

The reasons for the growing importance of this area in Canada's trade pattern are obvious. Latin America has a population of over 150 million and vast natural resources complementary to our own. As in Canada, the whole area is in the process of economic expansion, with high production, rising living standards and increasing import requirements. We are natural trading partners, each in need of what the other can supply.

Since the war, our traditional exports to Latin America have been supplemented by a wide range of other products. The area has become one of our best customers for manufactured goods, many of which are currently denied access to other markets. Many countries in Latin America, including Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico, are open dollar markets where trade is unrestricted by import and exchange controls, just as Canada is an open market for their products.

Our relations with Latin America have been strengthened substantially in recent years. Since the end of the war we have concluded new trade agreements with many of these countries and we now maintain most-favoured-nation trade relations with all of Latin America with the exception of Honduras. In recent months we have further strengthened our diplomatic representation by establishing embassies in Venezuela, Colombia and Uruguay.

It is against this encouraging background and as a positive contribution to the expansion of Canada's trade that the Government decided to organize a Goodwill and Trade Mission to visit many of the countries of Latin America early this year. I was privileged to lead this Mission on a 5-week tour of nine countries, leaving Ottawa on January 5, and returning on February 10. We visited the following countries:

Brazil	Venezuela	Haiti
Argentina	Colombia	Cuba
Uruguay	Dominican Republic	Mexico

The Mission also made unofficial visits to Puerto Rico and to Trinidad, where we were privileged to meet a number of businessmen. In Trinidad, we were able to discuss matters of mutual interest with the Governor, Sir Hubert Rance, and with the Hon. Mr. Gomes, Minister of Labour and Industry, and other members of the Government, and to see something of the development of that British colony.

The Mission was composed of a small group of government officials and seven Canadian businessmen, drawn from widely representative branches of the Canadian economy. Three of the latter group speak Spanish fluently and spoke for the Mission on a number of occasions. These businessmen called on those concerned with the interests they each represented and thus, by dividing the Mission, we were able to cover a wide cross-section of interest in the countries we visited. Special thanks are due to these businessmen who helped materially in making our trade mission a success.

Their names and affiliations are as follows:-

D. W. Ambridge, President and General Manager, Abitibi Power & Paper Co., Ltd., Toronto, and representing the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.