Supply

ski. It would be very helpful and just as enjoyable if we went to the world-famous ski areas within our own borders. This would help our tourist industry. I have not given the same caveat to those who, after 10 or 11 months of hard work, find it necessary to have some extra sun, sand and warm water.

Federal and provincial governments and our tourist organizations can and must do a better job of educating Canadians to vacation in Canada, not necessarily in the provinces in which they live. Some of our provinces are so large that one end may be completely different from the opposite end. That difference may be sufficient for most people to enjoy on a vacation.

What is wrong with someone from the Atlantic provinces deciding to visit the beautiful western provinces, or vice versa? Someone from Ontario may want to visit La Belle Province to see beautiful Quebec City, the Plains of Abraham, the St. Lawrence River and to enjoy the food for which Quebec is famous.

This is the kind of educating we have to do. We who have the honour and privilege of travelling from province to province and talking to the people can pass the word that there are many beautiful spots in Canada, most of which many of us have not yet seen. I have conceded that federal and provincial taxes on wines and other spirits have been a detriment to the tourist industry. As the Member of Parliament for Niagara Falls, one of the most famous tourist cities, I have nothing to say further on that other than that it does play a part. Hopefully our Governments will consider reducing taxes or not adding to them each year. You get the same net amount of tax if more tourists come to Canada and more Canadians vacation here.

Tourism is important to all Canadians. Someone who operates a motel in Niagara Falls understands the importance of the tourist industry. Someone whose job it is to get people to come to the theatre in Charlottetown, P.E.I. knows that you require more than a local audience. Therefore, you try to encourage tourists to visit, particularly Canadians. Canadians love to visit the Atlantic provinces.

Tourism is important to Canadians in general. It means one million jobs for the heads of households, wives, sons and daughters. Very often jobs in tourism help students get through college and university. Earnings in the tourist industry amount to $16.5 billion per year, or 5 per cent of our Gross National Product. More than 100,000 businesses, large and small, are involved in Canadian tourism. That is an important segment in a small country of 25 million, more or less.

Tourism has a great potential for growth. Before planning extravagant visits to Europe or portions of the United States far from home, Canadians should decide to see Canada first, something I strongly advise.

The side effects of tourism are extremely limited. It is a renewable resource. There is no, or very little, environmental damage caused by tourism. Unfortunately, tourism is an international industry. The Rockies of Alberta and British Columbia must compete with the mountain ranges of the world. The coastlines of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and P.E.I. must compete with other coastlines in the world for the tourist dollars.

Niagara Falls must compete with the beautiful Victoria Falls in Africa. The tender fruitlands of Niagara-on-the-Lake in my riding must compete with the tender fruitlands of Penticton, Georgia and California, just to mention the North American continent. We can see that tourist attractions of the world are under great pressure to be competitive. We must continue to be competitive if we are to increase our share of this world-wide industry. As I suggested in my opening remarks, the motion of the Hon. Member for Halton gives us an opportunity to explain to our fellow Canadians the importance of the tourist industry.

● (1640)

In the Niagara Falls area we have the beautiful falls and 32,000 acres of parklands maintained by the Niagara Parks Commission. Niagara-on-the-Lake is the home of the first capital of Upper Canada. It is there for Canadians to enjoy. Americans by the thousands are discovering the City of Niagara Falls and Niagara-on-the-Lake. Approximately 12 million visitors or a number equal to about half the population of Canada visit my riding each year. Many of those tourists are Canadians and many are world-wide travellers. When visiting Niagara-on-the-Lake, not only can they enjoy the beauty of this quaint town, but they have the Shaw Theatre which offers productions of world-wide quality.

As I said, this motion gives us an opportunity to reflect upon the importance of tourism even though we are not directly involved in it. What is the use of the federal Government, various provincial governments and tourist associations, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars promoting tourism if Canadians in general are not supporting the industry? I am speaking in support of the hospitality aspect. Whether serving a beverage in a hotel or motel, whether driving a bus, whether clerking in a giftshop or running one of the many amusements which tourists love to visit, such as guiding at Marineland in Niagara Falls, hospitality is very important.

I invite all Canadians to realize the importance of hospitality and friendliness to tourists. We must realize how important they are to Canada. When I was preparing to speak in this debate, I read a small pamphlet published by the Government of Canada. It raised the importance of hospitality, as it should, in the tourist industry directly and on the part of Canadians generally. One suggestion in the pamphlet was for us to reach out a friendly hand to tourists. This is what I have been trying to say this afternoon. This is what the Hon. Member for Halton permitted by his motion.

In closing I should like to say that tourism is good for all Canadians, and I invite all Canadians to see Canada first.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Questions or comments? Debate.

Mr. Ron Stewart (Simcoe South): Mr. Speaker, I find it quite disturbing that in 1984, the so-called year of tourism, we have to debate a resolution condemning the Government for its