

For the first time since 1978, Ministers responsible for Science and Technology at the federal, provincial and territorial level met to discuss matters of mutual concern. The meeting was conducted under the chairmanship of the Honourable Tom Siddon, federal Minister of State for Science and Technology, on February 4 and 5, 1985, in Calgary.

Ministers highlighted the important role that science, technology and innovation must play in economic renewal, and recommended the First Ministers endorse science and technology as a priority area for investment and funding, identifying it as a source of economic growth and job creation. Ministers were presented with evidence of Canada's poor performance in exploiting the economic potential of science and technology in comparison to our major international competitors.

Ministers committed themselves to producing a comprehensive NATIONAL POLICY ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, designed to build upon provincial and territorial economic opportunities and priorities. In pursuing this goal, Ministers emphasized the necessity for business and industry to play an increased role in support of this policy.

Ministers also agreed to more effective and continuing cooperation in both planning and implementing science and technology strategies, and pledged to meet again within a year to review progress on the National Policy.

Further agreement was reached on three fundamental priorities designed to:

- i. Stimulate private sector investment in innovation.
- ii. Encourage the transfer and application of technology.
- iii. Support important basic research to develop longer term scientific expertise and industrial leadership for the country.

Ministers adopted an agenda for cooperative action, and identified specific proposals which the federal, provincial and territorial governments would jointly examine in the context of work on the National Policy. These included pledges to:

1. Work for more effective programs of grants, tax incentives and procurement targetted especially to small- and medium-sized technology-intensive ventures.
2. Review and evaluate all existing agreements and programs to support provincial and territorial industrial development, with a view to increasing their effectiveness in promoting new technology, leading to more productive and internationally competitive industries.
3. Review the possibilities for more efficient coordination and use of all governmental research laboratories, in order to ensure better coupling with industrial opportunities and priorities and thus new job potential.
4. Seek ways and means of improving access to federal and provincial programs of support for industrial R&D, and access to information. Ministers will, in particular, investigate the possibility of creating single-desk access to such assistance on a decentralized basis.

*Provincial* Ministers urged the federal government to continue to improve the federal 5-year plans in support of postgraduate research programs within Canadian universities. The provincial ministers said adequate and predictable funding was essential if the human resource requirements of a more technology intensive economy are to be met. They also called for reinstatement of some form of the Scientific Research Tax Credit (SRTC) which would be understandable and effective in enhancing research, innovation and new product development.

Finally, the Ministers agreed that the conclusions of their deliberations would be forwarded to their respective First Ministers, for consideration at their forthcoming Meeting in Regina, on February 14 and 15, 1985.