

Trade and Aid

Although Canada still imports most of its coffee from Colombia, the percentage has declined in recent years so that there is no longer a rough balance of trade. In 1980, Canadian exports to Colombia had a value of \$185 million as against imports of \$101 million. Canadian exports include newsprint, asbestos, plastic and synthetic rubber, aluminum, barley, aircraft, computer equipment, auto parts and strip steel. Canadian imports from Colombia, besides green and instant coffee, include corduroy, bananas, fresh flowers, trees and shrubs and, since 1981, fuel oil.

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) has an \$8.3 million aid program in Colombia, one of the largest in Latin America. As well as institutional co-operation, CIDA supports a number of rural projects and schools, including one that teaches furniture building. It also assists some non-governmental associations.

In addition, the International Development Research Centre, which was founded and is financed mostly by Canada, has its regional office in Bogota and its work is well known among government agencies and academics.

Colombia, which has a gross domestic product of (U.S.) \$26 billion, showed a growth in its economy of 6 per cent in 1980. Its major exports include coffee, fuel oil, cotton, tobacco, sugar, and textiles. Among its imports are transportation equipment, machinery, industrial metals, raw materials, chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Its most important markets are Japan, the USA, Germany, Venezuela and the Netherlands, with its imports coming chiefly from the USA, Germany, Japan and Ecuador.

History and Politics

Colombia has a population of more than 27 million made up of a number of ethnic groups: Mestizos (Spanish Indians), Caucasians, Mulattos, besides the Spanish settlers.

As Nueva Granada, Colombia was a Spanish colony for 300 years until it established its independence in 1819 as the Republic of Gran Colombia which included what are now