

Drivers of Motor Cars Cause 120 Deaths Since 1930 in Winnipeg Area

Drivers of motor cars have killed 120 people in Greater Winnipeg, since 1930, according to statistics the Free Press has obtained, which means that one person was killed every two weeks in automobile accidents.

In addition to the 120 who were killed, there were 1,767 persons injured, some of them so seriously that they will be cripples for the rest of their lives.

The table of deaths and injured follows hereunder in its appalling ghastliness:

Year	Killed	Injured
1930	29	408
1931	25	392
1932	23	347
1933	17	300
1934	20	298
1935 to date	6	22

Prosecutions

Although 120 people were killed there were only 12 prosecutions for manslaughter and criminal negligence. One other prosecution was started, but was dropped by the crown.

Of the 12 people actually prosecuted in the courts for fatalities arising out of automobile accidents, six were acquitted. Three were convicted of manslaughter, and three others for the lesser offence of criminal negligence.

In the three manslaughter convictions, only one went to jail, and stayed there, and that was Peter Kushner, convicted at the March assizes this year, and sentenced to 12 months in Headingly jail by Mr Justice Adamson.

The other two manslaughter convictions went to appeal. One of the convictions was quashed. In the other case the Manitoba appeal court upheld the conviction, but there was a further appeal to the supreme court of Canada, where the conviction was set aside, and a new trial ordered.

Three others were found guilty of criminal negligence. One was allowed to go on suspended sentence; a second had a 12-month term of imprisonment reduced to that of one month, while, in the third case, the prisoner was given a penitentiary term of two years.

In other words, with a death record of 120 persons in Greater Winnipeg in the last five years, only three persons have actually

gone to prison and stayed there and out of 12 prosecutions there have been six convictions.

An article in the Fortnightly Law Journal, of Feb. 1, 1935, on the subject of motor car accidents, is timely and pointed. The Journal says that "a motorist who kills by criminal negligence, in other words commits manslaughter, is no less a criminal than the employee who borrows his employer's money to play the market or the races." It has even stronger words for jurymen who sit on manslaughter cases, remarking that "the public rises in righteous indignation over the defaulting employee, but twelve men sworn to find a true verdict are prepared time and time again to commit perjury to temper the rigorous consequences of the motorist's crime."

Why should a person who has taken a human life be regarded as less a criminal than another person who has committed a crime against property, the Journal inquires, pointing out that in the eyes of the law, a crime against the person is much more serious than one against property.

Stern Punishment Urged

Stern punishment is advocated as the only cure for the careless and reckless or incompetent driver. "If every motorist knew that any act of negligence of his that took life would be certainly punished, as manslaughter usually is with from 10 to 15 years' imprisonment . . . such knowledge would usher in an era of safe driving . . . and the effect upon road accident statistics would come as a shock to those who preach the sophistry that motoring crimes are no crimes," the paper declares.

The motor accident toll will continue to rise despite safety campaigns and other palliatives, the Journal submits, until the public properly classifies the careless driver as a criminal deserving and receiving punishment.

"Once the motorist understands that he must respect the rights of others on the roads just as he must respect property and other rights, some of the selfish driving, which with thoughtless driving — just about the same thing — causes fully nine out of ten serious accidents, will disappear," the Law Journal writer declares.

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