

*Private Members' Business*

I have a list here starting back in March 1993 during the previous government, I will admit, of federal funds going into the highways in Alberta, Manitoba, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. There were no funds for Ontario. No arrangement was made for federal government funds to be spent on highways in Ontario. That is what I am asking for now. I am asking members to support the idea of a four lane highway into the nation's capital.

I could support this motion with further documents if it were appropriate. I could table those with maps and so on. I have statistics showing the great increase in traffic flow that has occurred on that part of the highway since the first part was completed many years ago.

We hear a lot about the information highway these days and I am sure it is very important to Canada. We hear a lot in eastern Ontario about Pearson airport. It is the busiest—the best some would say—and the largest in Canada. Its needs are very important and they have to be addressed. I am sure they will be addressed.

We have not heard very much about access into the nation's capital by means of a four lane highway. A better access road linking the capital area with highway 401 would make the whole Ottawa area more accessible to all Canadians who travel by road. Just as important, as a citizen of eastern Ontario, it would make more accessible our biggest and best trading partner, the United States. It is less than 100 kilometres away but you cannot get to the United States on a four lane road from the nation's capital.

• (1640)

The infrastructure program was announced with great enthusiastic support from all provinces. It was to create employment, give jobs to unemployed Canadians and stimulate the economy of the nation.

It is estimated that the completion of the highway from 401 to the nation's capital would create over 12,000 person years of direct employment. It would create an awful lot of jobs for a few years while it is in the construction stage.

The infrastructure program is to get our country and our communities ready for the time when the nation's economy is moving ahead and a good deal of what constitutes a moving economy I think in the minds of most Canadians moves by highway traffic.

As far as I know the current provincial government in Ontario has never even considered completing the access road from the nation's capital to 401 except in the north end. Mr. Speaker, if you examine the political map of Ontario you will understand why that part is being done. The current Ontario government has one MPP from this part of eastern Ontario and she is from Ottawa. The highway is being built to four lane standards in this

part of Ontario but as far as I can tell no plan has been made to extend it. The only part of the highway that is being done is adjacent to Ottawa and it is for a political reason.

I know that the usual partnership arrangement with the three levels of government does not quite fit the infrastructure plan. The cost of one-third of the highway would be far too great for the small rural townships. Small rural townships in Ontario have never had to build major highways. They just do not have the tax base to do it.

When I asked people to show an interest in my motion, a lot of people from outside the Ottawa area were interested in speaking to it. This suggests to me that fixing this highway has a broader appeal than just to selfish people like myself who live in eastern Ontario. It does have a national flavour to it.

Also with reference to the infrastructure program, the time line would be far too restrictive. It could not be completed by 1997. I cannot imagine it being done that quickly. However that is a minor thing. Apart from those variances the main criteria of the infrastructure program would be met and far exceeded in building highway 416; the creation of jobs—I have given the statistics on that one—and accessing eastern Ontario to markets both domestically and internationally.

The priorities of the current provincial government have to be changed and that is the reason for my private member's motion. I think perhaps one-third federal funds; I am not suggesting the provincial government exceed the plan for more infrastructure funds. I am suggesting it arrange its priorities differently, one-third federal funds, two-thirds provincial funds. I am sure that would make a satisfactory arrangement and there would not be any more money spent. It would just be redirecting the money.

The plans for the project have been in place for years. What we need now is the political will in the province to move on with this.

Before its defeat three years ago, the previous Liberal government of Ontario had announced a plan. It said it would complete the project by 1999. I was there for the press announcement. The media were there and they said it was a long way into the future, 1999. I will tell you it would look pretty good to eastern Ontario right now if somebody said the highway would be completed by 1999. That date would look extremely good because it might still be possible, but do not hold your breath.

Let me make it clear again, it is a rearranging of priorities that I am asking for in the infrastructure program, with the federal government's involvement being one-third. I am asking the provincial government to be a little flexible, rearrange its priorities and spend two-thirds on this much needed project. I know how important and how very much needed the infrastructure programs are to all communities, but we have infrastructure