



# **ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT**

## **Tourism and the Environment**

**BY**

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**President of the Commonwealth of Dominica**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE**

**OPENING OF THE FIRST MEETING**

**OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT**

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Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House of Assembly,

I am pleased to extend to you my sincere good wishes for your well being and good health and that of your families. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey greetings to all Dominicans at home and abroad.

During this special year of Reunion, we all hope that not only Dominicans, but many others will visit our Island.

Our tourism should be given a boost, and I thought it might be of interest if I addressed you on some issues of relevance to the development of the industry. I have therefore taken as my theme "Tourism and the Environment."

Tourism is one of the fastest growing areas of international trade. Its extent can be gauged by the fact that over 355 million international tourists spent over (US) \$150,000 million in 1987, according to figures of the World Tourism Organization. An 8% increase in international travel and 6% rise in domestic flights is predicted for this current year involving a growth rate 7% in the aviation sector which shows the trend in long - haul traffic. Tourism provides a powerful tool for national development for small countries with limited alternative options. It is a sector which is growing not only in size, but also in complexity, in order to cater to increasing sophisticated international travellers, who seek a unique travel experience.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### ***The History of Tourism***

Tourism is not new, it has its roots in the past. In a brief historical perspective, Augustine emphasized the educational value of travel in his diction: "The world is a book; he who stays at home reads only one page. He who travels reads many."

The Queen of Sheba paid a visit to Solomon in Jerusalem out of sheer curiosity. The first Olympics were held in ancient Greece in 776 B.C., and it is recorded that visitors came from all over Europe and the Middle East to Mount Olympia. Early travel in the orient, especially China and India was based upon trade, pilgrimages and exploration. There is evidence of pleasure tourism in early days in Japan. The Polynesians travelled from South East Asia throughout the islands of Micronesia and Polynesia right up to Hawaii navigating with the help of stars, sun and polar birds. Among the Mediterranean people, travel existed for trade and commerce. There are numerous references to caravans and traders in the Old Testament. In Alexander's time Ephesus in what is now Turkey, was a great tourism cum trading centre throbbing with acrobats, animal acts, jugglers, magicians

and prostitutes. The Romans used to ride horses, even up to 100 miles a day, changing steeds at relay stations six miles apart, visiting temples, pyramids, Olympic games, medicinal baths and seaside resorts. Festivals, athletics, amusements and entertainment were organized at these spas. After the collapse of the Roman empire in the fifth century, organized travel existed mainly through raids and crusades, though numerous pilgrimages were being undertaken by end of the middle ages.

During Elizabethan times, before Monasteries were shut down in 1539, travellers took full advantage of free hospitality provided by the Monks. In those days people travelled to break those monotony, and enjoy a change of scenery to see attractive places and for entertainment.

Towards the end of the 19th Century, Medical Doctors began to advise their patients to seek mineral water baths for health purposes and thereafter sea baths and a new kind of tourism, health and spa tourism, emerged.

It was not until the eighteenth Century however, that tourism moved down the social scale, for the economist Allan Smith noted in 1776 that young people upon leaving school, and before going to University, were sent abroad and returned much improved. But it is the Industrial Revolution which started a little earlier which opened new horizons from the monotony of the work place and made holidays essential. The Trade Unions agitated and forced legislation which led to holidays with pay. All this meant that a wealthy middle class and their employees, and others, were able to travel. This was followed by the invention of the steam engine which brought mobility on a scale undreamt of before.

Tourism is based on the human need for satisfying intellectual curiosity. This curiosity increases with education, with higher standards of living brought about by economic growth and development. Tourism is caused by the possession of disposable income by people which they can use to travel for pleasure, or education, and satisfaction of their curiosities. The greater the economic development, the higher the disposable income, and propensity to travel for tourism. Tourism is also a product of increase leisure, time and mobility of people with more advanced means of travel, by road, the sea, rail or air. The shrinking of the world with airline travel and technological revolution in communication, has contributed to the development of tourism on an unprecedented massive scale.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

### ***Growth of Tourism***

Tourism is now well recognized as a barometer of economic growth in developing countries. It is an invisible export, earning valuable foreign exchange by providing facilities and services at the tourist destination itself. Tourism spendings have a multiplier effect on the economy as well as

employment, even though the rate of the multiplier differs according to state of self-sufficiency in a country's economy in providing goods for tourists. Tourism also helps in equitable distribution of wealth in different regions of the country by spreading out the tourist flows.

