# *Addict Ruling Poses Problem In California*

By VINCENT THOMAS
Assemblyman, 68th District

Once again a high court has created a big problem for uor California systems of law enforcement and correctional institutions. This time, the U.S. Supreme Court has in effect knocked out California law providing that narcotics addiction is a crime punishable by jail sentence.

The results will be, the Assembly committee on ways and means was told at a recent hearing, to cause the transfer of some 250 or more narcotics addicts now serving terms in local jails to the state narcotic rehabilitation facility. A serious budgetary problem during the coming year for the state corrections agency, which administers the program, and a temporary budgetary windfall for some counties, are likely to follow, the committee was informed.

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THE SPOKESMAN for the corrections agency told the group that it is unconstitutional to jail addicts for punishment, but that committing them to rehabilitation facilities for compulsory treatment is not. County jails have no provision for treatment, so commitment to the state is the only alternative to freeing the addicts.

In our 1961 session, we passed two important laws which stepped up our legal battle against the narcotics evil. First, minimum prison sentences for narcotics peddling were more than doubled. Second, the department of corrections was instructed to establish a narcotics rehabilitation center to provide confinement, specialized treatment, and follow-up control after parole for addicts. The center has been organized, and now almost 900 addicts are being temporarily housed in three correctional institutions, pending the early opening of a separate treatment facility with a capacity of about 2,400 addicts.

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LATEST AVAILABLE estimates place the number of addicts in California at about 12,000, or almost a quarter of the national total. Of these, about 7,000 are either in institutions or on parole. The remaining 5,000 are still at liberty among the general population. The number of known addicts in California prisons jumped a sharp 44 per cent within the last year, to more than 4,500.

The Assembly committee was told that there are about 450 persons now in Los Angeles County jails for narcotics addiction. County authorities are now screening this group, and it is possible that as many as 250 of them must be committed to the narcotics rehabilitation center. Under the new law, they must be committed for from six months to five years if their crimes are misdemeanors, or up to 10 years if they are felonies. Following release, addicts are kept on parole for three years, and are subject to immediate reconfinement during that period if their regular tests show that they have again taken a narcotic.

MOST ADDICTS now in the center come from the southern part of the state, 85 per cent of the total from Los Angeles County. They are young men compared to other inmates in state correctional institutions and most admit that they started use of narcotics between the ages of 14 and 19. Men outnumber women approximately four to one.

No estimates were given the committee as to the possible additional cost to the state of transferring such a large number of addicts to the rehabilitation center. The spokesman for the corrections agency reviewed the problems as one of the many hazards in making long range plans in budgeting for state agencies, as proposed to the committee by an outside consultant. This proposal was also questioned by our legislative analyst, who wondered if the mountains of paperwork involved would be justified by results.

## Garden Checklist

1. Potted geraniums stand more water than many people give them. Every other day is none to often for watering these.
2. Encourage larger blooms on dahlias by pinching outside buds. Water and feed dahlias regularly.
3. Taking long stems when cutting is good practice with established roses. It will further stimulate growth of long stem roses.
4. All container grown shrubs and trees may be set out now. No need to wait for fall.
5. Feed lawns frequently and lightly rather than seldom and heavily. A more even growth will result.

## Wetherbee Gets New Research Post at Aeronca

John K. Wetherbee has been named corporate director of research development and engineering at Aeronca Manufacturing Corp., it was announced here Friday.

In his new position, Wetherbee will work with management of the company's Torrance, Middletown, Ohio, and Baltimore plants. His chief concern is to generate new product ideas.


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