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Mr. MacEachen to Middle East

At press time, Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen had just begun a 10-day tour of the Middle East, visiting Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq and Israel.

External Affairs officials said that this trip, the first to the Middle East by a Canadian External Affairs minister, since Mitchell Sharp went to Egypt and Israel in 1969, came at a time when the Middle East was seen as an area for improved economic and trade relations and not as a theatre of war.

Prime Minister Trudeau's visit to Latin America

Pierre Elliott Trudeau's official visit to Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela — from January 23 to February 2, 1976 — is the first of its magnitude to be made by a Canadian Prime Minister to Latin America. The only other time a Canadian head of Government visited a Latin American country was when Mr. Diefenbaker visited Mexico in 1960, in return for the Mexican President's visit to Canada the previous year.

Mr. Trudeau, accompanied by his wife, will be in Mexico from January 23 to 26, in return for President Echeverria's visit to Ottawa in spring 1973. He will be in Cuba January 26 to 29, and Venezuela January 29 to February 2, in response to invitations from Prime Minister Fidel Castro and President Carlos Andres Perez.

The main objectives of the trip will be to strengthen Canada's economic, political and cultural relations with the three countries; to demonstrate Canada's policy of developing closer links with Latin America as a result of its policy of diversifying its international relations; to discuss the future course of inter-American institutions; and to examine such issues as the development of the law of the sea, the prevention of nuclear proliferation, the evolution of economic relations between developed and developing countries, environmental questions and energy matters (Venezuela is currently Canada's largest supplier of imported oil and Mexico is developing into a major oil producer).

Trade and tourism

The three countries, lying in the Caribbean basin, together account for the greatest portion of Canadian trade with, and tourism and travel to, Latin America. During 1975, they purchased about half of Canada's total exports of \$1,260 million to Latin America (thus together outranking Brazil), and supplied 80 per cent of Canada's total imports of \$1,830 million from Latin America. Two of the three countries, Mexico and Cuba, are the destination of by far the greatest portion of Canada's tourist traffic to Latin America;

out of some 250,000 Canadian visitors in 1975 to the entire area, nearly 200,000 Canadians went to Mexico and about 40,000 to Cuba. This traffic constitutes, in effect, an important additional export by those countries to Canada.

Canadian parliamentarians have displayed an active interest in discussions with their counterparts in the three countries. A group of Canadian parliamentarians visited Cuba in January 1974, and another group went to Mexico in December 1974; a return visit to Canada by Mexican parliamentarians will take place during the first week of February 1976. Still another group of Canadian parliamentarians were in Caracas January 6-13, 1976.

The Canadian Association for Latin America will hold its fifth annual convention — and the first to be held abroad — in Caracas, to coincide with the Prime Minister's visit there. This meeting will be attended by Canadians prominent in the private sector and by their opposite numbers invited from all countries in Latin America.

Mr. Trudeau's visit is another important manifestation of Canadian interest in, and involvement with, Latin America that has been growing since completion of the Canadian Foreign Policy Review of 1970. Since that time Canada has established its first official link with the Organization of American States, through the appointment of a Permanent Observer in 1972. Canada joined the Inter-American Development Bank as a full member in 1972 and has committed \$300 million to help finance the Bank's development activities in Latin America.

Canada is also now a member of several of the inter-American specialized agencies working in such fields as health, geography, agriculture and tax administration.

In addition, since 1970, the Canadian International Development Agency has carried on a program of technical assistance and co-operation in several countries of Latin America, especially Colombia, Peru, the nations of Central America, Cuba, Haiti and Brazil. In the