

Visit of Venezuelan foreign minister

Venezuela's Foreign Minister José Alberto Zambrano-Velasco visited Canada, February 4-7 at the invitation of Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan. The two met to discuss political and economic relations between Canada and Venezuela and to exchange views on international questions.

During his visit Dr. Zambrano-Velasco met briefly with Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and held discussions with Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce Herb Gray and the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Marc Lalonde. Dr. Zambrano-Velasco was also introduced in the House of Commons and later was guest of honour at a luncheon hosted by the Speaker Jeanne Sauvé and attended by members of the three major Canadian political parties.

Drs. MacGuigan and Zambrano-Velasco said they were pleased that bilateral relations were developing satisfactorily. The two ministers agreed that the relationship should be broadened and deepened through more frequent and regular exchanges and visits by government officials and private interests.

The ministers noted the significant volume of trade between the two countries in 1980 and agreed that there was considerable potential for a substantial increase.

They also agreed that officials of both

governments should begin negotiations for a co-operation agreement which would promote and facilitate the development of closer ties and increased exchanges.

Drs. MacGuigan and Zambrano-Velasco suggested that their governments should establish a mechanism to permit periodic meetings at the ministerial level to review the state of relations between the two countries and identify areas for co-operation.

They noted the establishment, on the basis of agreed arrangements between the Canadian and Venezuelan governments, of a Canadian provincial office in Caracas and agreed that it could play a useful role in the development of bilateral relations between the two countries in the areas of trade promotion, cultural exchanges and tourism.

Both ministers said they were satisfied with the long-standing and secure oil supply relationship between the two countries and the trend in recent years towards broader energy co-operation. They affirmed their determination to see this relationship continue and agreed that their respective national oil companies could play an important role in expanded energy co-operation.

During a meeting between Dr. Zambrano-Velasco and Energy Minister Marc Lalonde, existing and future energy co-operation was discussed. They agreed that the oil supply relationship should remain a central element of bilateral energy co-

operation. They noted with satisfaction the existing co-operation between Petro-Canada and Petroleos de Venezuela and agreed that there should be efforts to strengthen this co-operation. Mr. Lalonde explained the role of Petro-Canada International and Dr. Zambrano-Velasco outlined the Venezuelan-Mexican program of energy co-operation for Central American and Caribbean countries.

Mr. Lalonde and Dr. Zambrano-Velasco agreed that there were possibilities for eventual co-operation between Canada and Venezuela in the area of energy assistance to developing countries, especially in the hemisphere, and that these possibilities should be further explored.

International issues

The two foreign ministers expressed their concern at the increase in global tensions resulting from recent international developments and pointed out the need to intensify efforts both bilaterally and multilaterally to maintain and ensure world peace.

Drs. MacGuigan and Zambrano-Velasco reviewed extensively the current situation in Central America and the Caribbean. They said they were concerned over developments in the region and with regard to El Salvador, expressed the hope that that nation could achieve peace, democracy and social justice. They also agreed that there should be no foreign intervention.

The ministers agreed that Canada and Venezuela should co-operate more closely in the development assistance sphere. In particular, they said there should be more extensive bilateral consultation in the operations of their respective programs in attempting to meet the economic needs of the Caribbean region, with a special focus on the requirements of the Leeward and Windward Islands. They also said they would consult regularly in international financial institutions active in the Caribbean and share information on their respective bilateral development assistance programs in the area.

The two ministers exchanged views regarding the North-South dialogue and agreed that both countries would make every effort to bring the dialogue to a successful conclusion. They also reaffirmed their strong support for the United Nations and the principles of the United Nations charter and agreed that all members must make greater efforts to strengthen its effectiveness.



Dr. MacGuigan greets Dr. Zambrano-Velasco at a reception in Ottawa.

Andor Andre Sima