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indication of any drop in this level of interest. In fact, during April, ACOA experienced its two busiest weeks in terms of applications received. This is certainly an encouraging sign that ACOA is making real progress in its basic mission to stimulate entrepreneurship in Atlantic Canada.

I may say to my friend from Newfoundland that when I was in Newfoundland last week it was obvious to me that this program had done a lot of good things for his province in the fishing sector, as he will concede if he wants to check the figures. I realize it is never enough, no matter how much is put into a regional program. But ACOA, if my hon. friend wants to be fair about it, has done a lot of good things to Atlantic Canada.

My colleague said "Don't make any assumptions about fairness". I don't necessarily believe that. I believe my colleague opposite realizes, within the bounds of partisanship, that this is a good agency for his province as it is for other provinces in the region.

Mr. Tobin: You are building cold storage and there is no fish to put in it.

Mr. MacKay: The program is generating a very significant economic impact. There is no question about it. Some 5,100 applications have been approved involving commitments of assistance totalling some \$600 million which over the coming months will leave approximately \$1.4 billion in direct private sector investment. This, of course, is reflected in job creation.

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There are additional indirect economic benefits of a similar magnitude through the multiplier effect. These projects are expected to create, directly, 13,000 new jobs, and this impetus to the economic climate will largely be felt in the coming year as the projects reach commercial production, a very timely boost to the Atlantic region.

This program will remain vital to ACOA, but it cannot, in spite of the ongoing commitment to it, carry the load alone. The advocacy function is also very important. The Act creating ACOA specifically sets out this mandate to ensure that ACOA can exercise legitimate influence on

the major policy and program decisions made by the federal Government.

In its first two years of existence, ACOA has focused on advocacy activities primarily in the field of federal procurement. Atlantic Canada needs the kind of procurement contracts which can help its industries build new technologies and skills. Too few of these kinds of procurement contracts are placed outside central Canada. ACOA has targeted a number of key purchasing decisions and is working to help both the client departments and Atlantic Canada businesses get the best possible deal.

The objective of both the co-operation and co-ordination mandates is to draw together the regional development efforts of federal and provincial Governments. While the achievements in this field will be limited by the independent mandates of all the players, ACOA has been given the necessary powers, both financial and legal, to do the job. The nature of its role is clear in its legislation which says that its Minister shall co-ordinate the activities of all federal Departments and agencies which affect economic development in Atlantic Canada. Of course, this includes some of the policies to help support fisheries about which my hon. friend has spoken previously.

It also accords to the Minister the right to enter into agreements with provincial Governments, and the extent of the powers given to ACOA is perhaps best evident in the recent budget papers tabled with the 1989 Budget. These documents outline an allotment of funds for regional development in Atlantic Canada which go well beyond ACOA's own reference levels. The allotment for regional development in the Atlantic region includes all of ACOA's budget, plus the money that will be spent by other federal Departments on programs cost shared with the provinces or on special federal initiatives for regional development. The budget papers further state explicitly that the use of the funds in the allotment will be determined by the Minister responsible for ACOA.

The most important single focus of these co-ordination efforts is in the field of federal-provincial agreements which enable the provinces to undertake tasks they could not otherwise afford. The agreements also provide a mechanism for the drawing together of federal and provincial programs. The agreements, by placing