

of a number of bodies which are either integral parts of the OAS or associated with it. The OAS functions through a General Assembly, which meets once a year, and a Permanent Council and a Secretariat centred in Washington. Other important organizations are the other governing councils of the OAS—the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and the Inter-American Council for Education, Science and Culture—the Inter-American Development Bank and other organizations such as those mentioned on Pages 15, 29 and 31.

In recent years there has been an injection of considerable dynamism and farsightedness into the planning and administration of the OAS. Also, it is now entering a fresh phase with the coming into force of its new charter. At the same time, the composition of the OAS has been changing. Until recently it was essentially an association of the United States and the Latin American countries. Recent accessions give it a somewhat more truly hemispheric character. Three of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries—Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago—have joined; the fourth, Guyana, is in effect barred because the OAS will not admit a new member which has a territorial dispute with an existing member. (Venezuela claims that a large part of Guyana rightfully belongs to it.)

As the Inter-American System becomes more comprehensive it is changing in character. The Latin American and Commonwealth Caribbean members have formed their own caucus within the OAS on economic issues and social problems. At the same time, the inter-American bodies which occupy the most time of member governments are those dealing with economic and social questions. In the coming decade, the Inter-American System will provide a framework for efforts to reach agreement both on questions of this kind and on such political and security problems as may arise. In the economic sphere, agreement will be sought through a negotiating process which will frequently find the United States on one side of the table and the rest of the OAS countries on the other.¹ On political and security matters there will doubtless be a consensus but there could also be strains. More generally, in inter-American affairs the United States will find itself associated with a group of countries which are increasingly self-confident and increasingly insistent upon their own national and cultural values.

Implications for Canada of Joining the OAS

A decision to apply for membership in the OAS would at one stroke draw Canada closer to the Latin American countries both collectively