

## What if we legalized marijuana?

**By Jake Storey**

The Liberal government has set a date for its long planned legalization of marijuana. Now, I have never smoked marijuana. By the same token, the number of times I've had alcohol can be counted on one hand and I've never had a cigarette. So what does this writer, who has zero personal gain in the legalization of marijuana think? I spoke with MP Mike Bossio on the subject.

This was one of Trudeau's biggest campaign promises and is likely to have a big impact on all of Canada, economically, criminally and socially. As for how it will specifically affect rural communities like ours, we can't really know. There's never been anything like this in the history of our country. The last time we saw such a widespread prohibition lifted was during the days when alcohol was outlawed in the U.S. and Canada during the early 1900s. Of course, we live in a very different world than we did almost 100 years ago and alcohol is a very different substance than marijuana.

On the subject of prohibition, Bossio had this to say, "During alcohol prohibition, there was no regulation. You didn't know what was in anything you were buying. A lot of people were getting very ill and even dying from alcohol poisoning because of this. So I feel by legalizing marijuana and providing an ingredients list, we can not only boost our economy, take money out of criminal hands, and mitigate the health risks of the drug. Now we're spending tens of thousands of dollars on enforcement that we can't possible enforce."

The subject of what goes into the drug and knowing what you're smoking has been a frequent point for Bossio. "It's been changed a lot," he added. "It's a very different drug than what the youth were smoking back in the '70s and '80s, in my generation."

Bossio says that he wonders why it wasn't legalized decades ago. He's not alone. The potential health risks of marijuana are less severe than those of legal substances such as alcohol and cigarettes. Over in the UK, they are already enjoying the benefits of the active cannabinoids compounds in [CBD products UK](#), which don't come with any of the concerns surrounding marijuana use.

Although, according to the Canadian Medical Association there are zero deaths a year caused by the consumption of marijuana. A far cry from the over 4,000 deaths from alcohol (2015 Chief Public Health Officer's Report) and the whopping 37,000 from cigarettes (University of Ottawa). Talk of legalization has been going for years now. Bossio says that once the government set its plan in motion, it's mostly been a matter of arranging how it's going to be distributed within each province and making sure everyone is on the same page.

The question now is how will this affect us, immediately and long term. Will more people start smoking it? Maybe. I suspect that most people who want to smoke already do so. It's not difficult to get your hands on it; you buy it online at sites like [togoweed.ca/](#). A lot of people who didn't before may try it once it's legal, but I don't see there being a massive spike in regular pot smokers.

Will it boost the economy? Probably. It's not going to be an immediate jump, these things take time and I imagine a lot of people are going to be concerned when they don't see an immediate change. However, there is now cbd online banking for businesses that go into this field, helping them take charge. Economists project that legal marijuana could, in the long term, boost Canada's population by over \$22 billion a year, according to a study by business services firm, Deloitte and reported on by the *Huffington Post Canada*. This is thanks to dispensaries like <https://bud365.ca/> selling so much marijuana that it gives the economy a boost. That is a hefty chunk of money, but how is it going to be used? Bossio's answer was more or less, we don't know yet. He did say what he thinks it should be put toward. "We don't know how the money from this is going to be distributed. That depends a lot on how much taxation there is. But, with education, the rates of alcohol and tobacco abuse have gone down. If we can put some of the money we get from taxation toward educating people about marijuana, we should see similar effects."