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CANADA-MEXICO MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE MEETING

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
MINISTÈRE DES AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, announced today that the Foreign Minister of Mexico, Mr. Emilio O. Rabasa, and the Minister of Industry and Commerce, Mr. Carlos Torres Manzo, will lead Mexico's delegation to the first meeting of the Canada-Mexico Ministerial Committee, which is to be held in Ottawa on October 21 and 22, 1971. They will be supported by Messrs. Augustin Calchea Borbon, Chief of the Department of Tourism, Julio Faesler, Director General of the Mexican Foreign Trade Institute, E. Rafael Urdaneta, the Mexican Ambassador to Canada, and by senior officials of the Mexican Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Industry and Commerce.

The Canadian Delegation will be led by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Mr. Jean-Luc Pepin. They will be supported by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, Mr. Bruce Howard, the Canadian Ambassador to Mexico, Mr. Saul F. Rae, and by senior officials of the Departments of External Affairs, Industry, Trade and Commerce, and the Secretary of State.

The Ministerial Committee was established by agreement between the two governments on November 22, 1968, on the occasion of the visit to Mexico City by a Canadian Ministerial mission headed by Mr. Sharp. The Committee was set up for the purpose of periodically examining matters of interest to both countries in the political as well as the economic and commercial fields. It may also review other questions such as those related to tourism and exchange programmes. According to the terms of the exchange of notes under which the Committee was created, each government is to be represented by senior officials and, when warranted by the occasion or the importance of the matter, by ministers or ministers of state with jurisdiction on the subject.

The main purpose of the meeting will be to deepen and strengthen the relations between the two countries, with a view to intensifying them if possible through increasing trade and cultural exchanges between Mexico and Canada. The meeting will also provide the opportunity to discuss regional and world affairs of common concern.

-- Background notes on Canada-Mexico Relations are attached.

NOTES OF CANADIAN-MEXICAN RELATIONS

Canada exchanged diplomatic representation with Mexico in 1944 when Francisco del Rio y Canedo was appointed Ambassador for Mexico in Ottawa, and Mr. W.F.A. Turgeon was named Canadian Ambassador to Mexico. Our current Ambassador in Mexico City is Mr. S.F. Rae, and the Mexican Ambassador to Canada is Mr. E. Rafael Urdaneta.

The state visit to Canada in 1959 by the Mexican President, Adolfo Lopez Mateos, and the return visit in 1960 by the Canadian Prime Minister, Mr. John Diefenbaker, underlined the increasing importance of the relationship to both of the countries. In 1968 further progress toward close collaboration was made during the visit to Mexico of a group of Canadian Ministers, led by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp; a joint Canada-Mexico Committee was created for this purpose.

The endeavour to deepen and strengthen Canada's links with Latin America was elaborated in detail in the Latin American sector paper of "Foreign Policy for Canadians" which was published in 1970. An intensification of relations with Mexico and other countries of the region was envisaged as part of this process. Closer association with these countries in an increasing participation in inter-American institutions was also foreseen in the development of a growing community of interest during the 1970's, and the activities of the Canadian Association for Latin America which collaborates with the Mexico-Canada Businessmen's Committee were cited as an example in the private sector of the increasing liaison which is being cultivated.

Trade and Economic co-operation have contributed substantially to the strength and stability of Canadian-Mexican relations. In Latin America, Mexico is Canada's second largest trading partner. Between 1910-1960 Mexican imports from Canada increased by more than six times and during the decade 1960-1970, they almost doubled. In 1970 the total trade between the two countries was valued at \$139 million with Canadian exports amounting to \$91.7 million. The principal exports to Mexico were motor vehicle parts, newsprint, asbestos, wood pulp and skim milk powder; the main Canadian imports were cotton, tomatoes, coffee, fruits and vegetables, and fluorspar.

CP Air has expanded its services to Mexico to include direct flights from Canadian cities to Acapulco and Aeronaves de Mexico has extended its service to Edmonton and Winnipeg in addition to the cities already served:

Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. These new services respond to the growing numbers of Canadian tourists traveling to Mexico (about 70,000 in 1970) and to multiplying "people-to-people" communications between the two nations:

Mexico has a population of approximately 50 million and an area of about 760,000 square miles. The President of Mexico, Luis Echeverria Alvarez, was elected to office in December 1970. It is a federated republic of 29 states, a federal district and two territories. The House of Representatives is elected through universal suffrage every three years while the Senate is elected every six years.