

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, it will be remembered that on June 8 last the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion announced on Magdalen Islands an economic priming program with a minimum \$15 million funding. Clearly that can only be achieved with the co-operation of every federal department involved on the islands. I think we now have an opportunity for a pilot experiment to convince and show every other department of the federal government how DREE, in areas where there exist unthinkable and unacceptable rates of unemployment, could co-ordinate the work of all the various economic agents at the federal level.

We have DREE on the Magdalen Islands, and we will have the co-operation of the four departments directly involved, namely the Department of Fisheries and Oceans that account for 60 per cent of the livelihood of the people; the Department of Transport that is directly involved in air and marine transportation, which is the only *raison d'être* and the only possibility for the people to get out of the islands; the Department of Agriculture, through which we will be able to see what the possibilities are to try and reach self-sufficiency in certain crops; and finally, the Department of the Environment, which will have to look after the co-ordination of these various departments in order to protect the marine subsoil and the balance that should exist.

So, Mr. Speaker, we have five departments directly involved and they will have to work together to ensure a harmonious economic development on the Magdalen Islands. From the various comments we heard in the Magdalen Islands following the announcement by the minister, I think those people are truly determined to prove to the federal government that we can work in co-operation and that when it comes to economic development all departments can readily co-ordinate their efforts and succeed in reducing the rate of unemployment in our region of Quebec where, as I suggested earlier, we have at certain times of the year unacceptable rates of unemployment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am sure our colleague from Central Nova, when in three or four years he can see the results we got with that endeavour and that pilot experiment we are doing on a piece of land which he knows very well and which is not very far from his own riding, will be able to see indeed the enormous efforts we made and how we succeeded in co-ordinating the actions of different federal departments to spur economic development.

Mr. Speaker, this leads me to relate the regional development incentives program to other agreements within the Department of Regional Economic Expansion. I praised earlier the benefits of such agreements but I also believe the Department of Regional Economic Expansion should orient its policy in certain areas, as it has already done in the past, towards comprehensive agreements. Once again, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion proposed to the government of Quebec a comprehensive agreement for the development of eastern Quebec. I believe we have to go beyond the experience

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we had from 1968 to 1976 in this area where we managed to set up and put in place administrative structures, road and maritime infrastructures, and we need to go beyond that and a little further in the advancement of economic development.

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Obviously, if the Quebec government decides—and I hope it will take this suggestion very seriously—to accept such an agreement, we in eastern Quebec will be really able to develop our economy and raise the standard of living in that area to the same level as in the rest of the country. We simply cannot hope to raise the standard of living of a region facing tremendous unemployment problems and where most jobs are seasonal and to reach a decent standard of living only through measures that may be good but that are too often mere band-aids applied to chronic problems.

This is why, Mr. Speaker, we and the minister get tremendous support in that part of Quebec and again I hope that the government of the province of Quebec will respond to the desire of the people to conclude such an agreement. And again, to come back to the bill, as I said earlier the industrialists of that region who are facing tremendous difficulties are in favour of such legislation.

When you realize that at this time of the year people become aware of the importance of economic development, we should not penalize them by not passing a bill that would extend the program for at least five years. I talk about a five-year period. This morning I heard my colleagues suggest a shorter time period. I do not need to say, Mr. Speaker, that I fully agree on a five-year period because, as I said earlier, remoteness from large centres is a good reason to maintain that five-year period. Given the many administrative delays that those industrialists have to overcome to get their projects approved, that five-year period is not too long. When you consider the date of the application for a grant and the date of its approval you realize that there is a waiting period of 18 months to two years before a project is approved, so I do not believe that a five-year period is too long. This is why we should provide that time period for this bill.

Obviously, businessmen who rub shoulders with decision makers may think that five years is too long. But we must remember that those who live in isolated areas have to keep distances in mind and face other problems as well, so are not these incentives precisely aimed at helping Canadians who live in those areas? I think that was the initial aim of the program and that is why we want to keep those incentives and that five-year period.

There is another issue that I would like to touch upon, Mr. Speaker, and which is related to what I was mentioning earlier about the relationship between the various federal departments, and that is that DREE should play the role it was created for as far as the other departments are concerned. In those regions, and I will never say it often enough, where