



# CIVIC AFFAIRS

An independent fact-finding organization  
reporting to the public on civic affairs.

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## LET'S CONTROL PARKING ON TORONTO STREETS

Fellow Citizens:

The major purpose of municipal parking regulations is to ensure both freedom of traffic movement on the streets and the safety of the lives and property of those using the streets.

To any resident of greater Toronto who is reasonably observant, it is obvious that a sizable number of parking infractions are an habitual daily occurrence. Such breaches of the law certainly contribute both to traffic congestion and to street accidents. The existing body of parking regulations may fall short of many people's conception of the ideal framework of control. But even those who are strongly critical of certain of the parking provisions must agree that more complete observance of their terms would contribute to the safety of lives and property and at the same time to easier movement of traffic along the streets.

As a practical way of illustrating the extent of recurring infractions, the research staff of the Bureau undertook two simple checks on the observance of street parking regulations within the City of Toronto, one covering overnight and the other daytime parking. Both were conducted in mid-week when the weather was clear and the streets were entirely free of snow or ice.

For its overnight parking survey, the Bureau selected a street in the annex district suggested by a Bureau member. For the daytime survey, the location chosen was the complete city block surrounding the Bureau's own offices. Both selections were regarded as sufficiently representative to demonstrate the nature of the existing situation.

### Overnight Parking

The check on overnight parking was conducted on Madison Avenue from Bloor Street to Dupont, a distance of three blocks. In these blocks parking is permitted on the east side of the street only. The privilege is not unlimited, however, as the city's overnight regulation provides that, where parking is not more stringently regulated, no motor vehicle may park longer than three hours between the hours of twelve midnight and seven in the morning. In the Bureau's survey, the license numbers of all motor vehicles parked on the street at midnight were noted and compared with licenses of vehicles found on the same street at seven in the morning. It was regarded as a reasonable presumption that a car seen occupying the same position on the street at the two designated hours had remained there for the whole interval and had therefore contravened the ban on overnight parking.

HOURLY CHECK ON PARKING - COVERING COMPLETE CITY BLOCK  
7.30 A.M. to 6.00 P.M.

Street Parking Offences	Charles Street		Church Street		Isabella Street		Yonge Street		Totals
	North Side	South Side	East Side	West Side	North Side	South Side	East Side	West Side	
Metered Parking Violation	19								19
Exceeding Hr. Limit			6	4		33			43
No Parking	30	2			1	4	22	18	77
No Stopping	—	—	1	2	—	—	1	—	4
Sub Total	49	2	7	6	1	37	23	18	143
Less than 10' from Hydrant		1				1	3		5
Less than 30' from Intersection							3		3
Less than 50' from Intersection			4			5			9
Blocking Driveway	1								1
Over 6" from Curb	1		2	1		4	2	6	16
Partly on Sidewalk					1	2(1)			3
Double Parked	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Sub Total	3	1	6	1	1	12	8	6	38(2)
GRAND TOTALS	52	3	13	7	2	49	31	24	181(3)

(1) One of these two vehicles was at the same time blocking the roadway constituting a second infraction which has not been tabulated separately.

(2) If properly placed on the street, 16 of these vehicles would have been guilty of second offences:

Exceeding Hour Limit - 3  
No Parking - 12  
No Stopping - 1

(3) The Bureau also observed 33 instances of vehicles protruding on the sidewalk from driveways or boulevards and 2 cars travelling the wrong way on one-way streets.



While the technique is scarcely a commendable one, an individual may decide to enter a dramatic protest by deliberately contravening a parking regulation which he regards as unreasonable. If the results of the Bureau's recent survey are at all representative, however, parking infractions are much too prevalent to be written off on such a basis. In other words, whether or not the regulations are completely reasonable, the situation calls for action to obtain a much greater degree of compliance from our motorists.

In their attitudes to parking and similar regulations, a great many people tend to follow the crowd. For example, in some large cities on this continent the person who jay-walks is immediately conspicuous because the practice has been so successfully discouraged. He does not need to have a policeman tell him that his conduct is out of line. In this instance, of course, the good sense of the regulation may have an important bearing on the extent to which voluntary observance by the great majority of the public can be secured. But our contention is that the rules for street parking can be made equally reasonable and effective. One step towards that objective might be to reconsider the existing outright ban on overnight parking.

