

COMMISSIONER SPEAKS ON DRUGS

The following is an edited text of a statement by the Commissioner, Sir Colin Woods, made before a news conference in AFP headquarters on Monday, 10 December 1979.

I believe the drugs problem facing this country is of immense proportions. It has gone past the stage where the appropriate catch-cry would be: 'This must be nipped in the bud'. The truth is that the problem has become a deeply rooted tree, with branches that continue to grow and cast their sinister shadow further across the country. I know the scene in other countries and I have been in Australia now for sufficient time to make an assessment of the situation here. Policemen are supposed to become immune to many things, but I am personally shocked by the nature and extent of the illegal drugs and related crime situation in Australia. I can only feel convinced that it was not before time the police were given additional powers and the opportunity to mount a national offensive.

The problem facing this country is simply not just the importation and distribution of narcotics. The real problem that stems from large-scale drug trafficking is the related crime, the violence and the tragedy that entraps the innocent victim or the unfortunate person for whom narcotic drugs have become a desperate need.

Unfortunately, it is clear that the problem is growing very fast.

Over the past five years, for instance, the amount of heroin seized by federal authorities increased five-fold, from just under 6 kilograms in 1975 to a figure of just on 30 kilograms over the past eleven months.

Intelligence experts in the Australian Federal Police have reported to me that the proportion of seizures, when expressed as a percentage of total quantities imported can be estimated to be between 2.5 and 5 per cent. This means that already in 1979 between 600 and 1200 kilograms of import quality heroin may have been brought into this country. Intelligence from overseas suggests opium growers anticipate a bumper harvest in 1980.

Even one kilo of heroin is a large amount. Consider the following: The United States National Narcotics Intelligence Consumer Committee (NNICC) judges that only 24 milligrams of pure heroin is the minimum daily schedule required to produce physical dependence. The NNICC also estimates that addicts consume a daily average of between 35 mg and 50 mg.

You may also find these figures noteworthy. A kilo of heroin can be purchased in certain South East Asian

cities for between \$A8000 — \$A10 000. After deducting air fares, accommodation expenses and payment to courier, that same kilo when broken down in Australia and sold in deals can realise at least \$80 000. Multiply this last figure by estimated imports for 1979 and we can see that the heroin market in Australia by itself could be worth annually between \$50 to \$100 million to drug traffickers.

It is obvious drug trafficking is highly organised. In recent times criminals involved in drug trafficking have organised themselves to protect and promote their lucrative trade. Being an island has not made Australia immune from

The former Narcotics Bureau until very recently did not have what I believe to be certain essential aids to enable its officers to effectively maintain surveillance on persons whom it is reasonable to suspect are deeply involved in drug trafficking. I refer to the recent legislation that now allows the Australian Federal Police, under very stringent conditions, to conduct electronic surveillance.

The purpose of this new power is to help police to lock up criminals who import narcotics into this country and distribute them. It is a power that will not be abused by police; for to abuse it would, in a society such as this one, be

War declared on drug racketeers

Biggs on drug drive

Gloves off in police drive

lan new crime cent

COMMISSIONER 'SHOCKED'

Heroin trade worth up to \$100m a year

Intelligence

By 427TH GUMMAN Police Reporter

The Australian heroin market could be worth between \$50 million and \$100 million annually to drug traffickers, the Commissioner of the Australian Federal Police, Sir Colin Woods, said yesterday.

the type of criminal activity that some people would appear to believe exists only in other parts of the world.

There ARE the so-called figures in Australia that the media like to call 'Mr Big'. These are the crime bosses, the individuals who, in some cases, earn their dubious title by public repute. It is an astonishing and sad fact that these people can exist as they do. They are in a separate criminal class. Mr Big does not carry a gun, but brutal murder is not excluded from his *modus operandi*; Mr Big may personally disavow the drugs habit, but he has made a career of introducing it to hundreds and thousands of others; Mr Big likes security and the good things in life, and he buys them by ruining the lives of others. Saddest of all is the fact that in Australia there are sufficient of these people to maintain an uninterrupted flow of narcotics into the country, even when one of their number is removed from the scene.

