

---

## Canada/Mexico treaty

Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Relations Santiago Roel Garcia, accompanied by Secretary of Commerce Fernando Solana, visited Canada November 18-24, leading the Mexican delegation to the third meeting of the Canada-Mexico Joint Ministerial Committee in Ottawa, from November 21 to 22.

Leading the Canadian delegation, in addition to Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson, were Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce Jack Horner and Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Alastair Gillespie.

The committee, formed in 1968, first met formally in Ottawa in 1971 and then in Mexico City in 1974. Since its first meeting, Canada-Mexico relations have broadened significantly in all areas and the value of reciprocal trade has more than doubled.

On November 22 the two ministers responsible for foreign affairs signed a treaty providing for the exchange of nationals under prison sentence or on parole in their respective countries.

Mr. Jamieson said the present treaty exemplified further co-operation between Canada and Mexico, and was an important experiment being conducted by Canada and other countries to promote the rehabilitation of offenders by enabling them to serve the remainder of their sentence in the country of which they were nationals.

Legislation will be submitted to Parliament as soon as practicable so that the treaty can be brought into force.

Under the treaty, the transfer of persons under sentence would take place only after all rights of appeal had been exhausted in the sentencing country. No transfer would be initiated without the consent of the individual concerned and would be subject to approval of both countries.

At present there are 13 Canadians incarcerated in Mexican jails and one Mexican in a Canadian jail.

Other topics of the two-day meeting included: bilateral trade; consular, cultural and economic co-operation; the sharing of expertise in the management of fisheries, mining and forestry industries; the conditions for the sale of Canadian nuclear supplies to Mexico; the possibility of negotiating an air agreement; mutual concern over international problems, including the Middle East and South Africa.

It was agreed that officials from the two sides would meet early in 1978 to identify specific areas for commercial co-operation and individual projects and look at opportunities for joint ventures, investment and technical exchange. The ministers expressed a desire to increase science and technology exchanges.

The fourth meeting of the ministerial committee will be held in Mexico City at a date to be determined.

---

## Rural programs in Brazil

The Canadian Lutheran World Relief group and the Saskatchewan government will each provide \$75,000 to assist some 15 communities in northeastern Brazil to raise their standard of living. The 30-month rural development program will affect about 250,000 inhabitants in the region, most of whom are subsistence farmers. The Canadian International Development Agency will match the grant with a \$150,000-contribution.

The project will cover preventative medicine, water supply, agriculture and housing. Total costs are estimated at \$2.5 million, most of which will be donated by the Church World Service U.S.A., the churches of West Germany and the Lutheran World Federation.

---

## Remembrance Day every day

Although most Canadians reserve November 11 to honour veterans of two world wars, Bill Powell, recreational director at Westminster Hospital in London, Ontario, has found a way of remembering some of them all year round. Mr. Powell, charged with the responsibility of co-ordinating volunteer services at the veterans' hospital, recently completed the first of several projects designed to bring variety to the lives of the residents, who are often forgotten by the busy public.

Noting that some of them had not left the premises in 30 years, Powell organized a trip to Florida for a few of the geriatric and psychiatric patients, which began with a six-month "education program" before they left Canada. The eager travellers, some of whom had forgotten their social skills, refreshed their knowledge of restaurant etiquette, attended Toronto's

Maple Leaf Gardens to become comfortable in crowds and (for those who had never ridden in a modern airplane) took a trial flight over southwestern Ontario.

Finally, they set off for their destination — a motel in Tampa, "just off the beaten track", with Powell, a nurse, an occupational therapist and two orderlies. They tried to foresee all difficulties. Arrangements were made with a veterans' hospital in Florida so that if any of the Canadians needed emergency care, they could receive it there. "We had pill parades and pay parades," said Bill Powell. They all paid their own expenses but were only allowed a certain amount to spend each day.

Although some of the veterans have since visited Ottawa, Bill Powell says the Florida trip was the most rewarding thing he has ever done.

---

## Farm land scarce

New data demonstrating the critical importance of farmland near major cities is contained in a study released in early November by Minister of State for the Environment Len Marchand.

The study, entitled *Agricultural Land and Urban Centres*, is part of a continuing series aimed at encouraging sound use of the land resource.

Although the urban influence on Canada's best farmland has been apparent for some time, the study provides hard data to support the concerns. It shows that more than half of Canada's best (Class 1) agricultural land and more than one third of Class 2 land are within a 50-mile radius of the country's 22 largest cities. This area also accounted for 46 per cent of the total value of Canada's agricultural production in 1971.

Because it is within direct commuting distance of major population centres, this high quality land is under considerable pressure from the demand for rural residences, hobby farms, cottages, recreational resorts, businesses, and investment and speculative holdings.

An earlier report in the Canada Land Inventory series, released in July 1976, focused on the scarcity of prime agricultural land in all regions. It revealed that only 10 per cent of settled Canada was suitable for farming, and that only one-half of 1 per cent of this could be classified as prime land. The implications of its location are examined in the newest report.