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## MANITOBA: MANUFACTURING INCREASINGLY LED BY MICROELECTRONICS

The Province of Manitoba, half-way across the continent between the Atlantic and the Pacific, entered a new political cycle last year with the return to power of the New Democratic Party. The new Premier, Howard Pawley, faces a difficult but not impossible job as he prepares to build on the Province's industrial and high technology strength to provide new or improved social benefits to Manitobans. According to some projections, Manitoba will have a real growth rate of 2 percent in 1982, down from previous years, but still better than the national average. There has been general sluggishness in the traditional sectors of the economy: agriculture, mining and forestry, because of depressed world prices for such commodities as wheat, barley, beef, copper, nickel and zinc and the depressed housing market in North America.

Nevertheless, the Province can still create about 3,000 new jobs annually, and in the last year has welcomed over 3,800 new inhabitants, raising its population to 1,030,000. The two main drawing cards appear to be steady growth in the manufacturing sector, with capital investment in new plants rising 16.7 percent in 1981 alone, and a relatively low cost of living.

There are several major projects being initiated by the Federal and Provincial Governments, which will contribute to economic activity in the Province. Federal authorities, the Province and the city of Winnipeg plan to spend 96 million dollars to revitalize Winnipeg's downtown core. The Federal Government corporation Air Canada will undertake a 60 million dollar expansion of its overhaul and computer services activities. The Federal Department of Employment and Immigration will place its regional employment centre computer in Winnipeg. The Provincial Government is currently negotiating with Aluminum Co. of Canada Ltd. to build a 500 million dollar smelter, and with International Minerals and Chemical Corporation of USA to open a 500 million dollar potash mine in Manitoba. Arrangements are also underway for the construction of a one billion dollar power grid that would carry Manitoba electricity to Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Provincial authorities have designated microelectronics as one of the key areas for development. Manitoba is located far from the largest North American markets and consequently its larger manufactured products have to bear a relatively high transport cost. But microelectronics systems and products are relatively small and easy to handle, and can lead to the establishment of new industrial centres.

The Provincial and Federal Governments will provide 900,000 dollars during the next three years to fund a research centre at the University of Manitoba, which will help private companies develop products that prove commercially viable. Once a prototype has been proven, it will be up to the company alone to carry out commercial production. Other public organizations involved in microelectronics research are the Manitoba Government's high-technology laboratory, Manitoba Telephones Systems, and a new high voltage direct current Research Centre.

The private sector has begun to take notice of Manitoba's