

NEW ZEALAND WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN TEMPERANCE UNION

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"For God, and Home, and Humanity"

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the Business Manager, to whom all payments
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ments and subscriptions must be made.

versity, protested energetically against
the practice of entrusting chemical
analyses to police agents. None but
a medical man should be allowed to
carry out blood, urine, or breath anal-
yses and to supply clinical tests. The
same rapporteur, at a special medical
meeting was able to give the precise
results of experiments carried out in
his Institute showing the slowing down
of acoustic and visual reflexes after a
consumption of wine producing a blood
alcohol content of 1 to 1.5 per cent.

Prof. Goldberg, first rapporteur, de-
monstrated with the aid of abundant
material, that the same quantity of
alcohol, taken in the form of spirits,
produces a higher blood alcohol con-
tent than would be the case for an
equivalent quantity of beer. In the
discussions the luminous remarks of
Prof. Liljestränd of the Medical Insti-
tute of Stockholm, were followed with
the greatest interest.

The second day of the conference
was devoted to the study of the legal
measures proposed for combating the
danger of alcohol at the wheel.

Here great differences of conception
were revealed. However, all the mem-
bers were agreed upon the efficacy of
the withdrawal of the driving licence.
M. Thiéry, president of the Belgian
Automobile Club, declared this measure
to be the best possible deterrent. In
Finland, on the other hand, the driver
under the influence of alcohol, in the
case of an accident, may be liable to a
prison sentence of as much as seven
years.

There was also a great divergency of
views in regard to the blood alcohol
content which may be tolerated. In
Norway the limit is fixed at 0.5% with
a margin of 0.15%, whereas Switzer-
land admits in general a maximum
alcohol content of 1% for private
drivers (the professional chauffeur
being obliged to abstain from any
alcohol consumption while he is on
duty).

The third day of the conference was
devoted to questions relating to **tem-
perance education and teaching**. The
speakers were **Bentley** (English),
Blomberg (Swedish), **Rognlien** (Nor-
wegian) and **Simila** (Finnish). The
observations of **Mr. Thrupp**, chief of
the Transports Section of the Econo-
mic and Social Council of the United
Nations were likewise much appreci-
ated.

Very interesting also were **Mr.
Nelker's** remarks stating that **some
insurance companies granted abstain-
ing motorists a reduction of 33.3% on
their insurance premium**.

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ALCOHOL AND ROAD
TRAFFIC

First International Conference

STOCKHOLM, 1950

Following a decision taken by the
International Temperance Union at
Lucerne in 1948, the Swedish Tem-
perance Group undertook to organise at
Stockholm, under the chairmanship of
Governor Ruben Wagnsson and with
the aid, as general secretary, of Direc-
tor Sten Rosell, admirably seconded by
his wife, Mrs. Jeanne Rosell, an inter-
national conference on alcohol and road
traffic.

The Crown Prince of Sweden,
H.R.H. Gustavus Adolphus, had kindly
assumed the patronage of the Confer-
ence and the Honorary Committee was
composed of the highest Swedish
authorities with H.E. Mr. Erlander,
Prime Minister and H.E. Mr. Osten,
Minister for Foreign Affairs, at their
head. The Swedish Government had
undertaken to invite the foreign
governments to send delegates, and **22
countries** had accepted. Among them
were the representatives of the govern-
ments of Belgium, Canada, France,
Great Britain, Holland and Switzer-
land.

The Transports Organisation of the
United Nations had delegated **Mr.
Thrupp**, and the World Health Organi-
sation, **Dr. Wolff**.

At its first meeting the Conference
elected as president Minister Tapio
Voionmaa, General Secretary at the
Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Helsinki,
and president of the International
Temperance Union, whose ability and
discretion greatly contributed to make
the debates run smoothly.

The reports and discussions which
followed plainly showed that much
effort will still be required in all
countries to combat the danger of
alcohol at the wheel.

It is comprehensible that the wine-
growing countries should be inclined
to consider the grosser forms of alco-
holism as the great danger to traffic
safety, whereas it is the cases of slight
intoxication, often regarded with a

smile, which are the most to be feared.
For it is the early stages of intoxica-
tion which give the driver a false
feeling of security whilst a person in
a state of advanced drunkenness be-
comes very quickly incapable of driving
a motor vehicle at all.

Opinions at Stockholm were divided
upon the best methods of **diagnosing
intoxication in its early stage**; this
was seen in the discussions of the
first day.

Whilst the northern countries and
Switzerland are in favour of the **blood
test, completed** by the clinical diagnos-
tic which is dependent on the attitude
of the doctor with regard to alcohol,
England regards this test as an in-
fringement of the liberty of the sub-
ject and other countries, like Italy and
Spain, leave the diagnosis entirely to
the examining physician. The United
States, on the other hand, recommend
a combined chemical and medical
examination, but instead of the blood
test they prefer the **expired air test**,
for which they employ the "drunk-
ometer," several models of which were
on view at Stockholm, doubtless for
the first time in Europe. In some of
these models the presence of alcohol
is revealed by the use of a reagent of
potassium permanganate and sulphuric
acid. **Professor Harger** of the Univer-
sity of Indianapolis, presented a
"drunkometer" which is widely used in
the United States. The person sus-
pected of being under the influence of
alcohol breathes into an indiarubber
bulb from which the air passes through
the reagents. **Professor Greenberg**, of
Yale University, has doubtless carried
the mechanisation farthest. His appa-
ratus works automatically and with all
the technical guarantees, so that the
subject has only to breathe into a tube
and the police agent, after pressing
successively a series of buttons, obtains
in 8 minutes, marked upon a dial, the
amount of the blood alcohol content.

The Canadian expert, **Smith**, among
others, uses for the expired air test,
small test tubes which absorb the
alcohol.

Prof. Dettling, Director of the
medico-legal Institute of Berne Uni-