

value of Team Canada missions to Canadian taxpayers, “is a legitimate question for the opposition and the media to ask.”

On the topic of domestic media coverage of Team Canada missions, Mr. McCarthy stated that while still newsworthy, Team Canada missions do not generate the same media or general interest they once did. Indeed, the concept has become familiar and so “people are becoming less enamoured of it.” Most Team Canada stories are now relegated to the business section. But this does not imply they are not interesting: “There are some good stories there for an economic/business reporter”, especially one who goes off the beaten path. Nor are they unimportant. These stories, “not only educate Canadians a little bit as to what sort of development issues are going on in some of these places, but as important from the government perspective and the trade perspective, (they educate) the small and medium sized business people to the opportunities out there.”

Among the host foreign press, Team Canada still makes the news, though again mainly in the business section. Part of the mission’s appeal is the size and importance of the delegation. Undeniably, “you do get a bigger bang for the buck when you come down with that kind of entourage.”

In the questions that followed Mr. McCarthy described the unfolding of a Team Canada mission upon arrival in a host country and the Canadian media’s coverage of it. The Team follows two distinct agendas, one political, one business. The media cover both, as much as possible. In each country Prime Minister Chrétien meets the Head of State for an official one-on-one. Then the premiers join them. The media are invited only for the photo opportunities at the beginning and end of the meetings. This means the media do “a lot of standing around in ornate hallways.” After these meetings, an official luncheon or dinner, replete with speeches, takes place. They are open to the media. Afterwards the official and business delegations separate with the Prime Minister continuing his meeting with the Head of State and the business people getting briefed by Canadian embassy officials on the local economic situation, and meeting their local counterparts. These business meetings are usually open to the media. This separation marks the beginning of the “juggling act” for the media.

The media must decide which delegation to follow, official or business, based on where they believe the best stories can be found. To offset this challenge, some members of the media pool stories and visuals-both officially and unofficially. At the end of each day DFAIT officials usually give a briefing on the results of the day’s closed door meetings. However these reports often lack balance. On the whole media access to the Prime Minister and Premiers is “controlled, to say the least,” but to business people is “generally pretty good.” A prime venue for access is the plane, which made the separation of the media from both groups during the Latin American trip