

Criminal Code

level of awareness of those who think there is something socially cute about crawling into an automobile light in spirit—no pun intended—but in a totally irresponsible way, attempting to handle a machine they cannot handle. Drunk driving must become socially unacceptable, Mr. Speaker.

Interestingly enough, Sir, research in California and Washington indicates that when we take the licence away from a person it does act as an effective deterrent. More importantly, Sir, the research also demonstrates that when there is a large amount of publicity to the taking away of a licence, the deterrent value is greatly increased. That, also, is what my Bill would do. It would mean suspending licences automatically, in a harsh way. But, Sir, that harshness must be balanced against the dangers and damage to society as a result of drinking and driving.

I note, Mr. Speaker, that the Gentleman of the Black Rod will be arriving. I would only ask that my time be extended as necessary. I will continue until the knock draws your attention.

Drunk drivers must be held responsible for their actions. Drinking and driving should not be socially acceptable. The drunk driver must be viewed more as a turkey than as a man. The John Wayne syndrome of heavy drinking in North America is too dangerous and too expensive.

Some will argue, Mr. Speaker, that my Bill is harsh. They will argue that people need to drive their cars for reasons of work or care of their family, or to attend church. However, the fact that 2,600 Canadians died in 1980 because of drunk drivers is reason enough to bring an abrupt halt to this "socially acceptable" murder. Criminal law treats those who cause death and injury as having committed a felony. It should be no less serious an offence to kill or maim while under the influence of alcohol. If we are to be our brother's keeper, then it is best that we act with all the preventive measures we can. The prevention of drinking and driving is a matter of the deterrent.

I want to set before you, Mr. Speaker, an example of what has happened in some of the Norse countries where it is a very serious offence to be found driving a car while under the influence of alcohol. In some cases it can mean a suspension of a driver's licence for life. In those countries it is very common to find one person at a party who drinks coffee or soda pop and takes the responsibility for making sure that the others are delivered home safely. We need similar penalties to accomplish the same thing in this country. We cannot afford, neither in human life nor property damage, to allow persons to irresponsibly get behind the wheel of an automobile and aim it like a ballistic missile at innocent men, women and children. We need to bring this issue to the attention of all Canadians, and that can best be done when the penalties are severe enough and the deterrent is strong enough that it is imprinted on their minds.

For those reasons, Mr. Speaker, I have a bill before the House which calls for a penalty, for the first offence of drinking and driving, of suspension of a driver's licence for one year. A second offence would mean licence suspension for three years. Subsequent offences would mean five years' sus-

pension. In those cases where there has been death or maiming as a result of a person driving while drinking, then the suspension in the first offence would be for ten years and in a subsequent offence for life. While that may at first blush seem harsh, we have to remember the fact that between 1973 and 1979 more Canadians died from drunk driving accidents than were killed in action during World War II. In the past two years there were more people killed by drunk drivers in the U.S. than the total number of Americans killed during the entire Vietnam War.

We have had in North America a sort of culture of slapping leather and drinking hard on a Saturday night at the square dance, drinking until one finds he can no longer stand. Then along came a European culture of drinking while we eat, of having wine with meals, and drinking socially in the evening. It did not come into North America and replace the first culture. It came and added to the first culture. Now we have a continent which does both, rather than having selected one or the other. The result is that on one side of the ledger we have situations of maiming, disfiguration, ruined careers, ruined relationships, the loss of self-confidence and the loss of life itself. We have the loss of \$2.4 billion in Canada annually from automobile accidents. On the other side of the ledger we have the question of the right to drive.

• (1720)

It is upon that concept that I wish to focus for a moment. Largely because of the great diverseness of our land, which is the second largest nation in the world, we have come to believe that transportation is a right, that being able to drive a car is a right. I submit it must be viewed as a privilege. It ought always to be viewed as a privilege because every province requires that we become licensed before we can drive. Every province requires that you pass a driver's test before you can drive. Since it is the rule of the provinces that you must pass a test to drive, surely we ought not allow persons to drive on the basis that they are too drunk to walk. Yet in so many instances, after having passed the test initially, in later years persons climb into automobiles while inebriated and without ability to drive. Somehow in a cultural context they still presume it to be a right rather than a privilege.

My next submission is not in my Bill, but I would recommend that it become a part of our thinking towards driving. In recognition of the fact that to drive is a privilege rather than a right, before any person is given a driver's license they should sign a form giving consent for persons arriving on the scene of an accident to take a blood sample for the measurement of alcohol. Consider all the media attention which was given to the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 1970s. Then recognize that in any two year period in the United States there are as many people killed by drunk drivers as there were in the whole Vietnam War. That ought to underscore the seriousness of the problem.

I do not think we are being too harsh at all when we submit that we need stiffer penalties. Although it is not in my Bill, I would advocate that upon receipt of a driver's license we sign