

After 1967 - What?

The forward drive of Canada's travel industry over the past years was not by chance but by design. It reflects, first, the conviction of the Federal Government that its investment in tourist promotion outside Canada needed to be increased very substantially prior to our centennial year; second, the consensus of the provincial governments that in the same period, they, too, should move forward aggressively with their travel programmes both for Canada and the United States; and third, the increasing investment of Canadian carriers in travel to Canada. And, obviously, we could not possibly have attracted so many visitors this year or taken such good care of them if private enterprise -- greatly encouraged by government action -- had not invested many hundreds of millions of dollars in building new hotels, motels, restaurants, service stations and souvenir shops.

It is now incumbent on governments and the private sector to maintain travel-promotion pressures -- to apply them and to adjust them as warranted to ensure that our plant is kept busy and meets demand.

Let me return to first essentials. We came into our first century enormously endowed as a vacation wonderland, but travel was difficult and our tourist plant limited. We enter our second century with the same scenic splendours and many new man-made ones. We have attractive communities, many visitors' amenities, an excellent transportation network -- and a well-earned reputation for friendly hospitality.

Our travel plant -- and this is the consensus of visiting experts -- is one of the largest and best in the world. And our centennial has left us a legacy of new theatres, libraries, museums, aquariums, planetariums, community centres. We have overnight accommodation for more than half a million guests, 60,000 miles of paved roads, excellent air services. We have many hotels, motels and restaurants that are, by any standard, first class.

Certainly, there is need for even better accommodation and for more and better trained staff, but the facilities are steadily improving and there are more training-courses available. There is need for a better awareness in Canada that our travel industry needs young, ambitious men and women -- who can build worthwhile careers in the fastest-growing of all world industries.

We have had a great year, one we can all take pride in. But greater years lie ahead.

All indications are that, with the era of the "jumbo-jets" only a few years away, a travel explosion is fast approaching. Many countries are now going more actively after the tourist dollar. If we become complacent, we shall lose our place among the leaders in world tourism.

In this International Tourist Year, the economic importance of tourism has been widely recognized, while many countries have acknowledged tourism's vital role in developing better world understanding. The developing countries of the world are certainly attuned to the value of tourism as a means of earning foreign currency.