

Canadians and Mexicans have become more and more aware of each other in recent years. Approximately 500,000 Canadians travel annually to Mexico while the number of Mexicans visiting Canada has been in the range of 40-60,000. The level of cultural exchanges has risen and, notably, includes a programme to encourage the establishment and expansion of Canadian studies throughout the Mexican university network. Another significant activity with Mexico is the Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (MEXSAWP). Since 1974, a bilateral agreement between Canada and Mexico has provided the framework for the entry into the Canadian farm labour market of temporary workers from Mexico. The programme is designed to supplement seasonal shortages in the supply of Canadian agricultural workers and is of benefit to both countries. In 1988, over 1,500 were requested by Canadian employers.

Cooperation in the agri-food area has been a particularly active component of the relationship. A Memorandum of Understanding on Agricultural Cooperation and an Agricultural Commodities Supply and Purchase Arrangement have been concluded, and three meetings of the Joint Canada-Mexico Agricultural Committee (JAC) have taken place since 1980. These meetings explored and identified possible areas of mutual interest, with livestock, forestry and agro-industrial sectors being particularly promising. Minister of Agriculture Wise attended the Board meeting of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture in Mexico City in October 1986, and at the same time was able to pursue bilateral interests with his Mexican counterpart. Similarly, Mr. Eduardo Pesqueira, Secretary of Agriculture and Hydraulic Resources attended the Ninth Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Agriculture which was held in Ottawa in September, 1987.

Energy has also been a central element in the relationship between Canada and Mexico. Canada signed an Agreement for Industrial and Energy Cooperation with Mexico in May, 1980, as a framework for a state-to-state oil agreement and for increased trade. Canada agreed to import 44,000 barrels a day of Mexican crude, a total which was reduced by mutual agreement by 12% because of reduced demand in 1982. In view of the subsequent deregulation of the oil industry in Canada, however, oil procurement from Mexico now depends on the decisions of individual oil companies in their direct negotiations with PEMEX, the Mexican National Oil Company. Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources Masse made his first official visit to Mexico in January, 1987.