

Southern cone

Political events in the early 1970s in Chile and Argentina to some extent retarded the development of closer ties with these countries. Nevertheless it could be expected that Canada's relations with them would, in the long term, take on increasing importance. Increasing economic and financial stabilization in the region has enhanced Canadian interest in seeking new trade and investment opportunities. Bilateral trade has recently formed the major element in Canada's relations with the four countries of the "southern cone"; Canadian trade with Chile, Argentina, Paraguay and Uruguay totalled \$201.1 million in 1977 (predominantly with Argentina and Chile), compared to \$127.4 million in 1976. Collaboration continued on nuclear affairs in Argentina; the construction of a CANDU reactor was in progress and discussions were held on further co-operation in the atomic field.

By the end of 1977, Canada had authorized the immigration of 6,470 Chilean refugees who had been caught in the upheavals in that country, including 110 political prisoners and 225 dependants.

Central America and the Latin Caribbean

The focus of relations with the six countries of Central America and with Haiti and the Dominican Republic has also been on increasing development assistance and on promoting trade. El Salvador, Honduras and Haiti were countries of concentration for development-assistance programs begun earlier in the decade. Completion of existing projects and the planning of new ones continued in 1977. Canadian trade with the countries of the region was not extensive compared to that with Canada's leading trade partners in Latin America, but it nevertheless totalled \$258.4 million in 1977. As the Central American and Caribbean countries continue to develop their resources and industries, opportunities for expanded trade may increase, particularly in the sectors of transportation, power and forestry. Canadian investment in this region exceeded half a billion dollars, the larger part in Guatemala, the Dominican Republic and Panama.

More Canadians travelled to Central America and the Latin Caribbean in 1977 than ever before, Haiti and Costa Rica being the leading destinations. This trend is expected to continue as Canadians become more aware of the attractions of the region.

Cuba

The effect on Canada's relations with Cuba of the Prime Minister's 1976 visit provided a number of opportunities to improve these relations during 1977. The Canada-Cuba Joint Committee on Economic and Trade Relations met in Havana to discuss the current bilateral trade situation and to explore ideas for new trade and investment opportunities. The flow of Canadian tourists into Cuba continued at a high level. A number of official visits demonstrated the growing diversity of Canada's relations with the island republic. The Cuban Minister of Health came to Canada to discuss details of the health agreement signed in Havana in 1975. Fisheries and Environment Minister Roméo LeBlanc visited Cuba to sign a fisheries agreement. In November, Premier Regan of Nova Scotia went to Havana to look into trade and investment possibilities. It was expected that further contacts of this kind would reveal new opportunities in these areas.