Tourism has been making an important contribution to the economies of several Caribbean islands, and in some instances, it has been the main prop in sustaining economic growth in the face of declining commodity prices and earnings, slow growth in exports of manufactured goods and inadequate financial inflows. According WTO-CTRC figures, 8.4 million stop over tourists and 5 million, cruise passengers visited the Caribbean in 1986, and spent over (US) \$5,600 million, which was 10% more than the previous year. The tourism sector employs about 300,000 with approximately 100,000 persons in tourist accommodation establishments alone. In others, it has virtually made the difference between survival and decline. It follows then, that if we are to take advantage of this trend we need to take a number of inter-related steps in order to improve the social acceptability of the industry.

In the hope of reaping the benefits of tourism, Government and private agencies actively engage in large and colourful advertising campaigns in magazines, news papers, over the radio, and ultimately on television.

### *Changing Pattern of Tourism*

Much overseas travel is by jet aircraft. Consequently big ocean liners turned to cruises, and those with imaginative itineraries were able to attract large numbers of passengers. But sea travel continued to change. Travellers like the concept of flying the relatively long distance from home to the foreign port and there joining a cruise ship. Cruise ship operators and airlines therefore put together packages offering both flights to a Mediterranean or Caribbean port and a luxury cruise in warm waters.

The arrival of the wide-bodied planes inspired United States hoteliers to expand their facilities overseas. To ensure hotel rooms for their passengers, airlines moved to link up with hotels chains.

This era of widespread travel has had an enormous cultural impact, broadening the tastes of travellers in matters of food, dress, decoration, music, architecture, and automobiles, giving them a much broader political perspective as well.

A wide combination of factors were responsible for this enormous growth, among them, vastly increased leisure, early retirement, the advent of jet travel, and the existence of low-cost hotels, which have placed travel, both foreign and domestic within the economic reach of large groups of people, particularly North Americans, Western Europeans and Japanese. Indeed travel has been becoming more pleasant, popular and comfortable.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Tourism is often called an invisible export because many nations accumulate large sums in foreign currency by successfully encouraging foreign visitors. Such has been the increase in tourism that in some communities it has outstripped all other sources of income.

Developed countries are themselves major tourism suppliers but also obtain two-thirds of world receipts from international tourism. Developing countries earned in 1985 some (US) \$21 billion in tourism receipts, or 19 percent of the world total. The Caribbean as a whole, was in 1985, the largest regional tourism supplier among developing countries with receipts (stated in (US) dollars) of \$4.8 billion, led by the Bahamas \$994 million, Puerto Rico \$710 million, the Dominican Republic \$450 million and Jamaica \$400 million.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Some misgivings about tourism persist however, particularly to 'force majeure,' to income changes, and to the vagaries of fashion. There are also concerns about its social and cultural impact, and of its tendency, - at least in the Caribbean – to be an enclave sector with few linkages with the rest of the economy. These are all legitimate questions which have to be addressed. But it might be helpful if they are viewed in the context of global patterns and trends in the industry. Insights may then be gained into what are the opportunities and pitfalls.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Tourism has become a highly differentiated product. It is no longer just a vacation industry, but it is becoming more and more a visitor industry catering to a variety of different customs.

An international tourist was defined by the United Nations Convention in Rome in 1963 as a person travelling from one country to another for non-employment non-immigrant purposes, for pleasure, recreation, holiday, health, sports, study, religion, visiting friends and relations, business, mission, meetings and conventions and staying for over 24 hours. Those staying for less than 24 hours were deemed as excursionists. Earlier, the United Nations Convention on Customs facilities for touring in New York in 1954 had stipulated that visitors staying beyond six months are not tourists. These definitions were mainly based upon economic considerations of the contribution by the tourists to the economy of the host country. None-the-less they give an indication of the different types of tourism which necessitates the creation and provision of different types of facilities to meet the demands of different groups, not only according to their age, sex, geographical areas, economic and cultural level, but also their motivation.

