

*Supply*

Government signed general development agreements with the ten provinces. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion had concluded many subsidiary agreements with the provinces for the purpose of undertaking a number of joint projects and programs aimed at promoting development in the regions. Many of these programs are still in effect. However, the GDAs, most of which were for a ten-year period, practically all expired on March 31, 1984. On January 12, 1982, the Right Hon. Prime Minister announced there would be a re-organization of the Government of Canada. One of the objectives was to give all Departments with an economic mission responsibility for regional economic development, instead of having a single department like the Department of Regional Economic Expansion for that purpose. General co-ordinating of economic and regional development at the federal level has now been entrusted to a Cabinet committee responsible for economic and regional development. The new Economic and Regional Development Ministry, whose Minister is the Member for Saint-Henri-Westmount (Mr. Johnston), has initial responsibility for implementing this co-ordination, as set forth in the Government Organization Act, 1983. Responsibility for present GDA sub-agreements has been transferred from DREE to the Ministers in charge of implementing Departments, while the Economic and Regional Development Ministry is responsible for developing and negotiating new general agreements with the provinces, to replace the GDAs expiring on March 31, 1984. Mr. Speaker, four provinces have already signed new agreements with the federal Government, for a ten-year period. However, there is now a new provision which stipulates that agreements may be renegotiated or reviewed by the various levels of government signing the agreements.

Last fall and last winter, the Minister met with representatives from the ten provinces to discuss general problems in connection with economic and regional development and the new general agreements. Today, a definitive agreement has been concluded with four provinces while discussions are under way with the other provinces. The purpose of the new economic and regional development agreements is to provide a framework for co-operation and consultation on questions relating to the economic development of each province and each region. As I said earlier, the agreements run for ten years and provide a framework for taking measures to promote the economic development of the province concerned. The agreements determine development prospects for implementation through subsidiary agreements, and provide for general co-ordination of the latter agreements. They will provide, as appropriate, for the adoption of economic development measures by federal and provincial governments through their respective programs and departments. They will ensure that effective consultation and co-ordination take place between federal and provincial governments regarding the implementation of economic development programs, and the instruments attached to economic development agreements will, if neces-

sary, allow for joint projects with provincial governments. However, the measures to be taken by each government will be very precisely defined. Obviously, not all new regional economic development agreements will be identical. In other words, they will vary according to the discussions that will take place with each province. The agreements will, more specifically, take into consideration the economic responsibilities, resources and constraints of each region.

Each document will contain a general statement of objectives, a description of requirements and the consultation and co-ordinating process, as well as a section covering further details such as duration and evaluation. Each agreement will also include administrative provisions relating to medium-term development priorities for each province. Key factors will be the provisions for consultation and co-ordination. Each agreement will contain provisions providing for first: annual departmental consultation on priorities; second: determining prospects and subsidiary agreements, if any; third: ongoing consultation and co-ordination by designated officials, and steps to be taken by the Department concerned with respect to priorities.

Mr. Speaker, that is more or less how the Government has set its priorities and how it decided to make some changes in the general agreements with the provinces. I must say that, after looking at these changes and especially the creation of the new IRDP program, I would like to expand somewhat on this program and especially on what is happening in my riding.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is entirely in order. The House is aware that there were a number of federal-provincial agreements that were concluded with Quebec, and that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion was active in the regions, as necessary. However, since the system did create a number of disparities within Quebec, I feel that the new IRDP program has been able to neutralize what was sometimes unfair competition among the regions. I am referring mainly to Quebec, since that is my home province. The system may, as I said, have created a number of disparities among the regions.

● (1610)

Under the new Industrial Regional Development Program, Mr. Speaker, the riding of Portneuf is now at the third level. As Hon. Members know, the new program administered by the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion is now called IRDP; it has four levels and is applied throughout Canada. My riding is now at the third level. Mr. Speaker, for the information of everybody, particularly the people of my riding, I would like to give a few examples.

At the outset, when a businessman in my riding wanted to submit a project or a program to the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, the maximum amount available under the new IRDP was 25 per cent of total investments and, at the third level which is applicable to my riding, the maximum