

*Criminal Code*

terrible gap in our law and to put some real teeth into our law. However, let me say again that I would like to remove all doubt about the permitted amount of alcohol in the blood when driving by setting it at a figure of .1 per cent. Then, there would be no argument about it whatsoever. If the police were able to establish that you did have this percentage of alcohol in your blood, there would hardly be any need for more evidence before the courts.

Some people argue that breathalyzers or blood tests are an invasion of our privacy. I am inclined to agree with that. But I must say that if one were to weigh the right to privacy against the terrible toll of human life, then I am sure that those of us who think we should drive with reasonable care and regard for other people believe that this small invasion of our privacy is well worth giving up if we are to remove this blight of modern civilization from our highways which results in the loss of the lives of hundreds and thousands of people.

So, I add my one small voice to those in favour of the better features of this bill. These people have put a great deal of time and effort into the preparation of these amendments in the standing Committee. I think we should certainly give them a fair chance. If we find that this law is too severe, it should be toned down. I believe that at present there is something seriously wrong in the law. I think we must take a bold step forward and make sure that people who murder on the highways are no longer permitted to do so by sloppy laws, by weak courts and by a poor administration of the law.

Here, I would like to add one or two words of warning. It is not good enough to have stringent laws; it is not good enough to have a well thought out and a well meaning Criminal Code setting down the permitted percentage of alcohol in the blood unless there is a police force which is well trained and respected to enforce those provisions.

• (9:10 p.m.)

One of the most important things any police force can do, in my opinion, is to spend about 90 per cent of its time on prevention rather than trying to deal with the ill after it has occurred. Preventive police work is what we need. Although the public may be careless and hard to train, and slow to recognize its rights—I speak in this part of my talk to the policemen—those who are entrusted with the work of law enforcement have no excuse for ever forgetting that they are the

[Mr. Bigg.]

servants of the public, not their bosses. They are expected to keep their tempers in all situations. After all, it is not they who are drunk; it is not they who are breaking the traffic laws; their job is to see that everybody gets home in the best of humour.

On several occasions during my training and during my service I saw policies laid down which had a dramatic effect on the safety of the community in which I lived. During 1938-39, in the city and environs of Winnipeg, a world traffic safety record was established of 228 days without a single fatal accident. This was in greater Winnipeg, a city with a population of some 400,000 people. How was such a record established? The reason was this: the police took the lead in courtesy; they treated the public as if the public were their friends and as though they were there for one purpose only, to make the highways safe for the people. They stopped drivers with kindness and courtesy whenever they saw an infringement of the traffic rules and asked the public for its co-operation. This approach to the enforcement of the law, a new one at that time, I believe, had such a dramatic effect that it spread to everybody in the area and for two-thirds of a year not a life was lost. These things must start with the police; the public will respond when they find that the policeman is their friend.

The civil authorities which hire and discipline the police and set the general tone of the force have been somewhat guilty over the years. There are some municipal police forces which demand, particularly of young members, that they work on some kind of quota system. Rookie constables are sent on the beat with a traffic book and unless that book is filled with tickets before the end of the patrol they are not considered to be efficient policemen. This has one of the worst effects on the enforcement of law that I know.

There is hardly a man who has not been stopped at some time or another for driving at 61 miles an hour in a 60 mile zone, perhaps been treated roughly by the police and given a ticket instead of a warning. I am not saying this is general but at times it is certainly the case. There are certain roads in Canada which are known as revenue lanes. Wherever this practice occurs it should be put down with rigour by the people who know about it. If reasonableness is shown, the public will respond. The public generally wish to be law-abiding. Occasionally they break the traffic laws, as each of us has done on more than one occasion by hurrying home, forgetting