

as the first. Certainly the task before you is not an easy one. Tourism is not an industry made of bricks and mortar—it is hard to pin down. We have become used to the term “tourist industry,” and certainly there are many good economic reasons why we should think hard about the business aspects of vacation travel. I am sure that you will hear much about such things during the course of the day. For my part, however, I would like to venture a few broader thoughts which perhaps will be useful to keep in mind as we examine how best to attract more tourist dollars.

Tourists, after all, are not a commodity. They are not something we go out and haul in like shad or salmon. I don't think the manager of this famous Sheraton Belvedere Hotel goes home at night and says to his wife, “Guess what, dear, I just caught a big one today—six feet, two inches, all the way from Minnesota—thought I had a good one from New Jersey, too, but he was too small—had to throw him back.” For tourists—and I can't help thinking there must be a better word for them than that—are nothing more or less than people. They are not just people like you and me—they are you and me. If ever we were dealing with a subject we ought to be able to understand, this is it. All of us travel, both on business and pleasure, and when we do we are—all of us—tourists. And when we are tourists, we all know how we like to be treated. I am sure that during the day you will hear a great deal about the tourist facilities that are available—as well as the facilities that are not available—here in Maryland. But the presence or absence of facilities is not everything—not be a long shot. Even more important than facilities is attitude. And I'd like to talk a little bit about that.

Attitude is that indefinable something that makes a place pleasant or unpleasant to visit. How many times have you looked forward to going to dinner in a specially recommended restaurant and had your evening ruined by discourteous treatment or surly service? And, by the same token, how many times have you hesitantly stopped at a nondescript roadside diner and had your whole day improved by a cordial greeting and a pleasant atmosphere? Sometimes I think that we tend to forget these simple truths in our overly-materialistic discussion of the tourist “industry.”

In France this summer they had some sort of a contest in which the government gave prizes to those citizens receiving the most citations for smiling at visitors. In Maryland, thank goodness, we don't have to bribe people to smile at one another. Smiling, politeness and