

and Industrial Cooperation Committee Meeting which he co-chaired in Mexico City in November. It was a meeting that produced results. Mexico and Canada agreed to an exchange of information and to a program of activities which would help both countries pursue their trade objectives with each other.

Although the news to report from South America has not been promising and the debt, low commodity prices, and market access problems continue, we have maintained our marketing efforts and resources, and are tailoring them to opportunities for Canadian exporters.

At the same time as we look at the harsh realities of the economies of the region we also see some optimism as we look into the medium and long-term. Argentina, against what appeared to be impossible odds, has had the courage -- and, believe me, it took courage -- to attack its spiralling inflation and to get serious about managing its debt burden. The light we decided not to turn off in Argentina turned out to be at the end of the tunnel.

As for Brazil, its economy once again proved to be not just resilient -- but irrepressible. Brazil is on the rebound in a big way. It has always regarded itself as the land of the future. But the economy now appears to have taken off, so that it has become the land of the present, as well.

Ecuador and Colombia have also started on a moderate upswing, which is also very encouraging, and there are signs of life in most other countries, too.

During the past few difficult years, we continued an active trade development program in South America. We did so with the full knowledge that

there would be no quick fixes, that new opportunities would have to wait for awhile. In the short term, we were mainly trying to maintain our share of what was then a shrinking market, and to hold our position until the situation improved. But in the process we signed both a double taxation agreement and an air agreement with Brazil.

The Department also sustained its promotional projects program in the region and, in my view, brought it to a higher level of sophistication through the use of sector seminars in conjunction with fairs and missions. We were able to achieve this only by pooling our efforts with yours and those of C.I.D.A. The petroleum industries seminar in Brazil and Tecnocan in Buenos Aires stand out as examples.

Officials also conducted Joint Economic Committee meetings with Venezuela and Argentina, and a number of high level visitors came to Canada for discussions and a look-see at Canadian expertise. From all of this activity emerged a number of new and important trade opportunities which we hope will bear fruit.

All of this activity, I believe, goes to demonstrate two general points. One of them goes back to the question of how many baskets you put your eggs in. And the answer is as many baskets as you can get your hands on.

The second point is that all of these programs were undertaken with a minimum of adjustment to our Government presence in the region. And what does that show? I think it proves that we can be more efficient at running things. By taking a good hard look at how we've been doing things, by developing new and more imaginative methods, programs and tools, we can improve our effectiveness without expanding resources.