

\$519 million tourism potential predicted by '84

George W. Taylor,
M.P.P. Simcoe Centre

Tourism is a vital industry for Ontario and Simcoe Centre. Last year the total derived income from tourism in the Collingwood-Penetanguishene-Midland-Orillia region was estimated to be \$308 million.

Under present conditions this figure is expected to rise to \$519 million by 1984.

The area attracts between 5.7 to 6.4 million trips a year. Nearly all of these visits are by Ontario residents, 49 percent of whom live in Toronto.

To improve the tourist industry in our area the Ontario Ministry of Industry and Tourism hired a consulting firm to examine the resources and facilities of the area and to make comments on how these may be improved.

Resources

The consultants took a close look at the varied resources of our region, including Provincial parks and historic sites, and produced a comprehensive two-volume report which was released this summer.

Fundamentally, the report is critical of the

lack of unity among tourist operators in our region.

The consultants concluded that tourism in our area is fragmented and trying to appeal to the market of twenty to thirty years ago. Competition, rather than improving service to the tourist has only served to prevent our region from achieving its full potential.

There is a lack of leadership in our local tourist industry, the report claims, and this is due in part to geography as well as the conflict of jurisdictions and responsibilities of local governments.

Potential

On the other hand, the report sees great potential for growth in our region. We offer some of the best recreational facilities in all Ontario and are further blessed by close proximity to our major market-Toronto.

Demand for vacation and leisure-time facilities is continuing to grow, providing plenty of opportunity for development in Simcoe Centre.

In our riding the report suggests

Penetanguishene become a year-round cultural centre for Franco-Ontarians. In addition, the consultants propose the construction of a "living museum" to commemorate the days of sailing ships on Georgian Bay and the Great Lakes.

Further development of the resources of the Tiny Township shoreline is also recommended. The development of horseback riding, hiking and cross country skiing is suggested in order to improve the attractiveness of this area to visitors.

On the whole I am pleased with the research and recommendations of this report on Tourism.

I believe it has many ideas that are worth consideration and provides much food for thought for local councils and entrepreneurs.

I look forward to positive reactions to the report's recommendations from area tourist operators and an increased appreciation of the great potential our area has as a tourist spot.



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Over 100 pints (of blood)!

Three local men received recognition by the Red Cross during the blood clinic in Midland this month for their donation of blood on 35 occasions

according to the official record. Looking at one of the certificates are (left to right) Austin Matthews, Bud Street and Eric Weissflog.