

Supply

and four radio stations promoting tourism in Canada. We met with travel agents, people in the travel industry and people in the travel trade magazine industry. We did that in New York as well. That is what we have to do and in fact is what we are doing. In 1984 we will be spending some \$15 million in extra effort in the United States. We want to increase the number of American visitors to Canada.

In addition to being on television in the United States, we are currently on radio and are involved in a major magazine and newspaper campaign, all meant to reinforce in the minds of Americans Canada as a tourist destination. We are not just limiting that effort to the United States; we are going after overseas markets as well. For the first time, this year we launched a television campaign in Australia. That is a growing market for us. We are also very active in the United Kingdom and in Germany. I have met with people in the private sector in Great Britain who are interested in bringing tourists to Canada—airlines, tour operators and hotel chains. We are trying to co-ordinate our efforts, all for the purpose of increasing overseas dollars. It would appear that this has become a growth area over the past decade. About 10 years ago, only 3 per cent of tourist expenditures in this country came from overseas visitors. That has now risen to about 8 per cent.

● (1150)

I see that my hon. friend from Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) is present. We are going after visitors from the Pacific Rim including Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore and Korea. Last year the number of visitors who came from Hong Kong was up 14 per cent over the previous year. This is not just happening out of the blue but is happening because of the policy of the Government, which is to go after those markets quite aggressively.

The third main thrust of the Government is to improve the regulatory framework and to enhance the business environment for tourism. We are making progress in this area. I would like to commend the efforts of my colleague, the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy), in bringing about hearings to take a hard look at the regulation of air fares in the country. I for one think that we need a little more competition in that industry. I have appeared before that body and made my views known. I hope that we will move in the direction of liberalizing the regulation of air fares in Canada.

I would also like to commend the efforts of my colleague, the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Bussières), in simplifying part of entry measures for bringing convention material into Canada. I might add that later on this year the largest convention centre in the country will open. It is located in Toronto and will have 200,000 square feet of exhibit space. With that facility and with the over 20,000 hotel rooms in Toronto, we can go after the biggest conventions in the world. That sort of activity will benefit people in all parts of Canada because whenever international visitors come to any part of Canada for a convention, they usually have pre- or post-convention tours to various parts of the country. Of course, that convention centre is being built with the assistance of federal

funds, as have a dozen other convention centres throughout the country.

My colleague, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts), has now designated certain of the skilled tourism culinary trades as a priority for his departmental training programs. A culinary school at George Brown College in Toronto was recently opened. A lot of federal funds have gone into that project which is also aimed at improving the quality of the tourist experience of a person who comes to this country.

We are working on development of the product and we are working on marketing. We are trying to improve the business environment. This is being done in consultation with the private sector. Just three months ago, the Tourism Industry Association of Canada and I worked out an arrangement whereby we established a permanent consultative committee with about 30 representatives from all parts of the country on the advisory council to act as liaison with the private sector.

I like to approach tourism from a positive viewpoint. Surely there are things we can do and we are trying to do those things. We have poured additional moneys into the tourist industry. The year 1984 has been called the year of tourism in Canada by the private sector. We in Government believe in that and are trying to co-operate with the private sector to make it true. We are trying to turn the figures around by reducing the tourism deficit. I think that we really should approach the issue in a positive vein and continue to sell what I think is the greatest country in the world to people from all over the world and bring those people here to Canada.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister a couple of questions. First, I would hope that he would ensure that he made no misleading comments respecting the oil pricing agreement with the Province of Alberta. I think he left the impression that the federal Government could not extract a better deal from the Province of Alberta. The fact of the matter, which should not go unnoticed, is that when the deal was signed, the producing provinces were providing oil at a price which was approximately 55 per cent of world price. Yet at the retail level, that price exceeded the world price. That gap was essentially taken up by a federal Government tax. The consumer of gas and oil in the country did not receive the benefit of the low price that was negotiated with the producing provinces. Yes, our prices have been scaled up and international prices have come down, but Canadians in general did not receive the benefits of the low-priced energy agreement which was struck between the producing provinces and the federal Government.

The Minister spoke about being positive. I agree with him that we must be positive and do things that will enhance the tourist industry. If the Minister is interested in a constructive and positive approach, I wonder why the Government saw fit suddenly and unilaterally to dismantle 20 per cent of the VIA Rail passenger service in the country. That move created chaos and havoc in the tourist industry, particularly with the Japanese sector of the tourist industry. I think that some \$40 million worth of tourist revenue was lost annually as a result of