



*Lockheed assembly plant in Winnipeg.*

The cost of living is relatively cheap; Manitoba had a 10.9 per cent inflation rate last year, compared with 12.5 for all Canada. This year it is expected to fall slightly.

Long-term prospects are pretty good. Large-scale investment plans are afoot, and the city of Winnipeg's downtown is getting a \$96 million overhaul.

## **Agriculture**

This year the price of land was high, the grain harvests good and the market prices a disappointment.

The most significant crops, as always, are grain, wheat particularly. Saskatchewan grows more wheat and Alberta almost as much, but Manitoba has much of the marketing machinery—the Wheat Board and the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange are in downtown Winnipeg—and the centre of Canadian grain research is at the University of Manitoba.

In the trading room of the Exchange, which is a full block long, feed wheat, feed oats, feed barley, rye, rapeseed, flaxseed, corn, gold and silver futures and options are traded.

During the crop year ending July, 1981, there were 2,259,225 futures contracts valued at \$11.9 billion, a volume that was close to that of the year before but with a value up by more than \$2 billion.

Trading in wheat futures declined by 33 per cent and barley dropped by 23 per cent, but there were big gains in oats, rye and flaxseed.

Manitoba's agriculture (unlike that of Saskatchewan or Alberta) has a great variety; it includes market gardening vegetables like

potatoes and brussels sprouts, and livestock. The cost-price squeeze has hit cattle producers hard, reducing the size of herds and driving some out of business; the number dropped from 19,500 in 1981 to 18,000 in 1982.

## **Fishing**

Manitoba's lakes hold eighty species of freshwater fish—the greatest variety in North America.

Only fifteen are harvested commercially. Yellow pickerel and whitefish are 75 per cent of the catch, followed by sauger or perch, pike, tullibee, lake trout, yellow perch and mullet.

The catch, second only to Ontario's, totaled 48.5 million pounds in 1981-82.

It was marketed by the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation in Winnipeg (which markets all prairie fish) and brought an estimated \$42 million. Most of the harvest goes to the U.S.

## **Minerals**

The market for the province's main minerals, copper and nickel, has been hurt by a slackening demand in the United States for steel, autos, housing and durable goods.

## **Forest Products**

Commercial forests extend over 40 per cent of the province's land area.

High interest rates and low housing starts have hurt the sale of lumber. Inventories increased by 27.8 per cent in 1981, and this has caused short-term layoffs of workers.