There is thus different kinds of tourist: e.g. cultural, based upon history and monuments, arts, craft, shopping and gastronomy, recreational and resort tourism for sports, beaches and trekking, religious tourism for pilgrimages, convention tourism, health tourism to spas etc., adventure tourism of mountaineering and hazardous activity, ethnic tourism and nature tourism. Two types are particularly relevant to us as we expect our ethnic brethren to visit us during this year of Reunion and as we wish to emphasise our uniqueness as a Nature Island.

In fact every country has a mix of these different types of tourism in varying proportions, and ours can be no exception.

There is a growing business convention tourism in the world. Business tourism market requires special infrastructural facilities. First class telecommunications and international air connections – already of great importance for the tourist industry as a whole – are absolutely vital here. Then one needs conference facilities to cater for meeting of different sizes, and a whole range of conference services, including the organisation of meetings themselves, language and secretarial services, special entertainment programmes and so on.

Other growing components of the tourist market are visitors for educational and health purposes; it is obvious that both types of tourism also have their special requirements.

Other important categories of tourists are cruise-ship passengers and retirees. As regards cruise passengers, the data shows that there has been very rapid growth in the business at least in some Caribbean countries including Dominica.

Another significant in the industry is the growing integration of travel services, reflected in the rapid development of package tours and all expense paid vacations. Marketing is now principally centred among tour operators and airlines. Most persons travelling abroad now book through travel agents, and travel agents and airlines become their source of information. This has had important effects on the structure and functioning of the markets.

A further element in the change of market structure is said to be the emergence of exchange rate risks. Traditionally the industry in the Caribbean, quoted its services in United States dollars, and or local currencies. However, it is reported that on occasions many packaged tours are offered in the currency of the sending country. This means that exchange rate risks are shifted from the sending to the receiving country which adds to the vulnerability of the local producer. I have heard it said by an authority however, that we should recognise that the hotelier is no less vulnerable in this respect than the typical exporter of commodities or manufactured goods who has to confront the same risks.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

This rather sketchy commentary on some of the present features of the tourism industry throws up some issues for serious consideration in planning the development of tourism in this Country.

### ***Tourism Policy***

Honourable members must be aware of the fairly recent issue of a "Tourism Policy" by the Ministry of Agriculture, Trade, Industry and Tourism.

My Government seeks to provide the basic conditions necessary for lasting growth of tourism so as to optimize the sector's contribution to the national economy in terms of net value added.

The general policy objective anticipates that more people of this Country will participate in and benefit from the development of the tourist sector which it is intended to affect:-

Improvement in the quality of life, balance of payments, employment, foreign exchange, conservation of physical resources, enhancement and preservation of cultural heritage, distribution of benefits through all parts of the country, earning of the finance for conservation and development of Dominica's renewable natural resources, like plant life, wild life and protection of their environment, revival and appreciation of Arts and Crafts.

### ***Role of Government in Tourism Development***

My Government recognizes the existence of some constraints in the achievements of certain specific objectives in the form of:-

- the state of the product as to standard , price and organization;
- the effectiveness of the marketing;
- inadequacy of financial and human resources and skills;
- lack of integrated teamwork by the Public, Private and Airline Sectors;
- weakness of trade and investment confidence in Dominica tourism;

It therefore resolves to formulate a tourism development strategy which defines the scope of the trade desired for the next five years and more specifically outline mechanisms for product development, marketing and promotion, human and financial resource planning and identification.

### ***Marketing and Promotion***

The strategy with regard to marketing and promotion must seek within available financial resources to identify the most effective method of marketing Dominica, based on its unique attractions – lush vegetation, rivers, forests, mountains, hot springs as well as its historical assets. It must identify specific market segments to be targeted, the timing and precise methodology.

In the formulation of tourism strategies and in general, implementation of policies, Government will no doubt seek to encourage a high level of co-operation between the public and private sectors.

