

Private Members' Business

needs beyond those local levels. I think this one warrants being addressed as almost an emergency need.

• (1645)

If the government of the province of Ontario misses this opportunity by not putting highway 416 on its priority list, we who live here and are interested in the economic development of eastern Ontario will have to wait once again to see even the start of a project which is already 20 years overdue. It has been 20 years since the original plan was set and nothing has been acted upon since.

I am asking in my motion for the two levels of government, the federal level and the provincial level, to get together to make the infrastructure program fit the needs of eastern Ontario and the capital region, the capital region of Canada being the fourth largest metropolitan area in Canada, by constructing a four-lane highway in order to ensure road safety and enhance travel in and out of the nation's capital. I am sorry it is not a votable motion, but I have sensed a great deal of support for it.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Pursuant to Standing Order 38, it is my duty to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Mercier—Manpower Training; the hon. member for Bourassa—Immigration; the hon. member for Lévis—National Defence; the hon. member for Drummond—Tainted Blood Inquiry; the hon. member for Jonquière—Native Communities.

[English]

Mr. Dick Harris (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Madam Speaker, I rise in the House today to speak to the motion. On its surface I cannot find the normal things wrong with it.

The member for Leeds—Grenville clearly stated that he was not requesting additional federal government funds, which I appreciate. Certainly this side of the House looks for that in every motion. He talked about the safety concerns on the roadway. I appreciate the statistics that he presented in his background material have borne out the cause of concern.

I am not going to take too long on this motion. If I have any concerns it would be whether changing the rules of the infrastructure program as laid out in the famous red book would set any kind of precedent we might regret later on down the line. The infrastructure program clearly calls for a sharing of one-third federal government, one-third municipal and one-third provincial.

If we are to spend this credit card infrastructure program money anyway, I am wondering whether changing the rules to

accommodate a need in the member's riding will set a precedent in the future throughout the life of the infrastructure program that we may have to address later. If we make an exception for one, we may find ourselves having to make exceptions for others. Even though this particular one might have justifiable merit in the minds of many, will the others who seek exceptions to the general rules of the infrastructure program have merit? Could they cause us any harm?

The member has stated that he would like to see the provincial government pick up two-thirds of the cost. I have seen the reports on the financial position of the provincial government. I am wondering whether that is at all possible with the state of the finances of the province of Ontario.

• (1650)

Clearly the premier of Ontario has stated on a number of occasions that they simply do not have enough money to go around. On one project, highway 407 I believe it is, they have sought financing from the private sector to help complete it. I am wondering whether it might be an idea for them to do that in this case.

Does the provincial government have \$300 and some million to invest in the project even if the rules were changed? My main concern is whether we are setting a precedent both on making the exception from the municipal contribution and on the extension of the time limit of the infrastructure program application to be completed. I am wondering whether the precedent may cause us a problem down the road on other applications.

We are not being asked to spend any more federal money, any more federal funds than have already been allocated, the one-third sharing. Apart from those two points I do not have any opposition to the motion. Perhaps the member might be able to explain the two points.

[Translation]

Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes): Madam Speaker, as my hon. colleague just noted, the motion calls on the federal government to enter into an agreement with Ontario to widen Highway 16 between Highway 401 and Ottawa.

At present, Highway 16 links Ottawa to Highway 401, passing through the Brockville area. The stretch of highway in question is approximately 65 kilometres long. Traffic along this stretch of roadway is heavy, but not excessively so. I have been told that on average, between 15,000 and 30,000 vehicles travel this highway every day.

The road is relatively straight and the danger lies in the fact that drivers frequently pull out to pass other vehicles.