

ained; even on those rare occasions — usually involving the super-powers — when “summitry” appears to produce a concrete accord, most of the real bargaining has already been completed at lower levels long before the leaders meet to consummate the agreement. More often, the trip is meant to open new channels of communication, add an extra fillip to relations between two countries and, it is hoped, create an impetus towards co-operation that works down from the leaders to the bureaucrats.

Some of the most important benefits of such tours are reaped long before the Prime Minister actually sets foot on foreign soil; the very fact that he is coming obliges the leaders of the countries he visits to familiarize themselves with Canada and to seek briefing on bilateral matters that would otherwise be unlikely to reach their level. The actual visit continues this educational process, enabling leaders to explore one another's views and to make personal assessments of their counterparts. At the same time, the broader purpose of “showing the flag” is also fulfilled; the publicity surrounding the visit gives the general public in the host country a sort of “crash course” on Canada and its affairs.

Against this background, the differences between the success and failure of any particular visit are likely to be subtle. They turn on such factors as the personal “vibrations” between the two leaders, the opportunity to state views persuasively and the degree of success in laying the groundwork for progress at lower levels. By these standards, Mr. Trudeau's visit to Mexico was at best a partial success; his Cuban visit was a triumph, and his visit to Venezuela comes somewhere in between — a visit too uncertain in character to permit any clear conclusions.

His visit to those three countries — the first major trip to Latin America by a Canadian Prime Minister — was intended to mark the end of a long history of indifference during which Canada traded with Latin America but had few other contacts with the region. Canada did not, for instance, establish diplomatic relations with Venezuela until 1950, did not acquire permanent observer status in the Organization of American States until 1972, and did not become a full member of the Inter-American Development Bank until the same year.

Canada's new-found interest in the area dates back to 1968, when the Federal Government launched a major review of foreign policy. A succession of ministers travelled to Latin America as part of the

review process, and the resulting policy document concluded: “Closer relations with Latin American countries on a basis of mutual respect and reciprocal advantage would enhance Canadian sovereignty and independence. Greater exposure to Latin American culture would enrich Canadian life. Increased trade with Latin American and judicious Canadian investment there would augment Canada's capacity to ‘pay its way’ in the world. Similarly, a closer dialogue with some of these countries about world problems could enhance Canada's capacity to play an independent role in international affairs.”

The timing of Mr. Trudeau's visit coincided fortuitously with a new sense of international importance among the developing Latin American countries and with a feeling on their part that they were being ignored or taken too much for granted by the United States. The attention of another developed country like Canada appeared so welcome that Mr. Trudeau was paid the added tribute in each country of being treated as a head of state, rather than as a mere head of government.

Half Canada's exports

In visiting Mexico, Cuba and Venezuela, Mr. Trudeau chose three countries that together purchased about half Canada's \$1.2-billion worth of exports to Latin America in 1975 and supplied 80 per cent of its \$1.8 billion in imports from the area. Each of the three, moreover, wields particular influence in Latin America and among other developing countries.

Venezuela heads the economic list, with imports from Canada last year of \$291 million and exports to Canada of \$1.1 billion (mostly in the form of oil). Number Three among Canada's Latin

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Fortuitous coincidence in timing of Trudeau visit to Latin America