

grant can now be as high as 50 per cent. The amount varies from case to case.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the principles underlying the IRDP and the changes made within the Government. The main objective was to simplify the programs. We had often heard constituents complaining that it was very hard to find out what department should be contacted, or through which program grants—or even information, for that matter—could be obtained. I think that the creation of the IRDP and the wholesale changes made in the realm of regional economic development were aimed at simplifying the various programs, as economic agents in my riding and throughout Canada had long been urging.

The Industrial and Regional Development Program will now be a lot easier to implement and will take into consideration the needs of the regions. In addition, the business community will find it much more effective than previous programs. There will now be only one set of regulations and only one way to apply them, whereas before there were series of regulations and a good many application forms. The IRDP retains the best features of the old programs. In other words, they did not throw overboard everything that was good. Another way of putting it would be to say that we now have what might be called the one-wicket formula. The new IRDP eliminates duplication and takes into account certain needs which were not even considered before.

Here is a list of seven programs which have now been grouped under the IRDP: the Industrial Development Program, the program under the Regional Development Incentives Act, the program to promote productivity in technical fields, the cooperative Program for Export Market Development, the Industrial Assistance Program, the Montreal Special Area Program and the Îles-de-la-Madeleine Special Area Program.

As I said a moment ago, Mr. Speaker, businessmen and economic expansion agents were at a loss and it was often practically impossible to find one's way through that maze of acronyms that were hard to identify. One of the objectives of all those changes was to simplify the program. It will now be a lot easier because the emphasis will be on regional needs and the business community throughout Canada will have ready access to all federal industrial expansion programs. For the first time, all programs sponsored by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion will be provided under the same roof in the various regions. That is quite important, because in my region a lot of programs had been administered by the regional office in Quebec City and others by the regional office in Montreal. It was all rather complicated.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have about five minutes left and I would like to refer once again to the various government levels and add a few comments about what could be acceptable under the IRDP in my region. Certain operations were not

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acceptable before as the region did not have the proper designation. In the area of economic development, for instance, one should recall the establishment of non-profit centres or institutions, the studies carried out by consultants on modernization and expansion, as well as the adaptation of technology, micro-electronics and electronics. In the past, all such operations were subsidized only up to 25 percent in my region but now they can be eligible for subsidies of up to 75 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the tourist development and promotion program is also very important. As everyone is aware, Portneuf is a constituency with an economy based on business and tourism; it is also a constituency where agriculture is very important. However, one of the most important features in the region remains tourism. For many years, people in the industry have made major efforts to develop our tourist industry since it generates a high level of economic activity in the region. By the way, I should point out that tourist development and promotion programs will continue to fall under the IRDP. There is Tourism Canada which will still be under the jurisdiction of ITC and DREE. This agency will use ITC and DREE programs as well as the special economic and regional development fund of the political reserve, if needs be, to stimulate the development of the tourist industry in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I have a few minutes left and I would like to close by saying that, personally and as a Member of the Government I hold the opposite view to what is stated in the motion. The changes made as far as the Ministry of Economic and Regional Development is concerned and those to clarify the federal programs in this sector can but promote economic development. It will now be a lot easier for people in the industry, people who can promote economic development and businessmen to make use of all these programs. In my opinion, such changes are more likely than not to promote economic development in our regions.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I must say that I disagree with the motion introduced by the Official Opposition and that I support the Government's position.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Are there any questions or comments?

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there any questions or comments? If not, we shall proceed with debate.