

standing committee. There have been discussions with all Parties. The House Leader for the Official Opposition has apparently agreed to this and the House Leader for the New Democratic Party has also agreed. If you would care to proceed, Mr. Speaker, to Committee of the Whole and third reading stages at this time, I believe you will find there is consent to do that.

● (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): At this time it makes it a little more difficult, because we just passed a motion to refer it to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills and Standing Orders. However, if that is the disposition, we can reverse the decision. Is this agreed?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, indeed there have been discussions which have taken place between the three House Leaders. There is a disposition, at least from our standpoint, that this Bill move through Committee of the Whole and be passed in all stages today.

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time, considered in Committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Shall all orders and items preceding Motion No. 62 be allowed to stand by unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

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CRIMINAL CODE

MEASURE TO AMEND

Mr. Arnold Malone (Crowfoot) moved that Bill C-229, an Act to amend the Criminal Code (drunk driving) be read a second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs.

He said: Mr. Speaker, of all our nation's serious problems, the issue of drinking while driving must be considered as one most needing attention. The fact that drunk driving is a serious problem is well known. The extent, however, of that seriousness is not as well appreciated. During the night-time hours a full 25 per cent of all drivers have been reported to have had alcohol in their bodies. On weekends between the hours of midnight and 3.00 a.m., 40 per cent of all drivers have been reported to have alcohol in their bodies. In terms of medical costs, property damage and loss of work or education, the total national cost every year is estimated to be some \$2.5 billion.

Criminal Code

Some of these people, so drunk that they cannot speak coherently and cannot walk in a co-ordinated fashion, all to frequently climb into 5000 pounds of metal and hurl that object at some 60 miles per hour down a public thoroughway presenting great danger to all persons who are nearby.

What is at stake for the innocent men, women and children who become the victims of drinking drivers? Every day in Canada, Sir, some 400 persons are convicted of driving while having an intoxicating level of alcohol in their bodies. In this country 14 million persons are driving automobiles every year for a total of some 9 million miles. It is noted that in that number of 14 million drivers, 850,000 of them are involved in accidents every year.

More importantly, Sir, of those accidents in which there are fatalities, a full 50 per cent are reported to have been caused by people under the influence of alcohol. It is for those reasons we have to bring this situation to a national focus and attention. Drunk drivers, Mr. Speaker, are killing 2,500 Canadians annually. That number ought to shock us all into recognizing that the problem is of great concern.

It is not just a Canadian problem, but a North American problem. The statistics of Canada, with one-tenth of the population of the United States, interestingly enough, parallel American statistics. In effect, what these figures underline is the fact that we are culturally bound to its patterns of alcohol consumption and involvement in accidents. In the United States there has been a social cost of between \$21 billion and \$24 billion because of drunk drivers over the past decade. In the same period 250,000 persons lost their lives to reckless carnage or drunk driving.

In order to bring to light the seriousness of this problem I will give this example. Between 1973 and 1978 as many Canadians died from drinking and driving as Canadian soldiers were killed in the total of the Second World War. In the United States in any two-year period of this decade, there are as many people who are killed as were killed in all of the Vietnam war. That is the extent to which drinking and driving has become a social problem in North America.

● (1710)

In the United States somewhere between one of 500 to one of 2,000 of impaired drivers are arrested and convicted of impaired driving. More than one half of all drunk drivers involved in fatal accidents in the U.S. had blood alcohol levels of more than twice the legal limit. In a study in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, it was pointed out that between 1973 and 1978 some 11,500 persons were killed in automobile accidents, and in 42.5 per cent of those cases one driver had been drinking. Stop and think, Sir, about what I have just said. In 42.5 per cent of the accidents which killed 500 persons, one driver had been drinking. Those statistics underline that the situation needs real action, and my Bill proposes to take that action.

We know it is incumbent upon our society to start a war against persons who drink and drive. We need to heighten the