

Canada Weekly

Ottawa
Canada

Volume 13, No. 11
March 13, 1985

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First ministers' conference on Canada's economy

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney and Canada's ten provincial premiers met in Regina, Saskatchewan, February 14-15 for a first ministers' economic conference, Mr. Mulroney's first such meeting since he became prime minister. Items included on the agenda were: attracting new investment for job-creation; training and retraining of workers; regional economic development; and improved international trade.

At the close of the talks, Mr. Mulroney was optimistic about the climate of co-operation between the federal and provincial governments. He said the country's first ministers had succeeded in setting an economic agenda that would assure investors of a period of stability and growth.

After two days of discussions about jobs, debt, regional development, trade, training and investment, the first ministers projected "an appearance of stability in the major economic direction that will be taken by both levels of government", he added.

Mr. Mulroney also announced that the

11 leaders had agreed to meet at least once a year for the next five years, beginning this autumn.

Jobs program

On the first day Mr. Mulroney announced the allocation of \$695 million to training and employment programs for the fiscal year beginning April 1.

The funds for these programs will be in addition to the \$205 million which the government allocated for Challenge '85, the package for summer employment programs, bringing the total allocation for training and employment to \$900 million.

Details of the programs are to be worked out with the provinces and the private sector over the next few months and the programs may be applied quite differently from province to province. Employment Minister Flora MacDonald estimated that about 400 000 people would benefit from the new programs.

The major elements of the new strategy are: \$125 million to help women and young



Canada's provincial premiers with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney are: (From left, back row) James M. Lee, Prince Edward Island; Howard Pawley, Manitoba; John Buchanan, Nova Scotia; Richard Hatfield, New Brunswick; William Bennett, British Columbia; Grant Devine, Saskatchewan; (From left, front row) Peter Lougheed, Alberta; Frank Miller, Ontario; Mr. Mulroney; René Lévesque, Quebec; Brian Peckford, Newfoundland.



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