

regional area or territory that could receive these special dollars to ensure it is an area we can be proud of.

People come here from all over the world. My God, heaven forbid if they are driving from Toronto and they have to come in on the two-lane highway. They cannot believe they are on the road to the nation's capital.

I believe my time is almost up. I have gone on in trying to impress upon this House the importance of this issue to me, to the nation and to the capital. All of us in this House should be very concerned. I hope all members will support my colleague from Leeds—Grenville on this issue.

Mr. Pat O'Brien (London—Middlesex): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity today to second and to speak to this motion which calls for the government to enter into an agreement with the province of Ontario to expand highway 16 into a four-lane highway.

This motion placed by my esteemed colleague from Leeds—Grenville is meant to help increase road safety and to improve travel in and out of the nation's capital.

Unfortunately this motion has been prompted by a series of tragic accidents, including the death of one young woman from the member's own riding. I compliment him on his attempt to alleviate any future tragedies that may occur on this 40 kilometre stretch of highway which connects Ottawa to the 401.

I too would like to encourage both the federal government and the province of Ontario to consider committing funds for the national infrastructure program to improve and expand highway 16. Money spent on such highway projects is money well spent and therefore I am pleased to support and to second this motion.

Many would think that such a motion does not directly affect my riding of London—Middlesex. However numerous students from London—Middlesex have left their homes to attend university in the Ottawa area. Many of these people drive home to visit their families for holidays via the 401. Obviously Londoners are among many thousands of Canadians who yearly come to the nation's capital to see the Parliament Buildings and the other beautiful sites of this city.

When taking highway 16 to the 401 people are faced with a busy exit out of Ottawa as they begin their six to seven hour drive home in good weather. On a return trip after this drive they are faced with driving on a busy highway that is used by all kinds of vehicles from tractor trailers, to vans, to mobile homes and motorcycles. By this time it is usually dark, which only adds to the dangers.

If you are like me, Madam Speaker, you worry about the safety of your children on the road. For many parents in my riding that last stretch of highway 16 is extremely nerve racking.

Private Members' Business

Even the most experienced drivers are faced with the unnecessary risks of this particular road.

Tourists also use this road when visiting the nation's capital. Since 1985 over 700 accidents have occurred. Canadians from every province and territory use this road. The roadways to and from our nation's capital should be a source of pride to Canadians and not a constant worry.

• (1710)

This motion was put forward by my colleague primarily for safety reasons. I live in a region that is served by a major highway, the 401, as my colleague mentioned earlier. We have all seen far too many people lose their lives on that dangerous highway as well. As traffic has increased over the past decade so too have terrible accidents. For this reason alone both the federal and provincial governments would be wise to seriously consider this motion.

As a member of this government I am proud we have made a strong commitment to the funding of Canada's transportation infrastructure. Safety is and should be the primary reason for the expansion of highway 16, yet there is another vital reason for completing this important project: economics.

Several of the members from the national capital region have said in this House over the past several years that expanding companies in the region such as the high tech industries are faced with insurmountable transit problems when dealing with markets beyond the region. I hear the very same concerns expressed by businesses in my own riding of London—Middlesex.

This is truly a national issue. Improving the roadways in southwestern Ontario and across our country is very important to people in all parts of Canada. Time and time again constituents tell me of the need for better links with other regions so that small business and other vital sectors are able to benefit from access to other markets.

Good road systems open up new markets for existing small and medium sized businesses, which in turn creates jobs for people in all parts of Canada. In my riding, industry is steadily expanding. Commercial markets are facing increased challenges in dealing with markets beyond our region.

In speaking to this motion every one of us could easily draw a parallel to our own particular ridings. As my colleague from London East well knows, a number of surveys have shown time and again that transportation problems are at the top of the list of concerns of the people of the city of London. National surveys indicate the very same concern.

It would be extremely shortsighted and parochial of anyone in this House not to look at this motion with a view to supporting it. Surely it is a national issue when it concerns the nation's capital.