

**2000-2001 BUDGET
GETTING QUÉBEC ON LINE**

Québec City, March 14, 2000 – Deputy Premier and Minister of State for the Economy and Finance Bernard Landry announced in the 2000-2001 Budget Speech major initiatives totaling \$340 million to get Québec on line by promoting access by families to the Internet, as well as the development of e-commerce.

\$120 million to connect families to the Internet

The government will provide \$120 million to promote the connection of families to the Internet. This initiative is in keeping with the views expressed at the Québec Youth Summit, where a consensus emerged that access by the greatest possible number of households to the new information and communication technologies should be encouraged.

Beginning on May 1, 2000, families that receive family allowances from the Régie des rentes du Québec will be able to benefit from assistance equal to 75% of the cost of Internet access. This assistance can also include the rental of a computer.

Provided for two years, the assistance can total \$200 a year for connection (alone or with the required hardware) and \$450 a year for a package including a micro-computer.

The nearly 200 000 families receiving family allowances will be able to take advantage of this measure and enjoy the many benefits of the new technologies.

Helping 10 000 small and medium-sized businesses make the transition to e-commerce

In the wake of the Budget tabled today, Québec's SMEs that develop transactional web sites to begin on-line operations with other businesses, the general public and government administrations will benefit from a new refundable tax credit equal to 40% of expenses incurred, up to \$40 000.

A sum of \$126 million will be earmarked for this purpose for the next three years. The objective is to prompt 10 000 Québec SMEs to take advantage of this measure.

Deployment of the fibre-optic network in the regions

For e-commerce to develop, the infrastructures required for data transmission must be available in all regions of Québec. To this end, businesses that implement fibre-optic networks in the regions will benefit from an accelerated depreciation rate of 125%. The estimated cost of this measure is \$15 million.

Development of the information highway

The Québec government's departments and agencies have undertaken to modernize the provision of government services. Additional appropriations of \$15 million a year will be earmarked over three years to implement, in particular, the security infrastructures required to ensure the confidentiality of transactions between the government and the public or businesses.

Technology revolution

According to Mr. Landry, "A new technological revolution is under way that will very likely have as much impact as the Industrial Revolution on our lives and productivity." These initiatives as a whole should enable Québec rapidly to become part of this changing environment.

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