

BOWMAN

6645 - 32nd Street, N. W.
Washington 15, D. C.

December 12, 1957

Dr. Karl M. Bowman
3831 Market Street
San Francisco 14, California

Dear Dr. Bowman:

I have heard it stated that a camel is a horse put together by a committee. You are listed as one of 43 members of a committee - The Citizens Advisory Committee to The Attorney General - that built up a horse (camel) with a hump about 40 feet tall. I would like to enlist your aid in pulling it down since I don't believe you have anything to do with building it up and it is now about to mislead an honest, sincere, capable group.

On page 17 of Narcotic Addiction Report to Attorney General Edmund G. Brown by The Citizens Advisory Committee to The Attorney General, March 26, 1954, the following statement occurs. "It is known that we have in our State medical files 32,000 persons who are legally using narcotics medically, although a certain percentage of them may be using it illegally because they are going to several different doctors concurrently."

The Report goes on to infer, at least, that these 32,000 users were addicts and it adds them to 20,000 illegal users to give California a total of 52,000. The capable group I refer to is accepting this, or rather it has been put before them for acceptance.

What I would like for you to do is to find out what the figure 32,000 actually means. I am asking you to find out because, being a member of the Committee, the responsible person in the Attorney General's office or Narcotic Enforcement unit of California would pay more attention to you than to an outsider like myself. Besides I don't know who the responsible person is.

8 What I think happened in this case is based on the following: Narcotics agents in many States make continuous and almost immediate investigations of physicians who prescribe a narcotic, even codeine, to a patient for a few days. I know of a case where they have even invaded a hospital to investigate the prescribing of a narcotic to a patient who has been operated on for cancer of the tongue with metastasis, after which the superintendent, to avoid trouble, ordered a let up on the medicine. In another case just a few months ago, a physician prescribing a few grains of codeine daily for a patient recovering from the effects of a sinus operation was investigated and seriously questioned about the legality of his treatment.

Dr. Bowman -- 12/12/57

In California there probably was in some narcotic file a record of 32,000 cases like the foregoing in which a physician was then, or had been, prescribing a narcotic for a short time and, of course, there would be some patients who actually got the drug continuously because of the severity of their symptoms.

Some clerk asked to get up a list of physician cases would naturally put them all in and whoever wrote up the report would carelessly or maybe ignorantly count them as addicts.

There is another hump perhaps only 20 feet high on this horse (camel) which I recite merely as an illustration of what people will do when they go in for saving the world from narcotics. I think it pinpoints the spirit of the writer of the report. On page 26 you will find that a pound of heroin costs the consumer in California from \$768,000 to \$1,228,800. The author of the report, of course, did not take time to figure that at this price a moderate 6 grains a day addict would spend from \$219,000 to \$350,400 per year.

I don't want you to do anything about this last hump. Its absurdity is obvious, but the 32,000 addict thing needs your help. If you don't feel that you have time to handle it let me know shortly and I will try what now seems a less promising approach to it.

With best regards.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Kolb

P. S. I suppose you have seen or heard of the report on narcotics by the American Medical Association now appearing in the Journal. It is a splendid report that may even cause some of the cranks pause to think.