

Remarks on the Proposal to Secure a National Charter for the National Safety Council

By HONORABLE CLIFFORD DAVIS

Member from Tennessee, United States House of Representatives

During past years certain organizations in this country have been recognized by the Federal Government through the granting of National Charters. It is perfectly clear that any organization selected for this honor should be one which has an outstanding record of service and usefulness to the nation as a whole. It should be an organization which operates without profit, without regard to creed or color, and without regard to political or sectional affiliations.

In my judgment, the National Safety Council meets all of the qualifications, and more, which might be properly set up as the basis for granting of a Federal Charter. Born thirty-seven years ago, this organization has come to such a place of pre-eminence, and has sold itself so substantially to the country at large that I feel it would be a most natural and appropriate act for the National Government to grant a charter.

I am glad to say that a big step has been taken in this direction; the House of Rep-

resentatives has unanimously passed the bill which authorizes the charter. The charter bill has also been introduced in the Senate, and I sincerely believe that favorable action may be expected in the early days of 1950. In this connection it is important for you to know, also, that there is under consideration in the Senate a separate bill, setting up standards for Federal Chartering, which all organizations would have to reach to obtain such national recognition. Personally, I have no doubt whatsoever about the National Safety Council's ability to meet whatever standards may be set up.

It is a pleasure to make this report to the members of the National Safety Council, meeting at this Congress, and I look forward to the day when the President of the United States will affix his signature to a charter bill which will bring added prestige and honor to this great organization, and to the safety movement as a whole, in which you and I are proud to have a part.

We Prefer Murder

By K. FRANCES SCOTT, M. D.

President, The National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs

Americans are sentimental folk. We abhor war and weep over the casualty lists. When disaster, such as flood, fire or hurricane, strikes anywhere in the world we open our pocketbooks and loudly call for reforms to prevent recurrences.

Then we belie our own feelings by turning a cold shoulder to accidents that happen one by one, but pile up totals of killed and maimed greater than the casualties of war and disaster. With a continuing record of 100,000 deaths a year from accidents, plus 10,000,000 injuries, at a cost of 7½ billion dollars only one conclusion can be drawn. Americans still prefer murder and self-destruction by accidents.

Today I would like to discuss this prob-

lem with you from two standpoints, first from that of physician and educator who has dealt with college students for three decades and second as representative of the largest organization of business and professional women in the world.

From the standpoint of the former I am especially concerned over the third of the three safety E's—education. From the standpoint of the latter I am concerned with the neglect to use efficiently our local service clubs in the safety program.

Undeniably great progress has been made in safety promotion in this country, but largely through use of the first two safety E's, engineering and enforcement. Where laws and regulations, inspections and en-

forcement are possible, accident rates have dropped. This is especially true of industry, large businesses and public transportation. But where laws and inspections are less applicable, accident rates still climb. Such are the fields of home and farm, now furnishing our highest accident rates. We would have to be a "police state" indeed if we depended for home and farm safety on laws against slippery rugs, wobbly ladders, unlighted halls and steps, cluttered stairs, etc. There are certain fields where these two E's do not apply well.

But even in the fields where engineering and enforcement are possible and used they alone do not stop all accidents. Take some illustrations from various industrial occupations. Analysis shows that the "*unsafe practices and acts*" of the worker himself cause from 50 to 80 per cent of the accidents. In the home and on the farm the human being is largely responsible for the accidents. On the highway the motorist and the pedestrian cause most of the accidents.

It is high time we realized that our next great task in safety is persuading the *human being to like* safety rather than murder and destruction. And the way to accomplish that is less by law than by education. We are faced with the task of making safety, instead of danger, appealing and glamorous; of making human beings cooperative and understanding rather than hostile and ignorant.

In fact our job is to *convert* the *unsafe* human being into a *safe* person; to persuade people to *like* safety. The largely forgotten and much neglected factor in accidents, the human being, must be effectively dealt with.

Education is a tricky thing. It must use normal human motivations to succeed. It is my contention that so far safety education has had two glaring educational faults. It has employed far too much of the "scare 'em stiff" method and has depended too much on "don't do this" instead of "let's try this."

Call to mind all the magazine articles, the advertising posters, the movies, etc., that stress horror and fear as a motive for safety. I doubt if these are any more effective than the old "Hellfire" preaching was in setting us all on the road to heaven!

The plain fact is that the human being

is incapable of maintaining a prolonged state of fear. That is a very ineffective motivation for human conduct, especially for young people. We "don't scare good," we Americans.

