

Highway Traffic Accidents

Persons Injured

Total	78,417
Drivers	19,508
Passengers	27,012
Pedestrians	9,243
Bicyclists, motorcyclists and passengers ..	2,972
Others	180

May I repeat that during 1957 there were 3,258 deaths resulting from traffic accidents in Canada. This figure implies an enormous cost to the productive resources of the country in terms of lost manpower, taking into consideration that accidents are the third leading cause of deaths for Canadians as a whole but that traffic accidents are the main cause of death in the age group one to 24 years and the second cause of death in the age group 25 to 44 years.

The words of the Hon. George Drew on this subject spoken in 1954 are as true today as they were then, and I should like to quote from page 2455 of *Hansard* for February 25, 1954:

We are dealing with something that can bring the gravest tragedy to families which had every reason to expect a long and happy life together. If a young man is going to drive the engine of a railway train, guide a streetcar or any other fast, heavy vehicle of that kind, it is customary to make sure he is skilled before he gets behind the controls. We are strangely lax in the measure of supervision that is imposed before people can get behind the wheel of an automobile that can move at 100 miles an hour or more, and can carry death and destruction to people who had no reason to be in any doubt that they were going to arrive safely at their destination.

These words are just as true today as they were in 1954 when the hon. gentleman uttered them. Canada, with many of her natural resources still undeveloped and with great potentialities for industry, cannot afford the loss of a single Canadian if it can be avoided. Surely it is the duty of each and every one of us to ensure that young Canadians, your children and mine, have the opportunity to reach maturity and to assume their respective places in our society for the betterment of Canada rather than to be wantonly slaughtered before achieving their birthright.

It seems obvious that we have not adjusted ourselves completely to the motor vehicle even after more than 50 years of acquaintance. If any other machine in the world had such a continued and brutal record of killing and injuring its operators and others would there not be an overwhelming demand that it be made safe to operate?

Driving a car requires more continuous attention on the part of the driver than the operation of any other form of transportation, including the airplane. A person will apply for a licence to drive a car capable of speeds of perhaps 75, 85 or 100 miles an hour. These people may be wearing glasses almost an inch

thick and driving at night in all sorts of weather. Yet they are given drivers' licences without much preliminary examination. Something must be wrong with our system of issuing licences so indiscriminately.

If this problem of accident prevention is ever going to be solved, if the slaughter on the highways is ever going to be brought under effective control, it will be done by adequate education of the public and effective legislation at all levels. To do this, a royal commission, in my opinion, would have to be appointed to investigate the whole problem and to make its recommendations.

I would in no way want to imply that there would be any infringement of provincial authority to grant driving licences. The provinces would continue to do so for their respective jurisdictions, but the possibility of a licensing agency at the federal level should be considered to issue licences to be used by persons when driving in a province other than the one for which the person is licensed or for driving outside the country. Perhaps this is one way in which to control the problem of the indiscriminate issuance of licences to those who should not be licensed to drive at all.

For example, in the case of the inspection of food which goes into interprovincial and export trade, we have federal authorities to assist the local authorities. There are many other examples of this. I might just cite, for example, the licensing in my own profession, medicine. On completing studies a student may choose to write an examination which would entitle him to practise in the province in which the school in which he studied is situated. On the other hand, he may choose to write the so-called medical council of Canada examinations which will permit him to apply for a licence to practise in any province of Canada without any further examination.

Some form of reciprocity with the states of the United States of America might be considered of mutual benefit in so far as errant drivers are concerned who have undesirable records in the field of operating motor vehicles. This problem is so great that it crosses all provincial boundaries and even the international boundary with the United States.

Another aspect which could be considered by a royal commission would be the question of whether or not the present penalties are sufficient. In recent years it seems that the sentences handed out to persons convicted of motor manslaughter have been inadequate. After the expiration of the sentence these persons are once again able to drive, notwithstanding the fact that they have such unfortunate driving records and habits. Surely