The community cannot allow the scale of crime I am talking about to continue. It is the job of the police, as the protectors of the community to see that it doesn't.

the best way to lose it. I have stated earlier and I will repeat that we will not cheat.

The targets for our surveillance are no respecters of the rights of the individual. They would sooner see him helplessly addicted to their terrible product than enjoying a normal life in a free society. But for those who respect the rights of the individual, the only answer to the drugs problem is to catch the people behind it. These people exist because they are ruthless in their pursuit of illicit gains. The new powers given to the Australian Federal Police mean that we have now taken the gloves off and, as a result, our chances of success become far more hopeful.

NARCOTICS BUREAU OFFICERS

One week after the disbanding of the Federal Narcotics Bureau, all former agents were sworn in as special members of the Australian Federal Police. They still have this status and are in effect public servants.

Over the past four weeks I have travelled to all Australian States and the

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Northern Territory to interview each one of these officers. It is the intention of the Australian Federal Police that as many former agents as possible will be sworn in as police members. I trust that, in due course, those former agents to gain police rank will discover that their lot has been greatly improved in terms of career prospects. They will be in a much larger organisation in which opportunity for advancement will rest on individual merit and ability.

It would, however, be unrealistic of me not to acknowledge publicly that the transition of some former narcotics agents to police ranks presents a complex set of problems for the police. On one hand, there are the police requirements for certain physical, educational and training qualifications. On the other hand, there is the undoubted wealth of specialist skills and expertise that have been developed by former narcotics agents. I have made this point clear to former agents and I have told them that as potential police officers, they must of course be acceptable not only to me, but to my police colleagues in the States.

Those not absorbed as police members will still be able to make a positive contribution as public servants as part of the multi-disciplinary intelligence net that we are establishing. We are going to need all the skilled manpower we can get.

I therefore assure all former narcotics agents that far from seeking to exclude them from police ranks, I shall be looking for reasons to include as many as possible, consistent with common sense and good judgement.

COMMISSIONERS' CONFERENCE

Last Tuesday marked the close of a two-day meeting in Canberra of all Australian police commissioners. The purpose of the meeting was to draw up a plan of action that would enable more

efficient policing of drug laws on a national basis.

The key decisions of that meeting were these:

- (I) The establishment of a national crime intelligence centre;
- (II) The establishing of State crime intelligence cells which will be linked to the national intelligence centre;
- (III) Clarification, as required by the Federal Police Act of the jurisdiction of all Australian police forces in relation to the enforcement of drugs laws within State Boundaries;
- (IV) The establishment of a high level police group to undertake urgent planning to implement these decisions. (A sub group — consisting of experts from three States — was also formed to concentrate on the establishment of the national crime intelligence centre.)

You may be interested to know that the Deputy Commissioner of the Victoria Police will tomorrow chair a two-day conference in Melbourne of all Assistant Commissioners (Crime). This meeting will concern itself with exchanges of information that will enable us to very speedily make a basic national assessment of the current state of drugs trafficking and drugs-related crime. The Assistant Commissioners will have expert support to draw from and I am sure you will agree that this meeting stands to achieve much in a short space of time.

The small expert group I mentioned above is already working. Attached to this statement is its term of reference and I draw your attention to the fact that this group was instructed by last week's Commissioners' Conference to make its report within one month.

