

Trans-Canada Highway

take the initiative. So what if the municipalities and provinces have not yet brought up this question? This is an opportunity for dominion initiative, as was the whole development of the trans-Canada highway. It goes way back to the days of Borden, though I do not want to run the risk of incurring the ire of my hon. friend by talking about what happened in those days.

I am impressed by the suggestion, somewhat negatively impressed, if I may say so, that the trans-Canada highway goes through remote areas where pedestrians should not be. There are certain ecological developments resulting in more and more people coming into the environs of the trans-Canada highway. In the province of Prince Edward Island this highway passes through the finest farms in the country and people are naturally moving closer to it.

• (6:50 p.m.)

It is essential to recognize that people other than those who are driving pell-mell out to Red Deer will be on that highway. We must think of those who use this highway for short trips. I believe the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Keays) has made an extremely important suggestion. Surely we have enough initiative to set out strips of these roads which would be of more practical use than mere portions over to the right. I believe the British have done good work in developing protective areas of this kind.

I wish I could speak at greater length on this subject because it is a compelling one. I hope the government will take note of this suggestion because it concerns a matter which is both urgent and important. I believe the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Grafftey) is doing a wonderful thing in this country to dramatize the horrible statistics we are building up all over this nation. The role the federal government could play in a situation of national proportions cannot be too often underlined.

Mr. T. S. Barnett (Comox-Alberni): Mr. Speaker, I was intrigued by the eloquence of the hon. member for Medicine Hat (Mr. Olson) in the latter part of his observations. I am not sure that they were germane to the resolution before us but I would be pleased to join with him on another occasion in calling for extended federal participation in a national highway program. I should like to say I thoroughly agree with the remarks he made at the outset of his speech, remarks which I believe are germane to the resolution. I am
(Mr. Macquarrie.)

sure the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Keays) has the best of motives in putting this proposal before the house and I wish to thank him for turning our thoughts to this question. Since there is little time left to us I do not wish to make any prolonged comment on the subject but I should like to say that if the hon. member had put before the house a proposition which was the reverse of his present proposal, if he had suggested that there should be a clause in the specifications for the trans-Canada highway which would prohibit the construction of pedestrian walks or paths alongside that highway, I would be very happy indeed to support him in the interest of ensuring safety for both motorists and pedestrians.

I think this is the direction in which we must move. We must to ensure that pedestrians cannot get anywhere near this highway. The specifications should in fact provide for the construction of barriers or fences, for example, to make sure that pedestrians do not have access, thereby endangering their own lives and the lives of those who are travelling in motor vehicles.

Mr. Richard Cashin (St. John's West): Mr. Speaker, I congratulate the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Keays) on bringing this matter to the attention of the house so that there can be some discussion of it but I must say I find the argument put forward by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Stewart) much more germane than some hon. members would like to believe.

As to the constitutional question it seems to me there is a difference between bicyclists and pedestrians and other interprovincial traffic. I find this out of keeping with the remarks of the hon. member for Sainte-Marie (Mr. Valade) that we are not paying enough regard to the technicalities of the constitution. I do not believe the constitution would debar the federal government from doing something in this direction if the provinces and the municipalities were to make a request. I believe the remarks of the Parliamentary Secretary regarding the development of the trans-Canada highway were sound, though I see the hon. member for Brome-Missisquoi (Mr. Grafftey) shaking his head.

In my opinion we are approaching this problem from the wrong direction. We should be concerned about the secondary roads in the provinces where there is more of