

December 13, 1946

**Report of the Transportation and Communications Committee:¹
Committee of the Whole**

Mr. Smallwood Mr. Chairman I would suggest that Mr. Secretary might read the report on the tourist trade.² There are two very long appendices attached to the report, and another not quite so long, three in all. It might not perhaps be necessary for these appendices to be read, although members would no doubt like to refer to them throughout the debate.

[The Secretary read the report on the tourist trade]

Mr. Fowler I would like all the members present to know that my knowledge of the Tourist Board³ is comparatively new, and chiefly confined to this report, and the correspondence I have lately read in the press as a result of the resignation of the Tourist Board.

The opening remarks of the Committee suggested that the Tourist Board's work was one of the bright spots in the country's affairs. It has been demonstrated quite clearly that the Tourist Board has more than given good returns for the money they expended. It is incomprehensible that the work of the Board has been treated in such a careless fashion by the Commission of Government. The mind of a government that will look at the work of the Tourist Board, that has worked voluntarily over a period of 20 years, and dismiss their labours in such a summary fashion, is beyond my comprehension. I can only assume that the gentlemen handling our affairs are not only utterly callous to the future of our country, but actually do not want to see this country prosper. It is apparent that tourist traffic can be a major industry but for reasons best known to themselves the Commission of Government are not going to see this industry properly developed. If we had the power I would like to move a vote of censure on the Commission of Government for their attitude towards the most important industry of the country.

The future of the tourist industry cannot be too strongly stressed. I am firmly convinced that with a proper approach it can be a wonderful asset to

us. We have seen what the tourist industry in Nova Scotia has meant — why, in the last year alone the sum of \$22 million was realised. Even with the very conservative figure of \$50 per tourist in Newfoundland in the last year before the war, the sum of \$346,500 was realised. I am certain that \$50 is too conservative and at least the sum of \$10 per day is spent by tourists coming to Newfoundland. This would mean that \$750,000 came to the revenue in 1939.

Newfoundland is the least explored country in the world as far as tourist traffic is concerned. It has a real attraction for tourists, and if we properly develop the traffic Newfoundland is assured of a definite income that will increase as the years come. When we realise that for salmon fishing alone we have over 200 fishing streams, we can be sure that our country's possibilities are of immense value.

Mr. Higgins I heartily endorse everything Mr. Fowler has said. I agree with his condemnation of the powers that be over our tourist trade. I congratulate the Committee on a very fine and full report, because I see tremendous possibilities in the future for our tourist traffic. I, like a good number of you here, have gone over a great part of the country. I have observed it particularly from the tourist standpoint, because most of my wanderings have been for sport-fishing or shooting. I am convinced it is a factor in the economy of our country. All we have to do is look next door to our immediate neighbour, Canada and Nova Scotia alone, where the attractions are not a patch on our own, in spite of any ideas some people may have. We look at our own and we see that in 1939, 6,900 tourists came here and spent an estimated \$346,500, and that for an expenditure by this government of \$34,932. I am sure the figure of \$50 spent by each tourist is very conservative and this \$346,000 coming into the country can easily be doubled, or possibly trebled. In the past three years the Tourist Board's grant from the government has been \$26,000, and we have seen

¹Volume II:75.

²Volume II:123.

³The Tourist Development Board was a voluntary board staffed with a paid director operating under the Department of Public Works.