A.F.P. APPOINTMENT

Finally, I should like to announce the appointment of Chief Superintendent John Reilly as Acting Assistant Commissioner in the Australian Federal Police. Mr Reilly will have direct responsibility for the narcotics law enforcement area of the force.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Whereas the Report of the N.S.W. Royal Commission into Drugs and the Interim Report of the Australian Royal Commission on Drugs have outlined principles and concepts on the collation and dissemination of drug intelligence and the enforcement of drug laws, and whereas the Commissioners are in agreement that the collection of drug intelligence cannot be viewed in isolation and must 'per force' include the wider spectrum of criminal intelligence:

The Working Group is required to report on:

- (I) the establishment of a national crime intelligence centre, its staffing arrangements, its role in relation to operational enforcement units and State crime intelligence organisations, and the criteria for data input (its assessment and dissemination). The Working Group should also consider the central unit's role in relation to co-ordinating crime intelligence assessment training;
- (II) the establishment of Commonwealth State and Territories local crime intelligence units, their staffing, organisation and relationship (including information input) to the Central Unit;
- (III) the management and command, including the identification of targets arising from intelligence

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NEW APPOINTMENT: NARCOTICS HEAD

Mr John Daniel Reilly was appointed Acting Assistant Commissioner (Narcotics) in December, 1979.

He was born at Warragual, Victoria, in 1929 and was a dairy farmer before joining the Victoria Police in 1953.

He gained a Bachelor of Science Degree at the University of Melbourne and attained the rank of Sergeant. Mr Reilly worked in the Forensic Science Laboratory before resigning from Victoria Police in 1964 to join the Commonwealth Public Service where he remained until 1970. During that time he spent a number of years in the Customs and Excise section that later became known as the Federal Narcotics Bureau.



In 1970 Mr Reilly joined the former Commonwealth Police Force as Senior Inspector at the Australian Police College, Manly. He was

promoted to Chief Inspector in 1972.

After promotion in 1975 to Canberra as Superintendent of the Australia National Central Bureau (Interpol) for two years, Mr Reilly then became the Acting Senior Superintendent of the Australian Crime Intelligence Centre, before being posted back to Sydney in 1977 as Officer-in-Charge of the New South Wales District.

He has been awarded the Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal.

Mr Reilly is an Associate Fellow of the Australian Institute of Management and an Associate of the Royal Australian Chemical Institute.

He is married with two children and his hobbies include golf, gardening and reading.

FORMER NARCOTICS AGENTS OFFERED RANKS IN AFP

Eighty-four members of the investigative staff of the former Federal Narcotics Bureau have been offered appointment in the General Police Branch of the Australian Federal Police.

They were advised individually in letters sent out on Friday, 21 December 1979.

Altogether, letters were sent to 118 former narcotics agents advising them about their future role in the Force.

Thirty-four of the former agents are to remain in the public service field.

In a news release on 21 December the Commissioner, Sir Colin Woods, said one factor affecting the number of officers retained within the public service was the need to maintain a career structure in what had become a specialised field.

'Those not appointed to police rank will be employed in specialised areas including intelligence', Sir Colin said.

The Commissioner said other factors affecting the appointments had included age and physical health considerations.

Sir Colin said in the news release: 'it has been an exacting task, but I believe we have managed to achieve the best possible rationalisation of the manpower available from the former Bureau'.

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gathered, of the units at Commonwealth and State levels;

- (IV) the logistical arrangements associated with the physical establishment of the national and local crime intelligence units; and
- (V) any other related matters.

COMPOSITION OF WORKING PARTY

Under the direction of the Assistant Commissioners (Crime), a working party consisting of representatives of the following police forces:

- South Australia — organisation expertise
- Victoria — Bureau of Crime Intelligence
- New South Wales — Drug Squad operative



The Commissioner, Sir Colin Woods and Lady Woods were guests at the A.C.T. Branch of the International Police Association annual dinner held at Bunratty Castle in Canberra recently.



Inspector Hinchley, Assistant Commissioner J. Johnson and Senior Constables Phil Ritchie and Bill Lindsay who were presented with Commissioner's Commendations recently in recognition of their action in effecting the arrest of an armed offender.



Pictured after the presentation of the National Medal at Australian Federal Force Headquarters, Canberra recently are (l-r) Stn. Sergeant K. G. Taylor, Senior Sergeant B. J. Warren, Commissioner Sir Colin Woods, Sergeant R. G. Brown and Detective Senior Sergeant J. G. Franklin.