



Department of Justice

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Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst said today that federal criminal prosecutions have increased by more than 50 percent in the past four years while convictions went up by more than 40 percent.

"Some of our critics pointed out that the rate of convictions for 17 selected federal crimes decreased in 1971 from previous years," the Attorney General said in a graduation address at the FBI National Academy at Quantico, Virginia.

"This was put forward as being contradictory to the Nixon Administration's claims of progress against crime."

The critics failed to point out, he said, that total convictions had increased each year during this Administration--from less than 26,000 in fiscal 1968 to more than 37,000 in 1971.

"The reason was that prosecutions had increased substantially --from less than 32,000 in fiscal 1968 to more than 49,000 in 1971."

Mr. Kleindienst said that part of the reason for the slight decline in the conviction rate was that the Justice Department was turning over to local authorities cases that were easier to prove and taking on more difficult cases, such as narcotics and selective service prosecutions.

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He said the 16 percent increase in convictions in fiscal 1972 was "especially impressive since the continued increase in prosecutions means that we are pursuing more and more of the difficult cases."

The Attorney General said the trend was especially marked in the most numerous federal case, narcotics, where prosecutions rose 28 percent and convictions were up by 66 percent.

On the subject of narcotics, he said "I want to make special mention of our concern about lenient sentences that have been given for drug trafficking in many cases.

"It does little good for narcotics officers to risk their lives in arresting dope traffickers if a court lets a convicted violator back on the streets to pursue his evil trade."

The Attorney General noted that President Nixon called attention to lenient sentences given some drug peddlers and asked the Justice Department to survey the situation for possible legislation.

"As a result," Mr. Kleindienst said, "we have drawn up proposed federal legislation that will modify the use of bail for alleged hard-drug traffickers, will prohibit probation for convicted traffickers, and will require mandatory minimum sentences for such traffickers.

"This proposed legislation will be sent to Congress at its next session."