

During the early portion of the journey the two passengers slept quite a lot, that is, until the accident occurred in which Jackson was injured. The car went into a skid and spun around, during which time it appears to have struck some guard rails causing Jackson to be thrown out of the vehicle. The other two occupants were unharmed in the accident even though they were not wearing their seat belts; however, their location in the vehicle was such that they were not adjacent to the door which sprung open. Jackson was seriously injured. Although the only fault on his part was not to have worn his seat belt, and keeping in mind that the driver was found to have acted negligently in driving when he was tired, damages awarded to Jackson were reduced by 10 per cent, this being the amount by which the judge found the plaintiff to be responsible.

Thus, in reducing the damages allowed to Jackson, the judge could well be setting a series of precedents which, when they have received sufficient publicity, will cause people to be a little more careful about wearing the restraint systems provided for them.

In conclusion, I would like to restate my strong support for increased seat belt usage in Canada. I will support any program that will increase its use. I do not believe that the proposed amendments to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act contained in Bill C-35 can achieve this purpose. The safety standards prescribed in the regulations made under this act are already providing seat belts for passenger cars, trucks, multipurpose passenger vehicles and also for drivers of buses.

Mr. Mather: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit one question before he resumes his seat?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order, please. The hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather) is asking the hon. member for London East (Mr. Turner) for permission to ask a question.

Mr. Turner (London East): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Mather: Would the hon. member who has just concluded his interesting remarks object, not to the bill but to the subject matter of the bill going to a committee for further study?

Mr. Turner (London East): I agree with that, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the speech by the parliamentary secretary, some of which was basically a reading of the motor vehicle safety regulations of which we are all aware. I also listened with great interest to the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather), and I offer my compliments to him on his initiative in bringing forward the important matter of further safety in motor vehicles in Canada. I believe in the safety of all Canadians and therefore I should like to add, possibly in committee, some further amendments to the proposed legislation.

It is, as most members are aware, an indisputable fact that seat belts have saved not only many lives but have on numerous occasions prevented serious and crippling injury. Those countries that have passed such legislation are experiencing dramatic reductions in loss of life. All we

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have to do is look at the example of Australia which implemented seat belt regulations for all drivers and passengers in private vehicles and drivers of commercial vehicles. One year after this legislation came into effect, a 20 per cent reduction in deaths by traffic accident was recorded.

Mr. Speaker, the most advantageous aspect of the proposed legislation is that it will serve to make people aware of the value of these safety features in their automobiles. Advertising campaigns by insurance companies, governments and safety councils have already had a certain effect, but legislation in this regard will doubtless enhance the safety program presently being undertaken.

If we but considered the legislation currently in existence in most provinces and states in North America concerning the use of crash helmets by motorcyclists, and the overnight reduction that legislation had in reducing serious head injuries to these individuals, we would all give serious consideration to the immediate implementation of the bill presently before this House.

Mr. Speaker, no one speaking in support of this bill is speaking without facts and figures to back up this proposal. The success encountered by other safety studies speaks for itself. I doubt if there is a member in this House who is not aware of an instance where someone they know escaped serious injury because they were wearing their seat belt, or transversely, suffered serious injury because they had neglected to use the equipment, which is mandatory for all motor vehicles sold in this country, as we all know.

Mr. Speaker, if through this legislation we are able to save one life or prevent one serious crippling injury, then we will have served a great purpose. If through this legislation people throughout our land become safety-conscious and safety-minded, then this too will mark the proposed legislation a success. If we prevent the mutilation of one body hurled through a windshield, or the face of a child being scarred for life, then this too will mark this legislation successful.

As a new member, I am not exactly sure what the amendment means. The explanatory note to the bill is in part as follows:

The purpose of this bill is to require the equipping of commercial vehicles, trucks and buses, with safety belts in the driver position and to require the use of these restraint belts by the driver—

I take it that the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock intends that safety belts be compulsory only in commercial vehicles and that drivers of commercial vehicles should wear them when this legislation goes through. When this bill is passed to the committee, for the reasons I have stated I would like to see it contain a provision compelling the use of seat belts by both driver and passengers in private automobiles in this country. Such a step would make the legislation truly all-encompassing. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, with these amendments in mind that I will propose in committee, I would urge all hon. members to support the bill.

Mr. Reg Stackhouse (Scarborough East): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to support this bill because it tries to take positive action to deal with one of the most serious social