

of Canada that are represented at this conference. The point I would make is that the problems involved in the administration of motor vehicle laws increases proportionately with the increase in the number of motor vehicles and the increase in the miles they travel.

The first registration of automobiles in this State occurred 60 years ago. As we all know, there were very few motor cars at that time. The automobiles in 1904 were registered by the Secretary of State. At the time, the automobile owner simply painted the permit number on his car. The Secretary of State issued an operator's license and a metal badge which signified that he had been given permission to drive. The operator was supposed to wear the metal badge on his coat lapel when he was driving. There was no purpose and no need for strict regulation and control of motor vehicles and their drivers in those days. But today it is more common than not for each family to have more than one automobile.

In today's complex society, the administration of motor vehicle laws has become a complicated and unending task. You have seen our building and plant where the motor vehicle laws of Maryland are administered. More than 800 persons are engaged in the administration of these laws, while 60 years ago they were administered by one State official as an additional duty to his many other tasks. The promotion of traffic safety of course is just one of the many responsibilities of the motor vehicle administrator. But we all know that it is a primary responsibility.

Certainly one of the greatest problems which confronts our modern society is the *problem of highway fatalities and injuries*. Upward of 40,000 people lose their lives on the highways of the United States each year. There is no one sure remedy for this ill, but certainly one of the most effective deterrents to highway accidents is a strict enforcement of the motor vehicle laws.

A primary cause of death-dealing highway accidents is driver irresponsibility. Here is where the motor vehicle administrator figures prominently in the overall program of accident prevention. For it is his responsibility, in the first place, to refuse to issue licenses to drive to persons who are incapable of driving. And, in the second place, it is his responsibility to withdraw permission to drive from persons who for any reason have shown that their driving is such as to menace not only their own lives but the lives of all others who are traveling on the highways.

In this connection, it is most satisfying to me to note a decline this