

is important that these possibilities be developed for the benefit of all the countries concerned.

The political and economic situation has changed considerably since the 1926 agreement was concluded. Any arrangement which might be negotiated now, even more than in 1926, should show full respect for the integrity of all the participants and should reflect the interests of all the countries involved.

At the forthcoming meetings the house can be sure that the Canadian government's approach will be practical and yet farsighted. It will aim to deal effectively with any current difficulties which might be impeding trade. At the same time the Canadian delegation will not overlook any fruitful possibilities for expanding trade to the benefit of all the participants.

ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE—MEDICAL
ASSOCIATION REQUEST FOR COM-
PULSORY BREATHALIZER TESTS

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): On June 15 I asked a question on the orders of the day which was ruled out of order by Mr. Speaker. The question was as follows:

Is the Minister of Justice aware of the action taken yesterday by the Canadian Medical Association in calling for compulsory breathalyzer tests for impaired drivers in view of the urgent national problem involved in the slaughter on Canadian highways.

Since that time, in fact almost one week later, on June 21, what appears to me to have been the greatest Canadian assembly of federal, provincial and industrial highway safety experts ever to meet in Ottawa has placed itself on record unanimously in support of legislation for compulsory breathalyzer tests.

In emphasizing the urgency of the question I tried to ask I wish to point out that in the six or seven days between the day I asked my question and the day the safety conference approved the breathalyzer tests on a mandatory basis, some 90 Canadians have been killed in traffic accidents and some 2,900 injured in traffic accidents. Property damage amounted in those seven days to about \$12 million.

It is estimated that between one third and one half of all traffic accidents involve people who had been using alcohol. Breathalyzer tests are provided for in the Criminal Code on a permissive basis. They are recognized as being foolproof and accurate when conducted by experts under regulations which are

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

scrupulously fair to those subjecting themselves to the tests. The trouble is that the permissive character of the law at the present time enables the hardened drinking driver to escape their effect. He declines to take the test. In other words, while it recognizes the efficiency of the tests the present law does nothing to put drivers on an equal basis when it comes to taking the test. It does nothing to safeguard the rights of the ordinary citizen but it does something to safeguard the privileges of the drinking driver.

Further to the urgency of my question, I point out that Canada has the world's worst traffic accident rate of all countries reporting to the United Nations World Health Organization. We stand either 25th or 26th on the list. It is notable that the Scandinavian countries, which have much more realistic drinking while driving laws than we have, have a record of traffic safety that puts our country to shame.

In asking the Minister of Justice (Mr. Cardin) if he is aware of the need and the growing pressure for legislation to make breathalyzer tests mandatory in cases of impaired driving, I do not do so without having regard for the fact that in some circles there is criticism against this proposal on the ground that it interferes with the civil liberties of the person involved.

My contention, and it is supported by many people in many walks of life, in safety organizations, in the legal sphere, and throughout other states, is that the impartial breathalyzer test no more interferes with the individual's civil liberties than do such things as the taking of fingerprints or the mandatory production at the scene of an accident of drivers' licences, or the mandatory inspection of the vehicles involved in an accident. I conclude by urging the minister to be prepared to back up the findings and the wishes of these neutral traffic safety people who met recently in Ottawa.

Mr. Stanley Haidasz (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources): Mr. Speaker, I would like to assure the hon. member that we on this side of the house appreciate the importance of the traffic death toll on our highways and of the means that should be taken to try to reduce its incidence. As the hon. member knows, many witnesses were called to the hearings of the standing committee on justice and legal affairs which inquired into this matter. They heard such witnesses as Dr.