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DEBATES AND PROCEEDINGS

Speaker: Honourable Alfie MacLeod

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Second Session

MONDAY, MAY 26, 2008

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Ordered that this bill be referred to the Committee on Law Amendments.

The honourable Deputy Government House Leader:

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, could we go back please now to the order of business, Public Bills for Second Reading.

PUBLIC BILLS FOR SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Deputy Government House Leader:

MR. CHUCK PORTER: Mr. Speaker, would you please call Bill No. 151.

Bill No. 151 - Tourist Accommodations Act.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable Minister of Tourism, Culture and Heritage.

HON. WILLIAM DOOKS: Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased to be able to speak on second reading of Bill No. 151, a bill to repeal the Tourist Accommodations Act. Earlier this month, this government introduced a new approach to the Tourist Accommodations Act in Nova Scotia. This new approach will ensure a quality experience for our visitors and will reduce the regulatory burden for operators. As a government, our role is to ensure quality accommodations for tourists, and this new approach will do just that.

Many have asked us why don't we just enforce the current Act? Well, Mr. Speaker, enforcement is not the solution. Our goal is to welcome more tourists to Nova Scotia and to ensure that when they are here, they can stay in clean, quality accommodations. We consulted with the Tourism Industry Association of Nova Scotia and this is what they want, reducing red tape and regulations and allowing industry to take the lead on the issue of quality is the right thing to do.

TIANS welcomes less government regulations. They see that it has worked in other places, especially British Columbia and Alberta, and in fact, we are seeing media reports indicating that the Liberal Government in New Brunswick is planning to introduce legislation to eliminate tourist accommodations licences in their province. We understand that they are planning to replace the regulatory licensing requirement with a new program very similar to what is being proposed here in Nova Scotia.

Mr. Speaker, we along with many other areas, understand that government's role in the tourism sector is one of promotion, not one of policing. As I have stated before, TIANS is supporting our new approach and leading the way and I believe the majority of the industry has supported this initiative. A vote against this bill is a vote against what the industry wants.

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This new approach has many benefits. For tourists, it's about choice; for operators, it's about options; and for industry it's about giving them the leadership role they want to improve the quality of our tourism product. Mr. Speaker, at this time I would like to adjourn debate.

MR. SPEAKER: The motion is to adjourn debate on Bill No. 151.

Is it agreed?

It is agreed.

Would all those in favour of the motion please say Aye. Contrary minded, Nay.

The motion is carried.