

*International Relations*

before in the House of Commons in terms of a situation such as that in El Salvador.

The questions of economic development and economic promotion are of prime concern to the committee which is hearing witnesses and briefs at the present time. As an example of that philosophy, in 1980 we sold more to Brazil than we did to China, we sold more to Venezuela than to Norway and Sweden put together, and more to Argentina than to Spain. Our total exports in 1980 amounted to some \$3.7 billion, an increase of 32 per cent over the previous year, and we can expect further increases in 1981. Some 33 per cent of those exports were in the form of processed or manufactured goods, many in high technological areas. So it is not hard to see the economic importance we in Canada attach to various countries of Latin America. This is something which I think the Canadian public generally has a tendency not to realize.

The committee will also endeavour to look at our relationship with Latin America to move us out of what could be considered to be merely a one-sided relationship which consists in effect, of only trade. Trade will have to be supplemented by industrial co-operation and technological exchanges, and there is a greater need to give further attention to the political relations on both global questions and population questions between the two areas.

Economically Canada obviously views Latin America as a substantial market. In 1980 our exports to Mexico, for example, amounted to \$482 million which represents an increase of 104 per cent over the previous year. Agricultural commodities are a big part of that, as are processed and manufactured goods. Imports from Mexico increased by some 65 per cent to a total of \$344 million and will, of course, keep increasing as the years go on.

Canada has not had a history of a great deal of activity in Central America, but we should be moving steadily to increasing trade and development assistance in that area. There is, of course, in countries in Central America like Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, a substantial degree of uncertainty because of political turmoil, economic underdevelopment, abuses of human rights and military violence, of which everyone knows and is aware. The committee is also going to be looking at this particular aspect.

The Caribbean area is also going to be viewed with special priority as far as this particular committee is concerned, and certainly it is viewed with special priority as far as Canada is concerned. We are now working actively both bilaterally and multilaterally, to increase economic assistance to the Caribbean countries, and we intend to take a closer look at this particular aspect during our committee hearings. Our aim in Latin America and the Caribbean, as elsewhere, must be to contribute to the improvement of human rights either by private or public means, or both, by increasing trade between the two areas where trade is beneficial to both.

The area of Latin America and the Caribbean has been neglected by Canada for just too long. What the committee will try to do is to enhance the knowledge and interests of Parliament in this area, increase the awareness of Canadians

generally as to the benefits of trade between the two areas, and also the awareness of the whole area of human rights about which Canadians do not appear to be overly concerned at this time. For too long there has been a trend on the part of Canadians to look at Latin America and the Caribbean as basically a single area, ignoring the fact that in this particular area there are some 39 independent countries, and dependent colonies and territories where the languages spoken are as diverse as English, French, Spanish, Dutch and Portuguese. We must deal with countries in Latin America and the Caribbean on a more individual basis than we have done up to this point. Some no doubt will be important to us as export markets, others as sources of needed imports; some will be sources of immigration and others destinations for Canadian tourism. Some will be important because of their role in international affairs, and others because of the need for development assistance to which we can contribute, and still others because of the great need for humanitarian contributions Canada can make.

It will be incumbent upon the committee to take an in-depth look, or as much so as a parliamentary committee can, into the whole question of human rights and the violation of human rights in some of these countries, and El Salvador I suppose is a perfect example. Canada may be able to fill a very needed role in this particular area because of the status, standing and good will which we enjoy in the Latin American area.

Because this will really be the first in-depth look at this particular region, the committee will offer Canadians a window on Latin America and the Caribbean. This will act as a challenge not only to committee members but to Canadians in general to get to know this very important region better and to come to understand it, which we hope will result in us all being drawn closer together. I think this is a very important part of the committee's work.

May I call it six o'clock, and ask that I be allowed to resume my remarks after the dinner break, Mr. Speaker?

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At 6 p. m., the House took recess.

[*English*]

**AFTER RECESS**

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

**Mr. Murta:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue where I left off at six o'clock. In the last few minutes I have available to me, I would like to try to put into perspective the whole question of world population and our ability as a developed country and the ability of other developed countries to try, in some way, to feed that growing population.

To put population figures into some perspective, let me say that there has been a population increase from about half a