Automatic Headlight System

that we may enjoy the benefits of the program sooner than if we waited for cars that will be produced in 1989.

Automobile accidents have resulted in a catastrophic toll, a toll which calls for major advances not only along the lines suggested by the Hon. Member for Crowfoot but in vehicle design and operation, driver education, police enforcement and highway construction. We know, for example, that a high percentage of accidents are the result of young drivers. We should have a much better system for educating young drivers. We need to have a much better system in fact for educating all people about the dangers of driving while under the influence of liquor. Our highways need to be improved and we need better police enforcement of the law. For 12 months of the year, we should have programs such as those that are put into place in many cities and provinces at Christmas and New Year's when more people than usual get involved in drinking. Much of what I have suggested is long term and requires considerably more research than that which has been done until now. However, there are areas in which the federal Government could do more.

It could be said that rather than doing more, we are going backward. For example, the federal Government is moving to deregulate interprovincial trucking. As a result of that deregulation, there will be no enforceable safety codes. Standards for the amount of time a driver can drive a truck will not be governed nationally but will effectively be governed by each province. Thus, interprovincial transport will not be regulated effectively. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that once the trucking industry is deregulated and we have the competition to which deregulation leads, truck drivers going long distances will drive for longer and longer hours in order to cut costs. They will probably take drugs which will supposedly help to keep them awake and that is—

Mr. Benjamin: Won't matter if their lights are on or not.

Mr. Orlikow: My colleague has said that it will not matter if their lights are on or not. That is a prescription for more and bigger accidents.

Further, the Ministry of Transport is backing away from areas over which it has direct responsibility. Whenever a car-train accident occurs, it is because the car tried to beat the train at a level crossing. We should move as quickly as possible to get rid of level crossings. That would not only save lives and cut down on accidents but would permit trains to move much faster as they do so successfully in Europe. Instead of getting rid of level crossings and making both rail and automobile travel safer, the federal Government, in its desire to save money, has put a hold on the elimination of level crossings and has chosen to implement a program on the cheap. In other words, there will be a billboard campaign designed to promote level crossing safety.

Surely there is much to do to promote automobile safety. This motion is a small step that is already under way. Some other steps which could be taken are improving education, redesigning and improving our highways and cracking down on

drinking and driving. We could probably do a better job controlling those few automobile drivers who insist on exceeding the speed limit by anywhere from 10 to 25 miles an hour.

● (1730)

If the Canadian experience with daytime lights for cars matches that of the Scandinavians, multiple vehicle collisions will fall by 10 per cent to 20 per cent and there will be a saving of up to $200 million a year in medical and property damage costs. If those figures are correct, and I think the estimate is on target, then it seems to me we should not just be talking about it but we should be investing some money in the short run which would pay tremendous benefits in the long run.

As I have indicated, we are going to support the motion and I commend the Hon. Member for bringing it forward.

Mr. William G. Lesick (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour and pleasure to speak in support of the motion proposed by my colleague and neighbour, the Hon. Member for Crowfoot (Mr. Malone). With very little reservation speakers from both opposition Parties agree with the spirit and intent of the motion. That indicates the importance and validity of the motion which the Hon. Member has been endeavouring to present to the House for a great length of time.

More than 20 years ago my wife and I travelled into Saskatchewan and we saw oncoming cars with their lights on. I blinked my lights a few times to indicate to them that their lights were on in case there was a problem. However, they did not respond and I soon learned the error of my ways and the correctness of theirs. The moral of that story is that I could see the oncoming cars very readily. That is why this motion is so important. I am not suggesting that the Hon. Member was promoting this idea as long as 20 or 25 years ago, but he certainly had a great interest in it for many years and has been endeavouring to promote greater safety on our roads.

Each year in Canada there are approximately 700,000 collisions involving motor vehicles, pedestrians and bicyclists. These collisions, which we mistakenly refer to as accidents, claim roughly 4,000 lives and produce more than 200,000 injuries year after year. I do not believe this year will be any different unless we do something along the lines proposed by the Hon. Member. When you consider that half these collisions are caused by the failure of the driver to see the other vehicle, it becomes important to identify methods of improving the visibility of vehicles on our roads. The use of lights during the daytime is considered to be the most effective method of achieving that objective. Canada recognized that fact as early as 1974 when it became the first country to mandate automatic light systems for new motorcycles. Since then a number of studies have not only confirmed the fact that lights reduce motorcycle crashes, they have also confirmed the value of using daytime running lights for all motor vehicles. As a consequence, a proposed motor vehicle safety standard was