### *The Dominica Product*

From earliest times, the Dominica image has been projected in terms of its physical features and natural beauty. The Caribs named it "Waitukubli" meaning tall in her body. Nicolo Syllacio, who voyaged with Christopher Columbus in 1493, recorded his first view in these words: "Dominica is remarkable for the beauty of its mountains and the amenity of its verdure must be seen to be believed." Today, the Dominica Tourist Board advertises Dominica as "Ruggedly beautiful – last home of the Carib Indians. Dense rainforests and volcanic peaks. Crystal clear rivers and waterfalls sparkling through lush green valleys. Nature lover's dream: mountain climbing, hiking, exotic birds and flowers found nowhere else in the world. A feature article by Lennox Honychurch appearing in the 2nd December, 1987, issue of the Wall Street Journal, carried the heading "Dominica is an Adventurer's Dram."

Dominica has always been an Adventurer's dream. The majestic luxuriance of its knotted and forested slopes have captivated visitors for over five centuries.

It seems to me that our tourism appeal has been aptly epitomized by our Tourism Adviser Dr. Kunwar Raj Singh, in the copy of the advertisements for the Wall Street Journal and the ABTA and BWIA magazines which I may quote:-

Advertisement for the ABTA and BWIA Magazines

Break from the humdrum world,

Into the nature island of Dominica;

Wander through rainbows,

In mists and sunshine,

Where lofty blue mountains,

Looms over turquoise seas;

Freshwater, lakes, rivers, waterfalls and springs,

Murmur to you their sweet invitation;

Primordial rainforest,

Unspoilt for ten thousand years;

With fluttering birds,  
And very rare parrots;  
The geyser filled valley of desolation,  
Harbouring the world's largest boiling lake;  
Invite you for treks,  
To curiosities of nature,  
Our beaches are sandy secluded romantic,  
With warmth of golden and black sands;  
Snorkeling, scuba, swimming and yachting,  
Are well organized and taught;  
Here lives and thrive in reserve  
The original Caribs from Columbus times;  
Producing handicrafts that can adorn  
Your homes and be useful at all times;  
Hotels informal, low-priced with good service,  
Exotic cuisine with tropical fruits and drinks;  
Dominica offers a perfect balance,  
Of rest, recreation, quietude and adventure;  
Break into this romance of,  
The emerald queen of the Caribbean;  
Advertised in the Wall Street Journal  
***Can your Yacht Go Mountaineering?***  
In Dominica your yacht can't.

It can only anchor in the placid waters of the resourceful Roseau or Portsmouth harbours. But YOU can go to the mountains, hike on mysterious forest trails filled with the music of birds and rare parrots, bathe in mineral spas, trek to the crater of the GEYSER-FILLED Valley of Desolation and the world, climb to blue mountains, bask in rainbow hues, and play with mists and shines. Come and see for yourself, Tourists are our honoured guests.

Dominica therefore, is an island for travellers and adventures rather than for those who like pleasures "manicured and tamed". The visitors must make a personal discovery on foot, bus or car rather than become a programmed slot on a package itinerary. Here there is time to compare impressions with those of the chroniclers who have been this way before. Another travel writer, Charles Jones says: "Dominica is truly a paradise for those who are interested in plants and birds."

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

The plant life of Dominica is truly phenomenal. Bromilliads, Orchids, Anthuriums, Helconia and many other species bloom throughout the year. Bananas, Citrus - including oranges, grapefruit, limes, coconuts, coffee, mangoes, and many other varieties are seen everywhere.

The wildlife is also abundant and varied. There are 135 species of native birds, the most notable being the Sisserou and Jacqot Parrots. Frogs known locally as Crapaud or Mountain Chicken inhabit the mountain forests. Cave bats, Agouti, the Manicou and Crabs are abundant.

Undoubtedly, we have certain unique tourism resources which have hitherto remained largely unexplored. I am aware that it is Government's intention to develop, protect and safeguard our unique attractions, sites and heritage in a well-planned and well co-ordinated manner. More specifically, we must aim at improving the different tourist sites throughout our National Parks and Forests, and to provide easy access to them, with the required basic facilities and amenities – erecting direction signs, information panels, trail brochures, information booklets, the construction and maintenance of picnic shelters, simple viewing platforms etc.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

The foregoing throws up some important issues about the development of tourism in Dominica. One such issue is that of sustainable development taking full account of social, cultural and environmental considerations. This includes also, questions of security, involving control over the entry of undesirables and the elimination of drug trafficking.

It is, of course the case that, if we wish to embark upon an expansion of our tourism, we must, like in any other sector of international trade, be prepared to cater to the peculiarities of the customer.

