

Supply

affected the tourist industry. Believe me, I know what I am talking about when I refer to tobacco because I have spent my whole life working in the tobacco industry and saw a product cut to ribbons.

Sam Hughes of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce summed up the present state of affairs by saying:

Governments are a silent partner of almost all businesses. But in the world of tourism, they are virtually a controlling shareholder. They tell you what services you can offer, and often, the time and locations in which you can offer them. They tell you, in general, the scale of the bottom end of the wages you must pay. They tell you often who should, and who should not, be employed and then . . . when all is said and done . . . they claim a share of your profits.

This is called state control, and it must change. The Government should not be siphoning profits into government coffers only to have those profits mismanaged by the Members on the other side of the House. We will never attract Americans into our country when they have to fill up at our gas pumps and pay taxes to help bail out Dome Petroleum and pay double the market price for a boondoggle called Petrofina. This idiocy surely is ours.

Instead of taxing Canadians out of the country, why not give them tax rebates for travelling within Canada? This would be a simple income tax change. The cost to the Government in forgone revenues would be more than compensated by the increased tourist travel. Instead of spending money advertising in the United States, let us look at the reasons why tourists choose the United States rather than Canada. It is not only the weather, and even the people in Florida will admit that. Florida's approach to tourism begins at the basic level. Its university system develops tourism as do its elementary and high schools. Florida's motto is "Be good to tourists, they are very good to you". Money spent on projects such as these would be much better spent. I am not saying that advertising is ineffective, but its maximum impact will come only when we have something to advertise. We have to get the visitor to Canada first, then to a specific area or region. That is sound advice, Mr. Speaker.

● (1700)

We should get together and offer package tours to visitors to this country at discount rates, not at rates inflated by unnecessary, excessive and inequitable taxation, making us non-competitive.

Why not consider discounts for tourists travelling and spending money in Canada instead of delaying them at our borders? Why not consider a Lotto tourist scheme in conjunction with the provinces by which lottery tickets would be given to those who purchase travel packages in Canada? Money spent on such a scheme would attract many U.S. visitors.

We should offer package tours. From Niagara Falls we could offer a package tour to the Maritimes, for example, or to fly up to see the midnight sun. Why are there no trips on the St. Lawrence or the Great Lakes anymore?

Imagine what American tourists could do if they were told they could fish our Arctic char and see the land of the midnight sun. They should be told about the Agawa Canyon in

the fall, Churchill Falls and the Polar Bear Express. These things have hardly been tapped.

Ski resorts just below the border from Banff, Alberta, are now offering "Canada Week" specials to bring Canadians to their slopes for a week of spring skiing for less than \$200 and are offering discounts on almost all purchases. Do we have a U.S. week for skiing in Canada? I have not heard about it. Do we have the right air fares that would entice them to come? No, we do not because we have a state controlled airline.

Almost three-quarters of the tourists travelling in Canada are Canadians, but there are fewer and fewer of them every year. Why come to Ottawa and stay at the Holiday Inn for \$59 for a weekend when the same hotel in Lake Placid offers a room, dinner and breakfast for \$29, or when the Hilton Hotel in Syracuse offers a room for two days for \$29.90? These are hard, cold facts that should be explained to the Minister of Finance. Why fly to Vancouver for \$349 on Wardair when for an extra \$50 you could fly to Britain? These are facts, Mr. Speaker, and nothing is being done about the situation.

We are sitting next door to a potential gold mine in tourist dollars and we are not even tapping it. The problem has wide implications.

People are crossing the border to go south in ever increasing numbers. On the weekend of February 24 to 26, 3,834 vehicles crossed the border into Ogdensburg, New York. All 48 rooms of a local hotel there were filled with Canadians on package deals. While there they bought shampoo for 88 cents a bottle that would have cost them \$3 in Canada. They bought bed sheets for one-third of the price they would have paid in Canada, bath towels for less than half the price and designer jeans for a quarter of the Canadian price. Advertising will not bring them back. They have to be offered something good.

At night when they were not shopping, they were enjoying a drink at a reasonable price in a fashionable, licensed establishment. The parking lots in Ogdensburg were filled with cars bearing licence plates proclaiming "Ontario—Yours to Discover". Mr. Speaker, tourists have discovered that they cannot afford a Canadian holiday.

In Ontario, tourism is the second largest industry, and we must do something about the loss of over 100,000 jobs in 1983 and a \$2.1 billion outstanding tourist deficit. Tourism can no longer be singled out as a lucrative source of easy tax revenues.

I recognize that this may be the best the Government can come up with at this time. That is all the more reason why it should make room for a government with fresh ideas and a determination to solve the problems.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The Chair regrets to interrupt the hon. gentleman but his time is up. Questions, comments? Debate.

Mr. Douglas Fisher (Mississauga North): Mr. Speaker, tourism is our topic today and I shall spend only five minutes promoting what I think is a great idea for Canadian tourism. I speak of the prospects of building a dome and sports facility in Mississauga. I believe this kind of facility would bring tourists