a few are petty criminals (mainly theft) or prostitutes. Their relatively poor financial condi-tion is manifested in their living arrangements. Most reside semi-communally in well-worn houses or individually in cheap hotels or private rooms. During the summer it is often possible to sleep out-of-doors or at various youth hostels. During the winter months, however, without these alternatives, home-less street persons are forced to 'crash' (seek temporary residence) at the homes of friends who may only be able to afford an unpaying guest for a brief period of time.

Almost all 'street people' are cannabis users. Their consumption is primar-ily controlled by availability and their financial resources. It is within these scenes that individuals who are 'high' most of their waking day are most likely to be found, although, even here, they represent only a very small proportion of the total population. Nevertheless, the daily smoking of mari-juana or hashish is more the rule than the exception. Cannabis use is more routinized and less ritualistic among 'street people' than among any other marijuana- or hashish-smoking populations. The use of cannabis is so com-monplace that few, if any, mystical or special properties are
attributed to the act, and it is not unusual for street persons to smoke alone or in public areas such as streets or parks. The incidence of use of other illicit drugs is also higher among these people than among any other cannabis smokers. Most observers report that more than half of their subjects have at least tried hallucinogens (many had used these drugs frequently), and there are relatively high rates of experimental use of amphetamines and opiate narcotics.82,91,101,102

Many 'speed freaks' and young heroin users are recruited from these multi-drug-using scenes. There is almost universal consumption of tobacco and most drink alcohol (usually beer or wine), although rarely to excess. During the summer of 1971, however, alcoholic beverages became very popular among 'street people'. Whether this reflects the recent lowering of the legal drinking age in some provinces, a paucity of potent and inexpensive cannabis, an ephemeral fad, or the recent re-discovery of a licit 'turn on' is not yet known.

Shorn of its hippie 'virtuousness', the street scene has apparently become less attractive to middle class youths. Yet it continues to grow as facilities (such as free clinics, hostels, drop-in centres and community newspapers) develop to serve its needs and as increasing numbers of young persons choose to exchange what they perceive to be their suffocating familial situations for the insecurity but independence of the street. Very few, if any, of these individuals are cannabis-naive when they leave home, but their newly adopted lifestyle reinforces such use (and at least tolerates the use of other drugs) so that marijuana or hashish consumption often becomes a daily institution.

In these last pages we have been concerned with cannabis use among the so-called 'street people'. The patterns of use in this population are, of course, extremely important. As we point out it is in this context that the drug has its most intensive use. However, this is also a population largely made up of multi-drug users. It must be stressed that, important as this population is, it is only a minority of those who use cannabis. Most users do not move to the 'street' and do not reach the levels of use found there. Rather they use marijuana or hashish in a fashion that is increasingly similar to the way in which they use alcohol.
discussed in a later report of this Commission. The heroin and speed ‘street’ scenes are excluded from this conceptual-ization as they will be administration is sometimes preferred by non-tobacco smokers, it is relatively rare in North America and is almost never encountered by novice users.

asked why they did not use the drug only 14% of the university students, 26% of the high school students and 14% of those interviewed in the national household survey claimed that their The Commission’s own surveys tend to support this conclusion. When non-cannabis users were abstention was because they considered cannabis use to be morally wrong.49,48,47

characterize marijuana users in one of six ways. Sixty-seven per cent of the non-cannabis-using students felt that mari-juana consumers were “not much different from people who do not use”, and an additional 7% considered them “more sensitive and intelli-gent”. Only 3% of the non-users thought marijuana smokers to be “morally degenerate”.36

The Commission’s university survey, for example, found that only 3% of Canadian college cannabis users had first tried the drug by themselves.’

A number of high school surveys have indicated that a high proportion of students have been high school students surveyed one year later reported being offered the drug.”

NOTES

examining the questionnaires, we have found a higher rate of response to more simple and table was derived from responses to a question in which the respondents were asked to trace a reported by 11% of the high school students (295,000), 29% of the college and university direct questions in the questionnaire regarding the use of cannabis. On the basis of these replies, which almost certainly yield more accurate data, we find that in 1970 cannabis use was cannabis use in Canada. It should be noted, however, that the information contained in this Table 5 presents a composite tabulation of our survey findings with respect to the extent of To this should be added some tens of thousands of ‘street people’ whom we were unable to reach through our surveys. This would provide an estimated total of between 841,000 and 866,000 individuals who had used cannabis by the spring of 1970.

begun using cannabis in 1966 or earlier. By 1970, an estimated 850,000 persons had used it at least once. Projecting to mid-1971, an estimate of between 1,300,000 and 1,500,000 persons cannabis has gone beyond the experimental stage and might be considered occasional or experimental fashion—not more than two or three times. Our continuing analysis of the account the number of individuals who have termi-nated their use of the drug. This will require further analysis. To understand the social significance of these findings, however, we must not overlook the frequency with which the drug has been used by individuals. Our surveys indicate frequent use.

that a significantly large proportion of those who have used cannabis appear to have used it in fre-quent use.

The data derived from these surveys—the first and only systematic national surveys in Canada of drug use by these populations—require further analysis before they can be reported in detail. use are summarized in what follows.

This analysis will be presented in a subsequent report (as will a review of some other surveys of (3) Some 2,800 households, in which an individual in each household was interviewed under a method of selection that ensured an equal oppor-tunity to be interviewed for each member of the household 12 years of age or older who was not attending a primary or secondary school. (2) A total of 1,213 students attending colleges and universities in Canada at either the undergraduate or graduate level. Each student selected for this survey was provided with a letter explaining the study, a copy of the questionnaire and material for return mailing. The students were interviewed in homes selected for the National Household Survey, described in (3) below. More than 1,200 students were interviewed in this survey. (1) High school students from the ages of 12 to 19 years, enrolled in grades 7 to 12 or 13. In the spring of 1970, the Commission conducted three national surveys of drug use in Canada. of the national population. The samples of these populations were as follows:

COMMISSION SURVEY DATA

4. Patterns and Extent of Cannabis Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year and Survey</th>
<th>Began Use in—</th>
<th>Were Using at the End of—</th>
<th>Had Ever Used by—</th>
<th>Had Apparently Terminated Use by</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Proportion of sample</td>
<td>Estimated number</td>
<td>Proportion of all who have ever used</td>
<td>Proportion of sample</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966 or earlier</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National (1966)</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1966-67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University (1966-67 or earlier)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>11,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National (1967)</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>90,000</td>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101,000</td>
<td>88,000</td>
<td>180,000</td>
<td>92,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1967-68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School (1967-68 or earlier)</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>47,000</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>54.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National (1968)</td>
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<td>83,000</td>
<td>32.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>143,000</td>
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<td>123,000</td>
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<td>1968-69</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>70,000</td>
<td>59.6</td>
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<td>188,000</td>
<td>290,000</td>
<td>512,000</td>
<td>222,000</td>
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<td>1969-70</td>
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<td>High School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>University</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>133,000</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<td>34,000</td>
<td>42.5</td>
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<tr>
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<td>18.7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>247,000</td>
<td>354,000</td>
<td>758,000</td>
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</table>

*Data from the first four months of 1970 only.