

*Supply*

situation because the Chair tries to recognize Members as they stand.

**Mr. Garnet M. Bloomfield (London-Middlesex):** Mr. Speaker, this has been a long but encouraging day. It has been encouraging in that so many Members of all Parties have participated in this debate on tourism. Having listened to the remarks of Members today one thing stands out clearly to me. The Government and the Opposition firmly agree on at least one item, that is, the importance of tourism in Canada to Canadians.

Many people outside this House are not aware that Canada, with its exciting cities, beautiful wilderness, heritage and cultural diversity, is host to so many Canadian, American and overseas visitors each year. It is host to many people from various parts of the world, and we would certainly welcome many more if that were encouraged. Few are aware that this industry accounts for 5 per cent of our GNP, the amount of \$18 billion in our economy, and that it has contributed some \$32 billion in personal income to Canadians from coast to coast in 1982. The 100,000 businesses which make up the tourist industry are primarily Canadian-owned, many of them small family enterprises. These Canadian businesses employ 1,140,000 Canadians. This includes youth, native people, women and immigrants, many of whom would be without jobs today if it were not for tourism.

Throughout the recession of 1980-82 the tourist industry continued to grow, unlike many other sectors of our economy. According to Statistics Canada figures, as an employer of Canadians, tourism has registered consistent growth in levels of employment over the past several years, outperforming forestry, manufacturing, construction and trade. Wherever you go in Canada, Mr. Speaker, tourism is important and the Government has recognized its importance in regional economic development. It ranks first, second and third as an industry in every province of Canada. Canadians invest in this industry and benefit from it, not only from its employment and profits but, perhaps more important, in having the opportunity to meet each other, experience the diversity of their country and share it with the world.

The Minister of State for Small Businesses and Tourism (Mr. Smith) spoke eloquently this morning about the industry and the record of the Government in supporting its development over the past decade. As well, he outlined the Government's commitment to the further growth of tourism in Canada. Everything is not rosy. There are problems, but also there are solutions to those problems. The Minister mentioned the efforts of some government Departments in support of the tourist industry. I would like to add to that list for the edification of Hon. Members of the House.

First I would like to commend the role played by the Federal Business Development Bank which has branches across our vast country. Its largest client is the tourist industry. Twenty-nine per cent of its loans are made to tourist businesses in all areas of Canada. Surely this demonstrates a commitment to tourism. Not only does FBDB act as a major

lender to the industry, it also counsels entrepreneurs and acts as an equity partner in some major tourism developments.

I would also like to mention Employment and Immigration Canada. I noted earlier that more than one million Canadians are employed in the tourist industry. CEIC plays a major role in ensuring that training programs are available for those looking for jobs in tourism. Recognizing the need for qualified chefs, CEIC has included them in the priority training list under the National Training Act. Recently the Government announced a \$3.5 million grant for the expansion of the George Brown College facilities in Toronto to ensure increased training of chefs for the hospitality industry. After all, the tourist, like an army, travels on her or his stomach. I might add that the better the food, the easier they travel, and the quicker they return.

Among our most important domestic tourists are the youth. They should be able to see their country from coast to coast and experience the greatness and diversity of the land. The elderly should be able to use their well-earned free time to see their country and visit friends and relatives. To this end the Minister of Transport (Mr. Axworthy) recently announced major reductions of VIA Rail fares for youth and senior citizens in order to stimulate domestic tourism and support the aspirations of these Canadians to visit Canada.

This morning the Hon. Member for Vegreville (Mr. Mazankowski) raised the question of the VIA Rail service from Edmonton to Vancouver. Perhaps the Hon. Member was not aware of the recent actions taken by the Minister of Transport to establish a task force on rail passenger service in northwestern Alberta and British Columbia. Included in the task force are representatives of both provincial Governments, the cities of Edmonton and Vancouver, Transport Canada, VIA Rail, Tourism Canada, the Jasper Chamber of Commerce, and other interested parties. The task force will look at the viability of the passenger rail service between Edmonton, Jasper and Vancouver and report to the Minister of Transport and other Governments involved in the review of its findings. The Government is aware of the problem and is taking action, Mr. Speaker.

The comment was made this morning that one important component of the tourist industry is the attitude toward the visitors. Tourism Canada has worked with provincial Governments, communities and the private sector for several years on an attitude and awareness program designed to impress upon Canadians the importance of tourism, the importance of the visitor, and the importance of a friendly face and a friendly smile. If the Hon. Member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington (Mr. Vankoughnet) wants to carry this message to the tourism industry and the constituents in his riding, I am sure that appropriate information can be made available to him.

This is a people-intensive industry. Not only does it make work for many of our people, but we are all involved. Each one of us has the responsibility of making visitors welcome. This applies to the customs officers at the gateway to our country, to the hotel-motel operators, to the courtesy of the waitresses,