

Criminal Records

inches, feet and pounds, go driver hunting with gusto. Their favourite weapon is the traffic ticket.

Another invention, radar, is still more deadly. On the look-out in the traffic jungle, they watch and stop just in case the first driver that comes along. It even becomes a game, sometimes. They decide, for instance, to stop the driver of every fifth car or of every green car, or so as to make it easier for themselves still, the driver of the car that came to a stop at the red light, as the others are getting away too fast. That is what happened on August 23, 1969.

Who will dare argue in such circumstances? The policeman, hunter and not protector as he should be, invested with the supreme authority that goes with his uniform and his revolver, is infallible. Insinuations, lies, perjury, he is allowed everything. His word is worth more than that of an honest and respected man in public life, even if he is supported by his wife and other eye witnesses. Why? There is the uniform, the club, the revolver, we know that, but there is also the fact that an ineluctable law has been established for the police, namely that they must not lose any case. With his club and his big flat nose, the policeman would sell his own mother if that could help him win a case or save his skin.

A Crown attorney asked me why I argued with the policemen who stopped me since, knowing the law, I could always speak for myself in court, and that is what I did. The results are there to be seen. The good people of this country have known for a long time that it is better to pay \$3, \$5, \$10 or even \$20, even when one is right, than to be insulted in court, where one's word is worth nothing compared to that of a hoodlum policeman and where any citizen can finally get ruined.

As I wished to prove that justice is justice after all, I pleaded not guilty on the four charges with which a sensation-hungry policeman had saddled me on that August 23, 1969. But it was a waste of time. The evidence from my wife and two eye witnesses, apart from myself, could not outweigh the untrue statements of a policeman, supported by a buddy who, wishing at all costs to keep his job and for reasons of solidarity, was willing to corroborate anything, provided he was told about it first. The judge had seemed very sympathetic to me, even though he was employed by the town, as the policemen, and the evidence of my innocence was so crushing that I took it for granted that the four cases

would be won. The policeman's blatant insincerity about two charges could only confirm my innocence as far as the first two were concerned.

You might think that the incident has no relation whatsoever with the bill before us. Maybe, but the very fact I was charged with abusing the police, with opposing arrest, has made of me a criminal. When did you ever see a man driving at 49 miles per hour in a 30 miles per hour zone being handcuffed and taken to jail? Confronted with such flagrant injustice, I thought there would still be men able to use their common sense.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bécharde): Order. I believe the hon. member was right and that he is getting away somewhat from the subject.

Mr. Matte: Mr. Speaker, I could not be closer to my subject and that is what my remarks have tried to prove from the start. The point I am making is that one can have a criminal record simply because of an unfair sentence, thus proving that criminal records should be vacated right after the sentence has been rendered or the fine paid. But what I really want to show is that a lot of people have criminal records and that, for no reason whatsoever.

I would like to give you an example. I described in detail, in a letter addressed to the mayor of Quebec, copy of which I sent to the chief of police, the incidents in which I had been involved.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, completely disregarding the facts stated by a public man who is, I believe, respected as are all our colleagues here, a unilateral decision was rendered. The letter ends as follows:

In view of the complete lack of ethics of these two brutes: I urge and demand that official apologies to my wife and myself be made by the City of Quebec and its police force.

I strongly urge that the municipal police eliminate such fiends from its ranks.

Obviously all charges brought against me should immediately be withdrawn.

The foregoing is without prejudice of any action for damages that could be filed, particularly in relation to the effects of this incident on the health of my wife—

—who was eight months' pregnant at that time.

We all work to build a just society. As a member of Parliament, I must defend fearlessly the interests of all my fellow-citizens.