However, this has to be reconciled with local, social and cultural sensitivities, and with the need to protect the local ecology. As the Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organisation recently reminded the General Assembly of the United Nations, "The depletion of tourism resources today would mean that tomorrow's tourism was stillborn." Strenuous efforts are therefore required to protect our beaches, fishing banks, as well as the flora, fauna, and woodlands of the Country if Dominica is to be a "quality" destination.

Tourism is compared to a factory without chimney or smoke, producing services which the tourist buys. Compared to manufacturing, it is said, it doesn't kill or maim its workers, and compared to mills and factories does not seriously pollute or devour materials resources. Tourism is education without classes, providing painless assimilation of knowledge.

While tourism is caused by communication of all types it also generates communication and widens the horizons of the hosts as well as the guest. It can create inter-group and international understanding as a bastion of friendship. The citadel of peace stands upon friendship and not unreasonably tourism is publicized as a passport to Peace. But it has also been said that tourism carries within it the seeds of its own destruction, when it destroys the environment, cultural or ecological, which gave it birth arousing the curiosity of the foreigner.

A successful tourism strategy will therefore seek to maximize the total benefits to development, while preserving or improving the natural and cultural environment upon which it depends.

The negative aspects of tourism are being increasingly recognized in the world. Firstly, it is a capital intensive industry which means that the less developed the economy, is more the investment needed to build infrastructure to service the tourists and sustain development, by way of airports, hotels, roads, sewerage system, potable water services, cultural and amusement centres etc. These can be justified only if they generate commensurate high returns which stay in the economy. Secondly, tourist spending can generate rise in prices. Thirdly, it has deleterious social effects, in encouraging alcoholism, low moral standards and health hazards as has been brought out by several studies. A healthy tourism development should avoid social costs as much as possible by astute planning and learning from the experiences of others.

The concept of sustainable development has recently been given prominence in the report of the World Commission of Government and Development, chaired by the Prime Minister of Norway, Mrs. Brundtland. This concept will undoubtedly gain influence in policy circles in the period ahead. Dominica, which is a comparatively late starter in tourism, can benefit from the negative experience of the earlier starters, by emphasizing environmental protection. Tourism is an industry which is particularly sensitive to environmental conditions and its viability depends to a great extent on how its various with the environment are managed. Failure to integrate the environment with the planning process can have disastrous consequences. It is possible however, that we may be faced with serious constraints in planning. In general, human, financial, technical and institutional resources are scarce and economic considerations may make it impossible for us to

have locally, the full scale of planning expertise necessary to carry out comprehensive tourism planning. This may be particularly true when more complex technologies are utilized. Our tourism planning therefore, should be based upon an integrated systems basis taking the aid of all disciplines and available technologies. It should not allow for lop-sided development and haphazard growth.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

The style of tourism in the Caribbean has been predominantly based on the attractions of beaches, and the climate, which blurs the differences which exist among different countries of the region. All appear to be similar, even inter-changeable. In effect each country competes with all the rest catering to the same type of tourism. Such 'beach' tourism neglects other attractions or resources which might be present in some countries as a speciality because they are less relevant to the particular demands which this tourism style generates. Not only has this style predominated in most of the Caribbean countries over the last three decades, but it is also one which characterizes parts of the Mediterranean coast, Africa and increasingly other destinations such as the Canary Islands, the Seychelles and the South Pacific. In effect a global market has developed for this particular product.

There are however, alternatives being explored by a number of countries and one can mention the explicit policy decision by My Government to emphasize a tourism product based on Dominica's national parks and wild life, culture and nature.

This alternative style of tourism is based on the principle that tourism need not only be considered a consumer of natural and cultural resources, but can also be a tool for enhancing local awareness of those resources and contributing to their development and preservation.

The need for a greater awareness and understanding of the nature of the tourism industry and its relationship to local life has to be recognized. The appropriate authorities have already initiated information campaigns to this effect. These activities must be expanded to ensure a greater involvement of local communities.

People must appreciate that tourism is sensitive to a healthy environment for its long-term viability, and many of its detrimental effects primarily affect the tourism sector itself.

Only a person who knows the grandeur of a landscape can become an enemy of its destruction, only he who has enjoyed pure air will fight contamination, only he who appraised a clean beach and clear water is prepared to defend them. No other medium offers this possibility of awareness as in tourism, if adequately managed.

