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# A small idea for the Prime Minister [1]

Written by **Tim Worstall** [2] | Tuesday 6 May 2008

Dear Prime Minister,

Might I suggest a little something on a subject dear to your heart? We are all waiting for your expected announcement this week on the likely classification of cannabis, should it be upgraded to a Class B drug from the current Class C? We're waiting breathlessly, of course (those of us who indulge perhaps more breathlessly than others) to see whether you're going to ignore the advice of your own hand picked advisors, whether you have bought the entirely spurious arguments about increased drug-induced psychosis and indeed whether you think the higher THC contents in modern 'erb make it more dangerous than previously. That last really confuses me I'm afraid: we've long had alcohol that comes in varying strengths, from beer to wine to whiskey, and consumers seem not to unintentionally down pints of whisky nor purchase beer by the 25ml shot, so I'm not sure what anyone thinks the problem is here.

But anyway, on to my suggestion. Might we try the Dutch solution [3]?

> *"Coffee shops", where small amounts of cannabis have been legally bought and smoked since 1972, have become a major industry and a popular tourist attraction in cities such as Amsterdam.*
>
> *Tax on the 265,000kg of soft drugs sold last year in the 730 cafés netted the government £315 million.*

Rounding out our numbers, and ignoring the point that we have many more people than Holland, currently that £300 million in tax revenue would keep the governmental machine running for an entire five hours! A small enough contribution you might think, but every little counts, does it not? We might also think of the spending savings: the upgrade will raise the possible sentence from 2.5 years to five in jail for simple possession. Given the 3 million regular tokers we are thought to have, do your finances actually contain enough money to cover that potential 7.5 million man years of jail space you might need?

I mention it only as an option, of course: I do understand that you "wish to send a message". It's just that, well, to send a message, umm, don't you know anyone in the advertising industry? I'm sure they'd be delighted to help at considerably lower cost.

yours etc.

Tim Worstall

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