

*Stop in Mexico
least successful
of Trudeau visit*

American trading partners is Mexico, with imports of \$218 million and exports of \$95.8 million. Cuba is fourth, with imports of \$217.9 million and exports of \$85.5 million. The country left out of the tour was second-place Brazil, with imports from Canada last year of \$192.5 million and exports of \$166 million.

Of the three stops on the Prime Minister's tour, Mexico was the least successful. Mr. Trudeau's presence fulfilled the limited objective of showing the flag, but the formal talks with President Luis Echeverria left the Canadian delegation irritated and frustrated. Mr. Echeverria seemed more interested in talking than listening, and he and his officials took up much of the limited discussion time with long-winded lectures on Mexican positions.

The formal talks occupied a total of five hours spread over two sessions, and Mr. Trudeau frequently had difficulty getting a word in edgewise. The nuclear-non-proliferation issue, for instance, brought a 45-minute dissertation from the Mexican Foreign Minister on his country's views and leadership in this field. Similarly, when Mr. Trudeau made the mistake of asking how the Mexicans planned to finance some of the projects they were describing, the result was a 25-minute speech by the Minister of Finance.

The Prime Minister did find the time to put forward some of his own views, but selling those views was another matter. Canadian officials felt he had too little opportunity to put his points across forcefully or in sufficient detail. Beyond a vague cultural-exchange pact, the talks produced no clear agreement on either trade matters or major multilateral issues.

In the area of trade, Mr. Trudeau pressed Canada's interest in selling Mexico Dash-7 aircraft, CANDU reactors, and railway equipment, as well as expanding trade in various other areas. The Mexicans were noncommittal, confining their answers to saying that such matters were under active consideration. In turn, they put emphasis on the need to reduce the trade deficit with Canada, their eagerness to move away from the "triangular trade" situation of having some 25 per cent of their exports to Canada pass through middlemen in the U.S., and their desire to have their national airline get a larger share of the passenger traffic it divided with CP Air.

Multilateral relations

As far as multilateral matters like the new world economic order, the law of the sea and nuclear non-proliferation were con-

cerned, the Prime Minister found that Canada and Mexico shared broad objectives but differed substantially on tactics. President Echeverria is much more given to dramatic gestures, and Canadian officials were startled by the degree of virulent anti-Americanism that underlay Mexican positions. "My God," said one participant in the talks, "they're still harking back to the Alamo and Manifest Destiny."

In Mexico, as in the other two countries visited, the talks on multilateral matters produced no new meeting of minds. But the exchanges were at least an opportunity for Mr. Trudeau to explain some Canadian positions and to emphasize that Canada was pursuing foreign policies distinct from those of the U.S.

The effectiveness of the Mexican trip was further reduced by the fact that the Prime Minister was dealing with a "lame-duck" President; Mr. Echeverria's term expires in December, and he cannot succeed himself. Mr. Trudeau did meet for some 50 minutes with the designated heir, José Lopez Portillo, but that brief encounter was at best just enough to set the stage for talks after the new President came to power.

Success and controversy

Of Mr. Trudeau's three stops, the visit to Cuba was both the most successful and the most controversial. The Prime Minister had two principal objectives. He wanted to ensure that, if and when Cuba's relations with the U.S. thawed, Canada would not lose the commercial advantages of having "come in on the ground-floor" during the years when other countries in the Western Hemisphere were boycotting the island. And he wanted to cement further relations with the Castro regime, both because of its leadership role among developing countries and because of the desirability of keeping it from falling completely within the Soviet orbit.

Both those objectives were apparently achieved — in private, during more than six hours of talks with the Cuban leader and in public, by virtue of the hero's welcome Mr. Trudeau received from stage-managed crowds and Premier Castro's words at a huge public rally in the port and industrial centre of Cienfuegos.

During his 50-minute speech to a vast crowd outside a sugar factory in Cienfuegos, the Cuban Premier recalled that Canada had been one of only two Western Hemisphere countries (the other was Mexico) to resist U.S. pressure to sever relations in 1959. He outlined how the Cuban economy had benefited from Canadian aid and trade since then, and praised

*Prime Minister
pressed sale
of aircraft
and reactors*