

Borrowing Authority Act

1,500 lives could have been saved. That is between one quarter and one-third of last year's road casualties.

That brings me to the topic of enforcement. Four provinces now have seat belt legislation and even with limited enforcement seat belt usage is above that of the other six provinces. With additional enforcement and promotion a tremendous improvement could be achieved, not to mention a reduction in the \$3.5 billion lost to the Canadian economy as a result of road accidents.

One of today's most urgent needs is the strengthening of research and development in transportation. Improving productivity, holding the line on energy consumption, and supporting such related energy areas as Arctic transportation of oil and liquefied natural gas are key areas in which R and D should be accelerated. Transportation currently consumes close to 50 per cent of the oil used in Canada. To increase energy efficiency and reduce operating costs, the investment must be made in R and D activities. In June, 1981, the cabinet approved additional funding in the amount of \$19 million for a three-year plan of programs for rail freight and Arctic marine transportation. The investment is being made with the intent of future savings. This type of investment is recognized by all, I am sure, as being essential to the future of transportation.

Enforcement is an issue which received considerable attention in the Dubin inquiry. Judge Dubin concluded that enforcement of air safety had not been sufficiently vigorous and he recommended stricter enforcement practices. The recommendation was accepted by the minister and new enforcement procedures are now going into effect. There is no question this requires additional resources but if the result is fewer accidents, surely the cost is worth it.

Moving to the problem of maintaining a safe transportation environment, we find the expenditure requirement can be considerable. The radar modernization program which will contribute to safe air traffic services will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. There is an ongoing and costly requirement for improved navigational aids, beacons, landing systems and so on across Canada. The magnitude of these expenditures is such that not all demands can be fulfilled. Priorities must be established and decisions made on where to allocate scarce resources. Part of maintaining a safe environment is the promulgation of safe standards, whether it be for automobile design, operating practices of a railway, or for the packaging and marketing of dangerous commodities. Here again administrative costs are not very great in relation to the returns obtained from reducing the number and severity of accidents.

The final area I mentioned was the cost of compensation for disregard of safe practices. Enforcement and development of safe standards and practices, and their promotion, have one thing in common: prevention of accidents. But what happens after an accident occurs? The responsibility of the government in this area covers search and rescue activities and the investigation of accidents.

Search and rescue is extremely costly and some of the most difficult decisions have to be made in this area. It would, of course, be nice to plan for search and rescue coverage which could reach the scene of an accident in minutes no matter

where and when. We could if we had unlimited funds, but we do not. The bill being debated here demonstrates that convincingly, so again priorities must be established, decisions made and expenditures made prudently.

Just last Friday I had the opportunity to have a look at our search and rescue practices on the west coast. I was very impressed with the three hovercraft we have, which cost between \$1 million and \$3 million each. I was told that they can reach almost any accident within three minutes. Now, wouldn't it be great if we could have 50 such hovercraft covering our coastlines? But can we afford it? At this point I guess not.

It is perhaps a bit difficult, Mr. Speaker, to tie this into my theme of transportation investment for the future. Spending on transportation safety does not build an infrastructure which contributes to economic development, such as port facilities, railways or airports. It is, nonetheless, essential and demands for increased spending on transportation safety are at least as strong as demands on spending for economic purposes.

I have only touched on the major investments in transportation. We are all cognizant of the fact that the transportation industry is a major contributor to the economic wellbeing of Canada at all levels. An efficient and effective transportation system makes an even greater contribution to the wellbeing of all Canadians. We have accomplished much but we also recognize that much more has yet to be achieved in order to develop our national transportation system into one of the best in the world. Investment in transportation is an investment in the future of Canadians. In an era of world recession and tough times I think those investments will stimulate the economy and create jobs without overfueling inflation. We must continue to develop the national transportation system in order to maintain a very crucial link to our economic wellbeing.

Mrs. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the last speaker would entertain a question?

Mr. Flis: Yes, Mr. Speaker, by all means.

Mrs. Mitchell: At the beginning of the hon. member's remarks he referred to Transport Canada as an equal opportunity employer. Would he tell the House what proportion of women there are employed in that department, particularly in non-clerical jobs; and would he also tell us whether he feels that a compulsory affirmative action program is needed in that department in order for women to have equal opportunities and equal pay for work of equal value?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has some concern about the relevance, but the parliamentary secretary wishes to answer the question.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, the official opposition is saying: "Don't waste the time of the House". I think a discussion on equal opportunity employment is time well spent in this House. I do not have the exact percentage breakdown of the 22,000 people employed by Transport Canada, but I will get it for the