

tance of infrastructure, but that is not principally what ACOA and Bill C-103 are all about.

I do note, as he knows, that considerable sums have been spent by the federal government in the past 30 years on infrastructure. More will be spent. The infrastructure projects are, as he knows, largely within provincial jurisdiction, and the appropriate vehicle for these is a federal-provincial agreement such as an ERDA subagreement. As I have indicated, there are a number of ERDAs now in place in the four provinces and under some of these expenditures are made on various kinds of infrastructure, and that will continue to be the case.

Honourable senators, let me say a word about ACOA and about the action program that I announced on February 15, which will be considerably supplemented when this bill passes Parliament. The action program is a consolidation of the existing programs, particularly IRDP and the Atlantic Enterprise Program. It has increased assistance and provides it to a broader range of business and business-related activities; so we are helping not only commercial operations but non-commercial operations that provide support and services to business.

As an indication of the interest the program has solicited in the region, I should tell the honourable senator and others that from February 15 to May 13 over 2,000 applications were received by the agency under this program. Two hundred have been withdrawn or rejected and 492 have been approved, for a total authorized contribution of \$48.1 million, making possible business investment in the region of over \$166 million.

● (1530)

Honourable senators, what these investments involve is the creation of over 1,700 jobs—new jobs—in the Atlantic region and the maintenance of over 1,600 jobs.

As an indication of the interest in this program, during the month of April alone 865 new applications were received by ACOA compared to 85 applications received the previous year under the old IRDP and AEP programs.

From May 2 to May 6—just one week—ACOA received 200 new applications. We are now dealing with ten times the number of applications compared to the number that DRIE had to deal with a year or more ago. I was told the other day that as of May 20 there were 1,735 active applications in process. So, honourable senators, there is a great deal of interest on the part of the private sector in the Atlantic region. It is obvious to us that ACOA and the ACOA program is meeting the need there.

I want to pause just for a moment on those statistics. We had projected that we would be dealing with something in the order of four times the number of applications that our predecessors had dealt with; it turns out, as I said, that we are dealing with ten times the number. We pledged to improve the turn-around time in dealing with these applications, and we have kept our word. We have delegated authorities and done everything possible to honour that commitment; but I must appeal to the private sector and others for their understanding and patience. The response to this program has been far in excess of anything we had imagined. The staff are doing a

[Senator Murray.]

Herculean job in dealing with these applications, and their tremendous commitment to the success of this agency is preserving our credibility with the private sector, which is making applications in such unprecedented numbers; but we have to staff up in the next little while to deal with this vastly increased rate of applications from the private sector.

I don't know whether, when the time comes, Senator Graham intends to debate the motion of which he gave us notice today, but I suppose we can deal with the merits of it at that time if it is procedurally acceptable. However, I should, for the record, make a few comments in response to what he had to say about the Cape Breton Development Corporation and the proposed creation of the new Enterprise Cape Breton Corporation.

First of all, I think I should state for the record that it was the Donald report of the 1960s that led to the creation of Devco. That report had, in fact, recommended two crown corporations, as the honourable the Leader of the Opposition will recall. It had recommended one crown corporation to run the coal mines and one to promote industrial development. The government of the day decided otherwise. It decided to create one crown corporation, Devco, with a Coal Division and an Industrial Development Division, but essentially they have operated as separate bodies.

I am not sure whether Senator Graham would agree with that assessment. Indeed, at one point in his remarks he stated that they had operated as one, certainly with a single mandate, but my attention was drawn to an article, originally written in 1974 and updated in the 1980s, in a publication of the Institute for Research on Public Policy, by Roy George, which states:

Although Parliament had set up a single Crown corporation to cover both mining and industrial development, contrary to Donald's advice, it prescribed that DEVCO should operate in some respects as if it were two organizations. The act directed that there should be two divisions: the "Coal Division" to be responsible for coal mining operations, and the "Industrial Development Division" to stimulate the non-mining sector of the Cape Breton economy. Each was to have its own vice-president, its own budgets (to be approved by the government), its own set of financial statements, and its own grants from government, and no financial switching between the two divisions was to take place.

Further in the same article, Mr. George states:

Parliament created DEVCO as a monster with two bodies joined to a single head. Each was to have its own vice-president, keep its own accounts, and receive separate votes of money. This arrangement was Parliament's way of compromising between the forces that wanted, like Donald, two separate organizations (Robert Stanfield, then Premier of Nova Scotia, was in this camp), and those who wanted one organization (an arrangement supported by the United Mine Workers, among others).