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Second 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 second Canada-Mexico Ministerial Committee Meeting would take place in Mexico City, January 28-29. The composition of the Canadian delegation will be announced later.

The decision to create such a bilateral Committee at the level of Ministers came as a result of the Latin American Ministerial Mission of 1968 which recognized the importance of Mexico in Canada's relations with its Western Hemisphere neighbours.

The first session of the Committee met in Ottawa in October 1971. Following the state visit of President Echeverria to Canada last spring, it was agreed that preparations for the second session of the Committee, this time in Mexico City, would begin before the end of the year.

The Ministers will discuss a variety of current international economic and political problems in which both countries have a common interest, as well as specific bilateral topics including trade, investment policy, tourism, cultural affairs and immigration.

CANADIAN-MEXICAN RELATIONS

Diplomatic relations were established between Canada and Mexico in 1944. Exchanges between the two governments have taken many forms including an official visit to Canada by former President Adolfo Lopez Mateos in 1959, with a return visit made by the Right Honourable John Diefenbaker in 1960. In November 1968, a Canadian Ministerial Mission made a visit to Mexico during which a joint Mexico-Canada Committee, at the Ministerial level, was created to provide a continuing forum for periodic consultations on the growing number of political, economic, commercial and cultural matters of interest to both nations. The first meeting of the Canada-Mexico Ministerial Committee took place in Ottawa in October 1971. This meeting marked the opening of a new phase in relations between the two countries and revealed a wide range of common interests. It identified new opportunities for cooperation between Canada and Mexico, and confirmed that, in the process of deepening and strengthening its relationship with Latin America generally, the relationship with Mexico is of key significance.

In March 1973, the President of Mexico and Mrs. Echeverria paid a state visit to Canada. In addition to the ceremonial aspects of the presidential tour, ministers and officials had an opportunity to exchange views on areas of parallel or common interests e.g. relations with the United States, economic and trade diversification, foreign investment, resource management, mineral production, primary commodities, international commodity agreements, etc. A few months later, Mr. Echeverria personally invited several persons from the Federal Government, the Governments of Quebec and Ontario and private enterprise to attend the President's annual "Informe" or state of the nation address to the Mexican Congress.

In the area of trade, Mexican-Canadian relations are regulated by a trade agreement, which came into force in 1947 and which provides for each country to give the other most-favoured nation (MFN) treatment. During the 1960's Canadian exports to Mexico more than doubled while Mexican exports to Canada more than tripled. The total volume of trade between Canada and Mexico in 1972 was valued at \$152 million with Canadian exports amounting to \$100 million. Canadian tourist spending in Mexico brought the balance of payments closer to equilibrium. A trade seminar was held in Toronto in May 1972 to promote trade between Mexico and Canada. This meeting, which was both successful and useful to trade and investment development, emphasized again the substantially complementary nature of the Canadian and Mexican economies and the close affinity which exists between Canadian industrial capability in specialized sectors and Mexican requirements.

Canada and Mexico, as important coastal states, share a common interest and concern in discussions on the Law of the Sea and have worked closely to resolve outstanding international problems. More particularly, Mexico has been promoting the concept of the "patrimonial sea", which is close to the position favoured by Canada, i.e. that of the establishment of limited forms of jurisdiction for limited purposes, as opposed to the advancement of acquisitive claims over off-shore areas. On December 29, 1972, Canada became one of the first nations

to sign the "Convention on the Prevention of Marine Pollution by Dumping of Wastes and Other Matter at Sea" in Mexico City and took part in the First National Congress on Environmental Problems held in the Mexican capital, January 14-19, 1973. Both nations will take an active role in the international Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas, next July.

Mexico, like Canada, is an active member of the Geneva Disarmament Conference and their delegations enjoy a mutually useful working relationship on many arms control issues. The two countries have worked together in Geneva and at the United Nations to achieve progress on an underground nuclear weapons test ban; Canada has consistently supported the Mexican-sponsored Treaty of Tlatelolco which bans nuclear weapons in Latin America, as well as its Protocol in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) which provides for nuclear-weapon states to commit themselves to respect the non-nuclear status of the region. Canada and Mexico have expressed similar views and have cooperated on a number of other matters at the United Nations General Assembly, in United Nations specialized agencies, in Organization of American States' (OAS) institutions and in other international institutions and meetings.

In 1971, Canada joined the Mexico-USA conferences to discuss mutual co-operation in the control of the illicit traffic in narcotics and dangerous drugs in North America. Following the first technical meeting in Washington in October 1971, a meeting at the Ministerial level was held in Mexico City in the spring of 1972. A further Tripartite Narcotics Control Conference, at Deputy Minister level, was held in Ottawa on January 15 and 16, 1973.

"People-to-People" exchanges have increased in recent years. The Canada-Mexico Businessmen's Committee, which was formed in 1970, first met in Mexico City in November of that year, and subsequently held meetings in Toronto in November 1971, and again in Mexico City in May 1973, under the auspices of the Canadian Association for Latin America (CALA). In December 1971, the 5000 book Canadian Library Centre was opened in Mexico City to provide a public source of Canadian reference and reading material. In the fall of 1973 an intensive cultural program "Jornadas de Canada" featured an exhibition of Eskimo prints, one of children's art and another of Canadian books; a Canadian film festival; presentation of the revue "The Apple Tree" and performances by les Séguins, the Quebec chanteurs, and by the Groupe de la Place Royale. The Secretary of State's ongoing "Contact Canada" programme was implemented with Mexico in June 1972; last year eight Mexican young people arrived in Canada for a three-week period and seven Canadians travelled to Mexico for a similar period of time. The Canada-World Youth Program, an exchange of young people involving the two countries, began in January 1973 when 34 Canadian participants arrived in Mexico and a similar number of Mexican youth came here. In addition the number of students from each country studying in the other is yearly on the increase.

As a result of President Echeverria's visit to Canada last spring, a memorandum of understanding on an exchange of young specialists and technicians was signed by the foreign ministers of the two countries. On October 1973, the first group of 15 young Canadian technicians departed for Mexico and a similar group arrived in Canada from Mexico. They are currently training in a variety of private enterprises and public institutions.

Air Services between Mexico and Canada were established in 1952. Services are now provided between the two countries by both CP Air and Aeroméxico. CP Air operates services to Mexico City from Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver and operates a service beyond Mexico City to points in South America. In 1971, CP Air inaugurated flights for the first time from Canada to Acapulco and Guadalajara.

Tourism between Mexico and Canada has also been greatly expanding.

At the end of last year's presidential visit, Canada and Mexico signed a note of understanding designed to improve access of each other's consular officers to distressed citizens of the sending state.