

*Supply—Northern Affairs*

I think it is very important that this site should be better known and more justly appreciated.

I do not intend to outline here in the House of Commons the complete history of Fort Lennox but it is fitting that I should recall, briefly, a few facts which illustrate the importance and value of this picturesque island of which the citizens of St. Jean-Iberville are so proud.

Samuel de Champlain, founder of the city of Quebec, visited Ile-aux-Noix in 1609. The island was first occupied in 1759 by the French under the command of General de Bourslamaque. On the night of August 28, 1760, the 2,000 men stationed there were surprised by a massive attack by English soldiers under the command of General Haviland. The surrender of the island to the English was the prelude to the fall of Montreal and was the last defence of the old French regime. The English established themselves on the island in order to try to stop the advance of the American rebels when the war of independence broke out in 1775. In November of the same year the Americans took the island, but the English General Arnold recaptured it a year later in July, 1776.

The fort was erected in 1782 under the capable direction of the engineer William Twiss, who later became governor and colonel in command of the royal engineers. The fort was completed in 1812 and the island and fort were of great value to the English during the 1812-14 war against the Americans. It was only in 1870 that the English troops left the island for the last time. For several months it served as a penitentiary and was subsequently abandoned.

On May 18, 1921 the historic sites and monuments commission brought pressure to bear on the Canadian government to place the island under the national parks service in order to preserve the fortress and the surrounding area. Since that time considerable money has been spent by the Canadian government in beautifying Ile-aux-Noix, which has become a rendezvous for tourists and picnickers. Unfortunately, not enough has been done as yet to develop the full potential of this beautiful island and that is why I rise today to ask the assistance of the minister. I feel that the department should undertake a publicity campaign in co-operation with the chambers of commerce and municipal authorities of the area to make this area better known and appreciated. I suggest construction work should be immediately undertaken with a view to attracting tourists, which would of course result in additional revenue to the St. Paul-Ile-aux-Noix area and surrounding municipalities.

[Mr. Dupuis.]

There is a great need in the island for restaurants, modern cabins, swimming facilities and an amusement park along lines similar to those of Coney Island. Such a development would result in increased revenue for the government and would help to solve the difficult unemployment problem at present existing all across our country.

I am confident the minister and his officials will wish to investigate this matter and I feel sure it will receive serious consideration. In addition to the advantages I have mentioned such an approach would give to Fort Lennox its full historic importance in this country and the amusements which would be available to the tourists would be an added advantage. Visitors should become acquainted with the beautiful museum containing many relics from Indian days and the historic military events of our great country.

There are already two very fine docks on either side of the island. Yachts and boats requiring greater depth of water have easy access to the dock on the right bank.

Situated halfway between Montreal and Plattsburg in the United States, only 10 miles from the United States border, this beautiful island could become a tourist paradise, an historic chef-d'œuvre and an important source of revenue if the department agrees with the suggestion which I have made.

I sincerely hope the minister will give his very best consideration to my arguments in favour of Ile-aux-Noix, and I feel sure that if this is done, in a short time Canadians and Americans will find it pleasurable and interesting to spend their weekends or holidays in Canada for the greater good of the Canadian economy.

I notice that the minister intends to spend an increased amount on construction work with reference to national parks and historic sites, and I would like to draw to his attention another important matter.

*(Translation):*

Mr. Chairman, I now would like to add a few words in French to say that the whole area of St. Jean-Iberville-Napierville would benefit from any action which could be taken in this regard by the Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources (Mr. Hamilton). We have in Ile-aux-Noix a magnificent site, an ideal tourist attraction, and I believe the matter should be considered as soon as possible so that the whole area might benefit from the potentialities of this island.

As to my questions, Mr. Chairman, I shall let them stand until we come to the estimates of the department.