Negative, "don't do this," education is also bad. May I offer an example from observation of what strikes me as very negative safety education? Daily I see squads of school children conducted across the streets by police officers. Yes, this procedure undoubtedly saves lives *at that moment* and could not be abandoned. Yet in that same city never a day goes by but what some child runs out from behind a parked car into the road and is hit; or plays unseen back of a car in a driveway and is run over; or rides his bike into the back or door of a stopped car. What kind of safety education is it that does not teach a child *how to act safely* when the school traffic officer is not around? I am heretic enough to believe it is of more value to teach a child how to cross the street safely in the middle of a block than to let his teaching be to wait for the policeman to lead him across by the hand.

Safety education should be positive—should show the *safe and efficient way*. We Americans are proud of our skills and efficiency. Why not use these as motivations for safety? These appeal greedily to the age groups that at present furnish us our highest accident rates. Why does the youngster like excessive speed and disregard traffic regulations? He is showing off his skill and efficiency in handling a car. He is living romantically and subduing his environment as his ancestors conquered the wilderness and the wild beasts. Until we use these motivations to satisfy his ego *safely*; until we make safety *a skill to be proud of*, we shall have trouble with the young driver.

We are told that the "accident prone" person may be responsible for as high as 80 per cent of the accidents. Yet very few places pay any attention to the reeducation of this safety-sick individual. The nation was recently shocked by the death by taxicab of a prominent woman author. Yet we should have been more shocked when we learned that the driver had 22 traffic offenses to his record and was still allowed to drive. We need to tackle the accident prone person as the individual problem of an emotionally sick human being.

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How are the people in the home to be educated in safety? Having in my lifetime watched three generations of housewives operate in the home I am not discouraged. My mother's generation made very inefficient and messy housekeepers. Mechanical gadgets appalled them. Their methods were unplanned, laborious and scatterbrained. My own generation was somewhat better. We had more experience with mechanics. The modern housewife is very apt to have had some training in efficiency, in orderliness and safety in positions as office or store worker before marriage. She usually makes a safer housekeeper. We cannot expect every housewife, however, to have had this previous safety training and we shall have to reach the girl in high school. There, in her domestic science courses, education in safety should be incorporated as the *teaching of skills for household efficiency.*

Might I suggest another field where education is needed—education of town and city traffic committees and commissions and of traffic officers? At present, except in a few cities and states, the rules and regulations sometimes appear to the motorist as an insult to his intelligence while the method of enforcement makes him hostile. Disrespect for traffic regulations is rampant, because the motorist has not been persuaded they are reasonable or necessary. When a town frankly enforces only traffic laws that can return easy money to the treasury the average motorist has no respect for the regulations. When he is slapped in the face at the entrance to the city by signs threatening arrest instead of inviting cooperation he has little incentive to be law abiding.

May I offer as an illustration a recent personal experience? On a ninety mile drive I passed first through a small town with uncongested, wide main street with the speed limit marked as 15 miles. Half an hour later I was in a large city with a similar

wide main street, heavily congested, where the speed limit was 35 miles! I drove ten miles on a modern four-lane, divided highway in the country where the limit was 40 miles, only five more than in the center of a big city. Later I was on another four-lane highway with speed limit of 45 miles. When this dwindled to an old-type two-lane curving road the speed limit still remained 45 miles!

I do not wonder that motorists so often disregard speed signs when they seem to insult their intelligence and strain their credulity as to their necessity or wisdom.

Our paper reported recently an arrest by a traffic officer of an out-of-state motorist for speeding. According to the testimony, when the motorist requested information as to the allowable speed on that highway, the officer replied, "It is 60, 50, 40, 30, 20 or 10 miles as *I decide.*" Could such method of enforcement breed anything but hostility?

Finally may I offer a comment on the failure to utilize the average citizens banded together in clubs in every community. The safety program, of necessity, started and has largely remained in the hands of technical experts and government authorities. But if we are to convert this unsafe-human-being factor in accidents the emphasis must shift to the enlistment of citizens for cooperation and understanding. Who better can put pressure on city and state officials for reasonable safety measures and enforcement than the voters themselves? Where better can we reach these voters than through the already existing organizations in every community? Let's not neglect or waste this powerful force for safety.

Our greatest problem in safety today is the unregenerate, murderously inclined human being. He must be *converted* to safety before our murders by accidents will decline.

Safety in Transportation

By GUSTAV METZMAN

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I am happy and proud to be invited to speak before this opening session of the Congress. Yet I must confess that I feel somewhat like the man on horseback who

rode, carrying a lantern, in front of our freight trains as they crept down tracks in the middle of Tenth Avenue in New York many years ago.