We must continue to emphasize the uniqueness of Dominica as a tourist destination rather than to surrender to the uniformity implicit in large international tourist facilities.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

The tourism industry of today has a wide range of linkages with other services such as transport, telecommunications, finance, marketing, education and medical services. The physical infrastructure including water, public sanitation, roads, airports, harbours and power. The development of tourism has to be approached through the expansion of a whole network of mutually supporting services, many of which can be a source of foreign exchange earnings. Positive linkages between tourism and other activities must be established by the increased use of local resources and technology. These activities must be optimized.

One ought also to take account of some of the other linkages that can be promoted between tourism and goods producing sectors. For example, the need for developing agriculture in order to supply the food requirements of the tourist industry.

What this indicates is that from a policy standpoint, we should try to plan our tourist development in a manner that the labour force has the skills necessary for moving from one sector of the economy to the other, so that the opportunities for developing inter-industry-linkages are fully utilized.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

McIntyre made a very valuable and valid suggestion, I quote: "the Caribbean has not yet significantly tapped the major Western European markets. In this connection, one wonders whether openings should not be sought in negotiating the next Lome Convention to make tourism a major part of the package." He goes on to say "the Caribbean countries should increasingly search for opportunities to include tourism in trade agreements which they might negotiate with Latin America and other Third World Countries."

On the other hand, market power must depend upon achieving and sustaining competitiveness. There is no substitute for the relentless pursuit of efficiency through high quality service and attractive rates. These in turn, require dynamic management, a well trained and motivated labour force, supportive Government action, and a society aware of the peculiar requirements of the industry. I have no doubt that we have the basic capabilities for meeting these, but they have to be activated and developed.

As I said earlier, tourism can generate positive as well as negative impacts. In some cases, if well managed, it can provide the impetus for positive national development, and in other cases it may exacerbate weakness in existing natural and cultural systems. The tourist trade does not have to be a cultural liability. Many tourists genuinely want to "get to know people," and given the ideal circumstances of infrequent visitors who share mutual interests and a common language, tourism can be a bridge to an appreciation of cultural relativity and international understanding. However, catering to guests is a repetitious monotonous business, and although questions posed by each visitor are "new" to him, hosts can come to feel that they have simply turned on a cassette, especially late in "the season," it becomes progressively harder to rekindle the spontaneity and enthusiasm that bids guest truly welcome.

If the economic goals of mass tourism are realized and the occasional visitor is replaced by a steady influx, individual identities are blurred in the phrase "tourists" who, in turn, may be stereotyped into national character images. Guests become dehumanized objects to be tolerated for economic gain, and tourists are left with little compatriots in bars and lobbies, thereby creating their own reality – their "tourist bubble" – of being physically "in" a foreign place but socially "outside" the culture.

Ethnic and cultural tourism promise to the visitor, the opportunity to see at least some portion of the indigenous culture, and apparently some cultural traits can be effectively shared with outsiders without disruption.

The human motives for travel are universal and as more nations achieve industrialization, an increase in tourism can be expected.

We can examine and plan through Government and business a tourist industry that will create true hosts and guests, and benefit to both. Tourism must be treated as an organized industry, catering to a clientel who have time and money and want to spend them pleasurably, in leisured mobility or migration.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Any country wishing to establish an international tourist industry must be able to answer a number of questions: - What is the tourist industry worth at present? - Can its expansion be expected to continue? – Are there any signs of a set back in the growth of the industry? – Should steps be taken to protect and develop its tourism appeal and to attract new tourists to the country? – Is it possible to retain a balance between conflicting industrial, agricultural and urbanization needs and the protection of potential tourist attractions. We must also recognize the fact that the tourist industry is one concerned with movement.

With the large-scale and rapidly increasing movement of people wishing to visit new and distant countries, there is the possibility that we may see in tourism a ready-made solution for our economic difficulties. With proper study and direction, tourism could become a very important factor in our economy. The problem is more a question of maintaining our position in the market.

### *Employment Opportunities*

Tourism is a service industry and can have a significant effect on a country with surplus labour. To this service industry, human labour will always be extremely important. Demand for tourism services may be expected to increase rapidly, and this will also increase employment opportunities and consumer-goods industries.

