

## Editorial

Succeeding Mr W. S. Edwards, C.M.G., who was superannuated on account of ill health, Frederic Percy Varcoe, K.C., became Deputy Minister of Justice on Oct. 1, 1941. He was born of English parents at Toronto on Oct. 1, 1889, educated at Harbord Collegiate, University of Toronto, and Osgoode Hall. He was appointed advisory counsel to the Department of Justice on Nov. 16, 1916, senior advisory counsel on Apr. 1, 1923, and assistant deputy minister on Dec. 13, 1940. With his wife and two sons he now resides in Ottawa. The Force wishes him well.

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By order in council a speed limit of forty miles per hour became effective throughout Canada on May 1, 1942. The immediate purpose, it is well understood, is to bring about a more economic use of motor vehicles and thereby a saving of gasoline, rubber and oil; but it will be interesting to return to this subject, perhaps a year from now, to see whether some other important results have not accrued as well.

**Speed and the War** Last autumn it was suggested in the *Quarterly* that there should be a highway traffic code to govern the operation of motor vehicles throughout the dominion. The present order is proof that it can be done; it remains to be seen whether other steps will be taken towards that end, for example, in the uniform marking of highways, or in the fixing of a uniform speed limit for municipalities.

Despite incessant warnings and a tragic catalogue of sudden deaths, maimings and grief it has not been realized sufficiently, we think, that the automobile at speed is a very powerful and dangerous missile. The Hon. Mr Justice Blair, speaking over the British radio in 1937, translated that fact into these terms:

"A small motor car weighing about a ton and moving at a speed of forty miles per hour strikes the same blow as eighteen ten-ton steam rollers travelling at their highest speed, which is three miles per hour. That is the force you are handling when you speed up a light car to forty miles per hour—sixty feet per second. If you are driving a big seven-seater two-ton car at sixty miles per hour (ninety feet per second), its kinetic energy is more than that of a hundred ten-ton steam rollers moving at three miles per hour."

Police officials too have warned of the large percentage of traffic fatalities in which high speed has been a factor. Under the new order it may be expected that the number of these accidents will diminish—indeed, the incomplete statistics already available show that during the reduced speed limit's first month of operation there was a sharp decline in the dominion's highway accident and accident fatality toll. Although there has been a tremendous upswing in industrial and military traffic, there seems to be no doubt at all that gas rationing and the tire situation have greatly decreased highway traffic; and it is possible that the resulting saving of life and limb will be due so much to the lessened number of vehicles as to afford no valuable comparison.

On the whole, we believe that for the average motorist this order will bring a sense of relief. Few things could be more disconcerting to him than to be checked up in one locality for driving too fast, and in another to be regarded as a slow-coach who must be speeded up 'to keep the traffic moving'. And the knowledge that the law is the same from province to province, if not always in the municipalities, should help to bring about the public cooperation which is so needful for the successful operation of the order, especially if it is brought home to the