

NATIONS

IN • THE • NEWS

Canada–Chile: New strength to a long-standing relationship

Next year, Canada and Chile will celebrate 60 years of diplomatic relations. The first Canadian representative to Santiago was W.F.A. Turgeon, a former Chief Justice of Saskatchewan, who was accredited to both Argentina and Chile on September 28, 1941.

He had his residence, however, in Buenos Aires, and found it too strenuous to travel often to Santiago. Accordingly, in 1942 Canada established a separate mission in Chile headed by Warwick Chipman, a Montréal lawyer and professor of law at McGill University. Chile reciprocated the same year.

Our two nations have many things in common. Like Canada, Chile has a small population (15 million) spread over an immense distance; the country stretches more than 4000 kilometres from north to south but is only 100 to 200 kilometres in width. Both nations have strong resource-based industries,

such as mining, forestry, agriculture and fishing. Again like Canada, Chile has developed modern telecommunications systems to serve the needs of its dispersed population. And limited markets at home have forced the two countries to look outward to sustain their economies.

Chile has one of the most stable and open economies in Latin America, and it

Team Canada trade mission on its stop in Santiago, January 1998

returned to democracy in 1990. These factors prompted the Government of Canada to identify Chile as one of its 10 priority markets. Total two-way trade stood at \$357 million in 1992; since then, it has doubled to a high of \$776 million in 1999. Canadian investments have increased sharply; after the United States, Canada is now the largest foreign investor in Chile, with \$8 billion in current and planned investments.

Our economic relations received a boost from the 1996 Canada–Chile Free Trade Agreement and the January 1998 Team Canada trade mission to Latin America. With our other partners in the Hemisphere, Ottawa and Santiago

Chile coastline

photo: CANAPRESS



Newly elected Chilean President
Ricardo Lagos

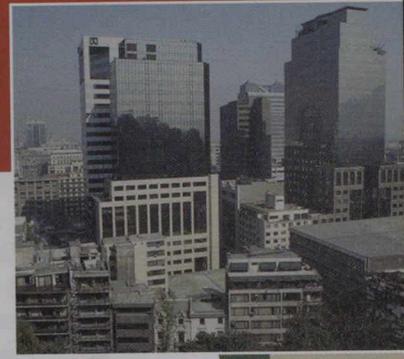
are now engaged in negotiations toward the establishment of a proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005.

Our cultural and academic relations have also been growing steadily, with the impetus of two bilateral agreements: one on co-operation in education, and the other on cultural co-operation and exchanges. A Canadian Education Centre has opened in Santiago to promote Canadian educational institutions and assist Chileans interested in pursuing their studies in Canada.

In the international arena, Canada and Chile work closely together on a range of issues at the UN, the OAS and the Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC). Chile hosted the second Summit of the Americas in April 1998, and Canada will host the third Summit next year in Québec City.

Now long gone are the dark days of the Pinochet regime (1973–90), when Canada took in hundreds of Chilean political refugees. Today, Chile is one of our key partners in the Americas and the future looks particularly promising for our bilateral relationship. Ricardo Lagos was elected President on January 16; he intends to strengthen Chile's democracy and market orientation.

For Canada, it is good news that we can count on a stable partner in Latin America. ●



Downtown
Santiago, Chile



Bolivia

Chile

■ Santiago

Argentina