

Historic Sites and Monuments Act

number of visitors to Canada grows larger. It meets three times a year and deals with a good many of the subjects one would expect to find discussed in terms of historic sites and monuments. The board carries out recommendations and policies accepted by the minister who is responsible for operating parks and sites from the Atlantic to the Pacific. These include projects such as lower Fort Garry, Dawson City, Sir John Macdonald's house in Kingston and the fortress of Louisbourg which is probably the largest example of single historical restoration in modern history.

In supporting the passage of this bill and expressing the hope that it will be speedily approved, I wish to make three suggestions. The first is that there should be an immediate review of the hundreds of historical Canadian marking plaques, particularly those which have to do with Indian affairs. Many of the inscriptions on these plaques were drawn up 40 years ago, since when research has done much to clarify and sharpen our knowledge of Canadian history. To put it bluntly, the information on a number of these plaques is out of date. My suggestion is that the section of the board which concerns itself with Indian tribes should consult with our native Indian people, our Eskimo and our Metis, to get their views in this connection.

My second point is this. With the growth of the tourist industry, our historic sites, particularly the larger and more interesting of them, are becoming increasingly important as centres of tourist interest both to Canadians and to visitors from abroad. I should like the board to give renewed consideration to co-ordinating visits to some of our major historic sites, such as that at Louisbourg, with either a cross-country tour or a tour of the provinces in which these magnificent sites are situated. In other words, I urge a better "tie-in" between the board and the Canadian Travel Bureau. If I may put it tersely, "thar's gold in them thar hills."

My third suggestion, Mr. Speaker—and I speak as a member from British Columbia where in the Lower Mainland we have the fine historic site of Old Fort Langley around which the industry of the province, including agriculture, fur trading, fishing, lumbering and manufacturing was born—is this: I recommend that if the historic Sites and Monuments Board is approached by the British Columbia Centennial Committee with a request for some special activation of the fort in 1971, the year which marks the province's hundredth year in confederation, it will cooperate in doing so, thus adding to the knowl-

edge and historical perspective of our citizens as well as to the drawing power of this particular site as a tourist attraction.

In conclusion let me say I am sure many members of this house and a great many people in the country admire the work being done by this board, and wish it well in the future.

Mr. John Roberts (York-Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, we all know that with the implementation of the new committee system hon. members are often called upon to attend various committees at the same time. I regret that I was unable to be present when the committee considered this particular bill concerning the National Historic Sites and Monuments Board. But I do not feel I can let this occasion pass without registering my dismay and concern at the timorous approach the government is taking to the challenge which confronts us in this area.

To make haste slowly is sometimes an adequate adage in both life and politics—but to proceed tortoise-like when events are moving so quickly in this area is a recipe for losing a great part of the cultural heritage of our country. The government has brought to this question a cosmetic approach, when surgery is required. For too long we have moved too slowly. As one member of the house has just told us, the board has been in operation for 50 years—most of this century. In 50 years it has managed to support 30 buildings, almost an average of one every two years.

Does the government announce, now, an approach commensurate with the urgency of the situation, bearing in mind what the increasing urbanization of our society is doing to the physical reminders of our past? No. After long consideration the government brings down a project which, in essence, would add one more person to the board of directors. One would have thought they could come up with something a little better than that.

I recognize we are not dealing, now, with something which is fundamental to our existence. I dare say western civilization will continue if we do nothing to preserve our historic sites and monuments. I dare say Canada will continue. But it will continue with a diminished heritage.

This is not a fundamental issue, but it is an urgent one. In the past ten years we have lost a great many attractive and important buildings and we continue to lose them very quickly. In my own constituency at Aurora