

Get tough with drinking drivers

**By ALF STONG
MPP - York Centre**

After a year of investigating highway safety across the Province, an all-party committee of the Legislature has called upon the government to get tough with those who drink and drive.

The consumption of alcohol in Ontario is increasing.

Almost 90 per cent of all citizens over 15 drink at least once a year; 13 per cent drink every day; and there are an estimated 200,000 alcoholics.

The Committee recommends that police be empowered to seize the keys of impaired, as well as raising the drinking age to 19, the establishment of compulsory education and treatment programs for people convicted of impaired driving, and a crack-down on advertising which depicts alcohol as a "desirable and necessary part of the good life".

The Committee's proposals would make it harder to get and keep a driver's licence and would require the police to be more vigilant and more visible in enforcing the law on highways.

Alcoholism is the number one enemy of the Canadian Armed Forces, according to the head of Canada's Defence Ministry's Drug and Alcohol Program.

Men in uniform with a drinking problem are given six months to "pull up their socks" and quit drinking, or leave the forces.

Apparently one difficulty in the campaign against heavy drinking for servicemen was to convince senior officers that over-indulging in alcohol was no longer part of the armed forces' tradition.

The military brass had to change its ideas because drinking servicemen were a security risk and "potential disasters".

In its many forms, alcohol has been around for centuries, and thousands of people use it for pleasure and relaxation, with wisdom.

However, many people misuse alcoholic beverages, and the costs to physical, mental and social health are high — unacceptably high.

In excess of 600,000 Canadians are alcoholics, but no statistics can possibly give the true picture of the people who die or are injured in road accidents, the costs of administering the law and providing treatment and rehabilitation, the costs in human suffering

to family, friends, the costs to business, industry and labour — to our society — in one way or another, of work not done to full capacity, or payments for on-the-job injuries caused by alcohol-related problems.

The results of drinking and driving are particularly serious, and Metro police have launched a major crack-down on drunk drivers, with an all-day, every-day program of breathalyzer tests in the borough of Etobicoke.

This campaign has been endorsed by the Ontario Motor League and the Addiction

Research Foundation.

If the experiment is successful, it will probably be extended through Metro, and subsequently throughout the Province, according to the Solicitor-General.

Teenage drinking is cause for concern. A 1976 Addiction Research Foundation survey revealed that: among 1,439 high school students in Ontario, 86 per cent drank alcoholic beverages, although fewer than 25 per cent were of legal age; of the drinkers, more than 50 per cent drank more than twice a month.

In Toronto, for

example, persons aged 18 and under account for about 7.6 per cent of all drunkenness charges.

In 1973 and 1974, 3.5 per cent of the admissions to a detoxification centre were people under age 21. In 1974, alcohol was involved in 5,383 collisions of drivers aged 16 to 19, an 18 per cent increase over 1973.

Dr. Saul Levine, a psychiatrist at the Hospital for Sick Children has said "We're seeing more younger alcoholics in the past couple of years than ever before".

He believes the youth alcoholism problem is partly the result of a change in the outlook of

youth in relation to other drugs, and partly a reflection of the "current ethos in society — booze is in."

As long ago as September 1974, the "Toronto Star" carried an article, headlined "We're heading for holocaust with boozing", by Sidney Katz, an expert on social problems.

The stories he told were frightening, the facts and statistics formidable testimony to the harm which is done to our society by heavy drinking.

For instance, "heavy drinkers are responsible for as many as half the 7,000 Canadians killed

and 250,000 injured in car accidents"; "heavy drinking plays a significant role in suicide, murder, crimes of violence and industrial absenteeism and accidents"; "a high proportion of people who lost their lives in drownings and pedestrian accidents had previously been drinking heavily".

Mr. Katz suggested, as one measure to help bring the situation under control, that effective educational programs should be initiated on the subject of alcohol and drinking in all schools, beginning in kindergarten.

He felt the principal

message to parents should be contained in another educational program which stressed the fact that the parents' example will be the greatest single influence in our children's lives and on their drinking patterns.

If parents drink unwisely — to escape from pressure or to avoid responsibility or because getting drunk is equated with having a good time — the lesson will not be lost on the young people.

No matter what wise words of advice may be given the ultimate result will be that children will do as we do rather than do as we say.

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IN THE MATTER OF THE ONTARIO HERITAGE ACT, 1974 S.O. CHAPTER 122 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE LANDS AND PREMISES KNOWN MUNICIPALLY AS 37 AND 39 COLBOURNE STREET, THORNHILL, IN THE TOWN OF MARKHAM, IN THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO.

NOTICE OF INTENTION TO DESIGNATE

Take notice that the Council of the Corporation of the Town of Markham on the 14th day of June, 1977, decided to designate the lands and buildings, known municipally as 37 and 39 Colbourne Street, Thornhill, Ontario, as a property of architectural and historical value or interest under The Ontario Heritage Act, 1974, S.O. Chapter 122.

The lands and buildings comprising 37 and 39 Colbourne Street in Thornhill, Ontario, are recommended for designation for architectural and historical reasons as good examples of a type of building prevalent to the area in the middle of the 19th century. The double or semi-detached house was a common sight in the early stages of Canadian domestic architecture, especially in milling villages such as Thornhill.

This particular double house was owned by Thomas Hamill Robinson, a carpenter, and he most likely rented it to workers from Thornhill's mills located along the nearby Don river.

The property and dwellings are important in terms of the local streetscape as the easternmost units of a series of houses between Yonge Street and Church Lane. This area forms the best preserved and perhaps the most typical section of the old village of Thornhill.

Notice of Objection to the designation may be served on the Clerk within thirty days of the 5th day of October, 1977.

DATED at Markham this 5th day of October, 1977.

Diane Smith Clerk

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