

From Lawyer to Corporate President

In 1962, Brian Mulroney worked briefly as a private secretary to the Honourable Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Agriculture in the Diefenbaker Government. He completed his Bachelor of Laws degree in 1964.

After his graduation, he was asked to join Ogilvy, Cope, Montreal's largest law firm. Over the rest of the decade, and into the 1970s, Brian Mulroney established his credentials as one of the nation's most prominent labour lawyers.

Such was his reputation that, in 1974, when the Quebec construction industry was experiencing grave labour problems and unprecedented violence, Mr. Mulroney was asked by the Premier of Quebec to join a three-man Royal Commission, the Cliche Commission, to study the problem.

The many recommendations of the Cliche Commission helped to bring peace and stability to the province's major industry.

In 1976, Brian Mulroney was invited to join the Iron Ore Company of Canada as Executive Vice-President, and soon became its President. The firm had been plagued by labour unrest, more than sixty work stoppages in the previous ten years and a huge debt. Yet, by 1979, the company's labour difficulties were a thing of the past, and it was showing a handsome profit.

"Our objective and our mandate is to get the economy of Canada moving. Our new government will place the highest priority on the development of a new and attractive business climate for domestic and international investment. We plan to attract risk capital where the benefits for Canada are in job creation and economic growth."

Prime Minister Mulroney

During his period as President of the Iron Ore Company, Brian Mulroney worked with the unions to implement numerous policies to benefit employees and their families. This greatly improved employee morale, enhanced productivity and helped the company out of its difficulties.

In 1982, faced with a worldwide recession, declining steel prices, and cheaper sources of iron ore, Brian Mulroney was forced to close an Iron Ore Company plant in the town of Schefferville, Quebec. The final settlement for company employees affected, applauded then in labour, business and government circles, still stands today as a model of a generous and equitable settlement.

Three years later, Brian Mulroney was to stake his political career on winning a seat in Canada's Parliament in the very riding in which Schefferville is located. He won an overwhelming victory.

"If you treat people properly, if you conduct your affairs with integrity and with honour, no one can ever fault your actions, no matter what the circumstances dictate."

Prime Minister Mulroney



Australian Prime Minister Robert Hawke was Prime Minister Mulroney's guest at Canada's first National Economic Conference. Hawke shared with Canadians his country's experience with building a national consensus on major issues.