The proper understanding of tourism and commitment to lasting tourism is possibly the best method of ensuring the preservation of our environment. The study of tourism, which already forms part of the school curriculum in most parts of the region, should be encouraged in order to develop public understanding and appreciation of the industry's importance and significance.

It is clear that tourism is an environmentally dependant industry. To say that one both wants and understands tourism, is to say that one is committed to the preservation of its resource, which is the environment. The converse is also true. Far from the protection of the environment being an obstacle to tourism development, it is clearly the only way of ensuring tourism's survival.

The hotelier who grasps the reality that for the tourist a room is only a base from which to enjoy the environment, will in his enlightened self-interest become an environmental aficionado.

In an unrestricted and unplanned situation, the private sector may focus, as is but natural, on maximizing profits from individual operations and often pay too little attention to environmental concerns – some through lack of knowledge, others for short term gains.

In the absence of intensive education and training, this overall situation of doubt and concern is bound to affect the attitudes of tourism employees and the host population with respect to the carrying capacity of our country. There can be no mathematical formula for how many tourists are enough or too much. Constant vigilance has to be maintained of the stress on services and impact of tourism on them.

As I said, tourism is a service industry and the quality of service is dependent not only upon the equipment and material used, but also the human factor, the quality of the personnel, its technical abilities, attitudes and efficiency. It is necessary that the personnel in all sectors of the industry should be trained in the different craft and professions involved. While timely steps may be taken to create a Hotel Crafts Training School to meet the growing needs of the hotel and catering sector, craft course should be organized to upgrade the skills of the existing hotel and restaurant workers.

The taxi drivers come into close contact with tourists and can make or mar our tourist image. They must be given a proper orientation in tourism to be able to provide an honest, courteous, pleasant and helpful service, and to answer the simple questions of their passengers. We should have a team of well informed trained and pleasant tourist guides, who can satisfy the curiosity of the tourists and solve their problems intelligently and efficiently.

I am pleased to see the imaginative courses designed by our Tourism Adviser Dr. K. R. Singh for the tourist guides and taxi drivers, and the plans for modular courses for hotel employees as a positive step in this direction. But our hotels and guest houses have also, to make concerted efforts to upgrade their standards. Also the tourist should be made to feel that they are getting a affair deal and fair prices. Our hotels should therefore follow a rational pricing policy commensurate with facilities and services provided and competitiveness with comparable destinations.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members,

Our natural patrimony is inextricably linked with tourism: any image projected is linked to some natural resource base, and tourism is particularly sensitive to environmental conditions since the environment itself is a significant part of the product.

Dominica is still truly a nature-lovers paradise and for those who are interested in plants and birds. Much emphasis is being placed in preserving our historical and cultural background, and flora and fauna which enhances its beauty.

Some growth is being experienced by the tourist industry and we may yet see its expansion into major role alongside Agriculture and Industry in the island's economy. But that expansion must be tempered by the determination of all Dominicans, without exception, to desist from littering our beaches and beauty spots, avoid discarding vehicle wrecks anywhere; avoid erecting unsightly galvanized iron sheet fences and other structures along our roadways; all these must be discouraged. We must recognize that the quality of landscapes is naturally important to the tourism sector.

It is a well known fact that ecology as a branch of science dealing with relationships of live beings and their environment, finds in tourism a practical and very important field, since tourism heritage is based upon conversation and sound use of environmental factors related to human life for our enjoyment and comfort. Aesthetic beauty is determined by the landscape, both natural and man-made.

The purpose of my address is to draw the attention of Members of this Honourable House to the pressing importance of the inter-relationship between continued successful growth in the travel industry and the conservation of natural environment which dictates man's way and quality of life. Both Tourism and the Environment are individual topics encompassing tremendous areas of

interest, concern, conjecture and human development. I have selected this point of issue because of its magnitude, its ever-increasing significance, its controversial nature and its paramount importance.

It is my hope that my message will at least provide an overview of the subject as well as guidelines for further investigation and thought.

Madam Speaker,

Honourable Members of the House of Assembly,

I sincerely hope that this Session of the House may be fruitful and I implore the Almighty to guide and bless your work.