

deterred simply by increasing penalties. More thought must be given to the problem of impaired driving; the simplistic view that excessive penalties is the only solution to this problem is probably not the only one.

I propose that this has been a very worthwhile Bill put before the House. I hope the Government's Bill, Bill C-19, which is designed to deal with this problem as well, will receive passage in the House, because it deals with this serious problem. It is one for all sectors of our society and one to which we must, working together, find the solution.

● (1750)

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview-Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, Bill C-229, an Act to amend the Criminal Code with respect to drunk driving, is a very commendable attempt to deal with a very serious problem. The problem of drunk driving is one which is responsible for the death of thousands of people on our highways every year. This Bill was brought about as a result of a loophole which has been found in our current laws, and a decision of the Supreme Court of Canada in *Boggs*. The proposed amendment to the Criminal Code would make it possible for suspension of driving licenses on conviction of impaired driving and would increase the time of suspension very considerably.

The Hon. Member who introduced the Bill pointed out the very serious toll on the highways resulting from drunk driving. For 1981, 5,379 people in Canada were killed in traffic collisions. Estimates are that roughly half of these were caused by drunk driving.

If we look at the question as to how best to meet this issue and to what extent we can use our criminal law to deter drunk driving, we have to look at the question of certainty of conviction and punishment, and the severity which has been proposed. Unfortunately we have no evidence that increasing severity, within the bounds that would be permissible, has actually helped in reducing drunk driving. Scandinavian studies of incarceration show no reduction in convictions after the introduction of the mandatory jail sentences, nor were persons sentenced to prison any less likely to repeat the offence than those who were only fined. The certainty of being convicted and the certainty of being arrested and charged for drunk driving in Canada, as elsewhere, is unfortunately very low. Estimates are that there are only 1 in 2,000 incidents of impaired driving resulting in arrest.

In Canada after the introduction of the breathalyser test there was a lot of publicity. People were more aware of the possibility of conviction and there was for awhile a reduction in drunk driving. However, people then began to realize that their chances of being caught were frankly not very great, and the rates went up again. The Canadian Addictions Foundation recommends very strongly that we increase the possibility or probability of being convicted rather than deal with severity of sentence. The probability of apprehension has to go up. People have to know that. People have to be aware that they have a good chance of being caught.

Criminal Code

The best way of doing this of course is through spot checks. I might point out that a study done by Transport Canada showed that 77 per cent of regular drivers want more spot checks, that they want to increase the probability of being caught. A survey of 237 experts on drunk driving recommended increased detection. They rated increased severity of sentencing as minimal in having an effect. They also recommended lowering the amount of blood alcohol allowed before a conviction of drunk driving would be registered to .04 or .05, rather than the .08 which we have now.

The problem of merely suspending drivers is that people unfortunately continue to drive after they have been suspended and drive impaired. Passing a law does not necessarily change behaviour. In fact, it seldom changes behaviour. The solutions will not be easy ones. Alcoholism treatment is very difficult. We have enormous research literature on alcoholism treatment. We do not have any reliable methods. There is no way that we can say that, if only society invested in a certain kind of treatment centre or a certain treatment method, we could deal with problem drinkers and once their alcoholism problem has been dealt with they would not go out and drive while drunk again. We do not have any such obvious methods to turn to. Therefore, since we cannot effectively treat the problem after it happens, we have to deal more with preventing it in the first place, that is preventing excessive drunkenness and excessive drinking.

We have to address the whole issue of levels of consumption. Drunkenness is related to levels of consumption. If we increase consumption in our society, we will increase the number of people who consume excessively, and of that number a certain proportion will go out and drive after having consumed too much alcohol. It is naive to believe that we can increase consumption, and that all this increase will simply be by the people who will drink very moderately and then stay home.

Let me quote the Canadian Addictions Foundation expert:

A person can drive home safely hundreds of times after drinking. This conflicts with messages about thousands of people being killed and injured and about the tremendous risks involved, including arrest and punishment. We tend to rely on our own experience and conclude that we are not part of the drunk driving problem.

If we are to deal with this consumption problem, we must deal with the factors that stimulate consumption. One of them is the price of alcohol. Much as we hate to think that higher taxes are any good, higher taxes mean higher prices and actually succeed in reducing consumption. I say this for the benefit of people who participated in the debate on the tourist industry last week. Many Hon. Members recommended reduced prices of alcohol. They cannot have it both ways. If they want reduced prices of alcohol we will have increased consumption, some of which will result in increased deaths on the highways.

Advertising is another issue. It is legal to advertise alcohol in Canada. Enormous amounts of money are spent on advertising. Advertising of alcohol links alcohol with sexual attractiveness, sexual success, sports, fitness, the outdoor life, good wholesome fun, things which are desirable. Of course we