

Once your organization's check-in is completed, insist that all members proceed immediately through security and passport control. The same duty-free shops and the same temptations that are available *before* security will almost always be available *after* security — and you will certainly be able to control your group better once they are all in the departure lounge, especially if there is an unexpected delay.

When you get to “the other end”, you can also make things smoother by sending someone ahead to the hotel to make sure that the pre-registration you have requested has been completed and that there is no last minute problem over the availability of your rooms. When you send your hotel list always include your anticipated arrival and departure times.

HIRING A BUS

Remember that foreign buses do not always have the same number of seats or facilities as Canadian buses. The existence of a toilet, the amount of luggage space and the very amount of physical passenger space can vary enormously from country to country. Do not presume that when you ask someone to hire a bus on your behalf that anything resembling the standard 47-seat North American will either show up or even be available. You might discover that, instead of the one bus that would meet your requirements in Canada, you will need two buses “over there”.

TRAVEL TIMES

If your organization were visiting Montreal and your schedule involved getting from a downtown hotel to Dorval airport via the Décarie Expressway at five o'clock on a Friday afternoon, common sense would tell you to leave early to allow for the known

traffic congestion at that time on that day. The same rule applies abroad as the distance on a map will by no means indicate how long the journey will actually take when traffic and road conditions are taken into consideration. Make sure that you know the distances to be travelled, certainly, but it is also essential that you are aware of the normal travel times involved on the days and times when you are travelling to and from an airport or going from city to city.

BEARING GIFTS

It can be somewhat embarrassing if, during the course of a tour, you are showered with gifts and have nothing to offer in return. In fact, the exchange of gifts is a tradition in many cultures and, on the “when in Rome” principle, you should be ready to reciprocate. How to and when to is, of course, a question of knowing the customs of the country you are visiting. You are advised to consult with a Canadian diplomat on the spot before the tour so that you are aware of how you should respond when such a situation arises.

GETTING THE NEWS BACK HOME

Letting the people of Canada know that your tour is taking place is important. You should start with a press conference at home before you depart and then keep in touch with all Canadian journalists and “stringers” in each of the countries that you are going to visit. To get the best coverage, however, you must, first, find out who they are and, secondly, let them know that you are coming. Canadian diplomatic and consular missions abroad will be able to give you the names and addresses of the journalists you should contact. Do not forget to credit your governmental and corporate sponsors when dealing with the media at home or abroad. Such major supporters could get very upset if you do not.