The parking situation on Isabella Street offers another good illustration. It is far from the only street in the city where one hour parking is the law but all day parking is the practice. Since an occasional ticketing blitz apparently does little to discourage the all-day parker, it would perhaps be more realistic to authorize all day parking on a number of such streets, and greatly step up enforcement on the remainder.

From the Bureau's observations, even without adequate enforcement parking meters secured greater automatic compliance of the designated parking limit than parking signs, thereby freeing space for use by more vehicles. Between 9.45 a.m. and 5.45 p.m., the hourly checks along Charles Street indicated that at least sixty-nine different vehicles were accommodated within seventeen meter spaces, or more than four cars per space. Actually, out of the nineteen parking meter infractions, eleven were by short-term parkers who failed to put any money in the meters. By comparison, on the south side of Isabella Street where there is room for about twenty-nine automobiles at one time the corresponding checks throughout the day produced a total of only fifty different vehicles, or less than two cars per space. The contrast suggests that, where a one-hour parking limitation is desirable, consideration should be given to a more widespread use of parking meters.

In the course of its brief survey the Bureau was particularly struck by the problem that the police have in enforcing a no parking regulation while at the same time permitting legitimate commercial deliveries. Had the research staff judged each case on the strict letter of the law, a far larger number of no parking violations could have been noted down for Yonge Street. On such an artery, consideration might be given to the introduction of metered parking available for commercial delivery vehicles only, with a ten minute time limit and a charge of five cents. Such vehicles would suffer less hardship under that rule than through proper enforcement of the present no parking regulation.

On February 20th, 1951, the City Council adopted the policy of reserving net revenue derived from parking meters to provide off-street parking facilities. On the other hand, the receipts from parking fines

In tabulating these results, great care was taken to avoid any possibility of error. It is noted that in some cases, where vehicles were parked in violation of the regulations, the law was not strictly enforced. In other words, the survey disclosed a total of 181 actual offenders.

Particular Facts

As the tabular presentation is of the extent of parking infractions, it does not tell the whole story. The following are further facts developed from the survey:

In those areas where the maximum for daytime parking is one hour, a total of thirty-three vehicles were parked for more than two hours. Of this number, no less than sixteen remained during an interval of more than seven hours!

On Isabella Street, an automobile parked too close to the Church Street intersection was actually there more than two hours. Another was left directly in front of a hydrant for better than six hours!

On Yonge Street, where no parking is allowed, one automobile was used for over an hour, while a plumber's truck remained standing in front of a store for more than two hours!

On the east side of Church Street, two cars not only remained parked for more than one hour but continued on the street after 8.30 p.m. when the no stopping regulation becomes effective. One was first observed at 8.30 p.m. and had not left by 11.15 p.m. The other was first observed at 8.30 p.m. and was still on hand when the last check was made at 8.30 p.m. A parking ticket was boldly displayed on the windshield of the latter vehicle. Upon examination, however, it proved to be a ticket issued earlier the same day by the police at Forest Hill Village.

Police were in evidence a number of times during the day and had the effect of discouraging some infractions. Particularly on Yonge Street, nevertheless, one vehicle was found parked by the Toronto police in the block under survey!

Observations on the Street Parking Problem

It is axiomatic that disregard of any single by-law will breed disrespect for the whole body of law. If for no other reason, the citizens of Toronto have, in the Bureau's opinion, a continuing responsibility to obey the parking regulations imposed by the municipalities in metropolitan areas.

are credited to general revenues. Estimated income from this source is included each year as part of the budget revenue which goes to reduce the requirements from taxation. During 1955, voluntary payment of parking tags grossed over \$900,000. Further parking fines levied by the courts doubtless brought the total well above the million dollar mark. In the circumstances, there is an obvious temptation for the extent of enforcement and the size of the penalties to be left so that parking fines will remain as a continuing source of revenue. The Bureau recommends that in future all revenues from parking fines should be earmarked for off-street parking, planned street widenings and the like which are designed to improve the flow of traffic.

In order to ensure adequate enforcement of parking regulations, the Bureau suggests that the existing by-laws be reviewed and revised where necessary in cooperation with the police department. If, in relation to the present penalties, the police cannot then achieve full-scale enforcement, further changes should be introduced. This might involve increasing the number of police available for such work, stepping up the penalties, or both. Consideration might also be given to establishing records which would enable the imposition of heavier fines for repeat offenders.

In the Bureau's judgment, the time for complacency about the parking problem is long since past. If our streets are to serve the travelling public effectively, early reforms are a must.

*Eric Hardy*

President

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Director

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