

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

SOUTH AMERICA AND MEXICO

(We have 10 chanceries here — Bogota, Caracas, Brasilia, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo, Buenos Aires, Lima, Santiago and Quito — with 114 Canada-based staff, plus Mexico with 27 Canada-based staff.)

The situation here is very different. Trade and investment are the key issues. Canada's investment in this area is sizeable plus there is a strong corporate presence — Brascan and Alcan, to mention two. Canadian missionaries have also played a major role in education throughout Latin America.

The problem, however, is the enormous debt. Not only are the countries in Latin America the largest debtors (about \$350 billion in total), but a significant portion of their debt is owed to commercial banks at floating interest rates. (Canadian banks are presently exposed to the extent of several billion dollars.) The countries are rescheduling their debts over longer periods of time, but it is still of great concern to all.

In terms of aid, the only countries receiving it are Peru, Colombia and Brazil.

Thus, the issues facing Canadians at our posts in Latin America and the Caribbean vary greatly depending on which country they are in.

THE ISSUES AND THEIR EFFECTS

The Latin American and Caribbean countries are presently going through very difficult times. The Canadians living there can't help but be aware of, and attuned to, these problems. Life has become a little more difficult than usual for some of our representatives there, but they obviously are handling it well.

Our whole mandate in this area has changed. Trade now focuses on the protection of our interests and the active promotion of our programs, and aid and immigration have now become key issues.

THE FUTURE

Changes are taking place with regard to our representation in this geographic area. As of March 1984, citizens of Jamaica, Guyana, Guatemala and Peru now require visas to enter Canada. This has resulted in the establishment of new visa offices in Georgetown, Guatemala City and Lima as well as nearly doubling the size of the visa office in Kingston. In terms of aid, the Treasury Board has recently approved five additional positions to be deployed in this area for the delivery and support of the aid program. It is expected that these positions will be staffed prior to April 1, 1984.

Politically, the number of staff will remain constant, but their level of activity, due to the situation there, will be high.

Besides the political turmoil, this area is going through an economic crisis. Canada has been involved, and will continue to be involved, both through private and public institutions, in its recovery process. We are taking a long view of the situation and are looking optimistically at the potential for trade and the prospects for investment in this region.

The emphasis now is on a strong and helpful Canadian presence there. We have confidence that Latin America and the Caribbean will overcome their present difficulties and resume their rightful positions in the world.

COMMUNITY CO-ORDINATORS AT POSTS ABROAD

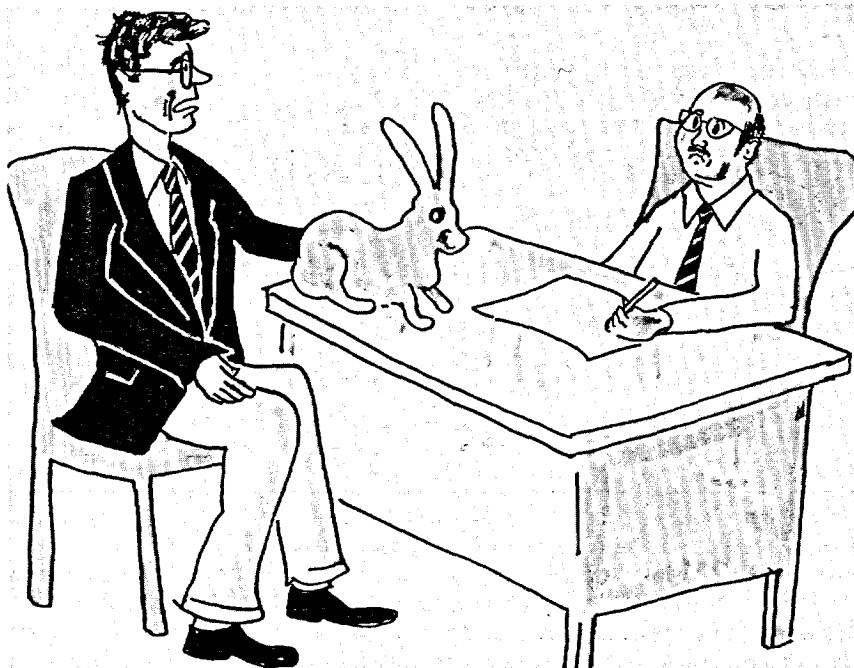
In our last issue, we announced the forthcoming implementation of a program whereby community services would be offered at a certain number of posts abroad. (A definitive document outlining the program is near completion).

In the first stage, it is proposed that posts with at least 20 Canada-based staff and level I to IV posts with a least 6 Canada-based staff, will be given the opportunity to implement this program. (Those not on the list who wish to offer the service may obtain financial authority to do so from the Posting Services Centre (ADTB), provided funds are available.) A model for the contract has been prepared to facilitate operations at the posts.

Then, at posts abroad, one or more spouses may be hired on contract to organize the activities deemed necessary at that post. These could include such things as: writing families before they arrive at the post, welcoming them upon arrival, showing them around, assisting them with any particular concerns, planning activities for Canadian families, setting up an embassy library, updating the post report, researching other information that may be needed, producing a monthly newsletter, or co-ordinating food orders.

Posts initiating this program will be getting in contact with the spouses to provide them with details, plus, in this publication we will keep you informed of future developments.

Dip Doodles by Vic Lotto



We'll accept that posting provided we get a guaranteed return ticket for Harvey.