

for regional security in the Western Hemisphere as a whole. It should nevertheless be emphasized that our obligations with regard to international security and our participation in the United Nations enable us to make a positive contribution, even if it is indirect, to the stability of Latin America.

Institutionalization of International Relations

Like most other countries, Canada belongs to a large number of international organizations; international affairs tend more and more to be discussed and even settled within these organizations. It is within these bodies that Canada, since 1945, has had some of its most fruitful contacts with the countries of Latin America. These contacts have occurred mainly at meetings of the United Nations and within several of its bodies, in particular the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council, the International Law Commission, the Commission on Human Rights, the International Labor Office, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Committee on Disarmament and the Economic Commission for Latin America, to which Canada has belonged since 1961.

Even though we have noticed in the deliberations of these bodies that our interests and outlook differ somewhat from those of Latin Americans, there is nevertheless a much broader field of action in which co-operation exists and this could be enlarged. As I have just said, this was also the impression of the Canadian ministerial mission which recently visited Latin America.

There is also an international institution to which the countries of Latin America and the United States belong. Canada, on the other hand, is not a member. I am speaking, of course, of the Organization of American States, the OAS, the leading organization of our Hemisphere. Its membership includes two independent countries of the Caribbean -- Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago; Jamaica has also just applied for membership. Why, then has Canada never taken the necessary steps to take its place with most of the other countries of the Hemisphere within this organization?

Generally speaking, it would seem that the imperatives which impelled Canada to join similar organizations -- NATO, for example -- have not yet made themselves felt in the case of the OAS. Also, most Canadians are not very well informed about the OAS and, among those who know it well, there are a few who are convinced that Canada ought to become a member while others are distrustful and hence opposed to membership.

If one goes a little more deeply into the arguments involved, one would have to admit that Canada, by joining the OAS, would be taking an unequivocal stand at the side of the countries of the Hemisphere and would, at one stroke again, gain a voice in Hemispheric deliberations on political, economic and social affairs, and in questions of collective security. On the other hand, the history of the Organization, in particular its evolution during the past few years, and also the parallel evolution of co-operation among member countries of the OAS should be considered.

The Organization of American States was founded under its present charter in 1949, but it has existed in other forms since the last half of the nineteenth century. In its origin, the OAS was essentially a rational arrangement of relations between the Latin American countries themselves, and between these countries