

found principally in the economic difficulties experienced by the region during 1975 because of the impact of inflation and, in many countries, the increase in the cost of oil and a drop in price of major export commodities.

If Canadian trade with the region as a whole diminished slightly in 1975, trade with its area of greatest concentration, the Latin countries of the Caribbean, increased. Canada's exports to them rose considerably, from \$805 million for the first 11 months of 1974 to around \$1,180 million for the corresponding period in 1975. Imports declined by a smaller amount, from \$1,517 million for the first 11 months of 1974 to about \$1,304 million for that period of 1975.

The Export Development Corporation played a significant role in assisting Canadian exports to Latin America. In March it gave a commitment in principle for a line of credit of \$100 million to Cuba. In September it signed a memorandum of understanding for financing up to \$300 million for exports to Peru. Actual loans for financing Canadian exports were \$97.2 million to Mexico, \$19.7 million to Cuba, \$16.9 million to the Dominican Republic, \$13.6 million to Ecuador, \$3 million to Peru and \$1.2 million to Brazil.

In the effort to encourage stronger economic ties with Latin America, several Canadian ministers visited the area during 1975. In January, the then Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources, Ian Macdonald, visited Venezuela. In March, the then Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Alastair Gillespie, led a trade mission to Cuba and Venezuela. At the start of the year, the Minister-President of the National Bank of Cuba, Raul Leon, paid an official visit to Canada and, in September, the Deputy Prime Minister of Cuba, Carlos Rafael Rodriguez, came to take part in the initial meeting of the Canada-Cuba Joint Committee on Economic and Trade Relations. A bilateral air agreement was signed during this visit.

The Canadian Association for Latin America (CALA) continued to stimulate the interest of Canadian business agencies and firms in the region and the prospects it offers for Canadian trade and investment.

Canadian bilateral aid to Latin America is relatively modest in comparison with the amounts given in some other parts of the world because of the advanced stage of many countries in the region and Canada's policy of

concentrating on the poorest countries and populations. In 1975, CIDA provided \$17 million to countries in Latin America, mostly in technical assistance. CIDA also committed about \$3 million in matching grants to non-governmental organizations.

Canada provided funds for multilateral programs of assistance to the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and to various specialized technical organizations. In March, \$7.5 million was allocated to the IDB for financing the preparation by prospective recipients of development projects. In October the Cabinet approved Canadian participation in the proposed increase of the IDB's ordinary capital and of its Fund for Special Operations. If the proposed increase is ratified by the other members of the IDB, Canada will provide about \$70 million over a period of three years, raising total funds committed since Canada became a member in 1972 to \$382 million. In May, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce attended the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the IDB in Santo Domingo. Canadian support for Latin American integration movements, such as the six-country Andean Group, continued.

In addition to the assistance to specialized technical organizations provided by CIDA, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) supports research on the application of science and technology to the needs of developing countries. In 1975, the IDRC approved 15 projects in Latin America with a total value of \$2,647,000. Among the specialized technical organizations supported are the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT) in Mexico, which was responsible for the development of triticale, a cross between wheat and rye, the International Centre for Tropical Agriculture (CIAT) in Colombia and the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Peru.

In April and May, Canada was host in Ottawa to annual meetings of the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IIASA), the Inter-American Centre of Tax Administrators (IATA) and the Geographical Commission of the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History (PAIGH).

The growing extent of Canadian relations with Latin America has led to contacts and