

officials to discuss specific questions of mutual interest. Exchanges at high government level were maintained with several Canadian ministers visiting the region during the year and a number of distinguished leaders from the area visiting Canada.

Latin American Division

The fruitful development of Canada's relations with the 20 Latin American nations is this Division's responsibility. Canada has had diplomatic relations with all the Latin American states since 1957, and currently maintains 11 diplomatic posts in the region.

During the past year the Canadian Government has made significant progress in the implementation of the objectives, as outlined in the sector paper on Latin America in the foreign policy review. In April 1971, the Canadian observer delegation to the first regular session of the General Assembly of the Organization of American States (OAS), led by Mr. André Ouellet, Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, reiterated the Canadian Government's intention of systematically strengthening and intensifying its relations with the countries in Latin America on both a bilateral as well as a multilateral basis. The delegation formally declared the Canadian Government's desire to establish a permanent observer mission to the OAS. A resolution approving in principle the new status of Permanent Observer was passed by the General Assembly and the Permanent Council of the OAS was then asked to determine the timing and criteria for the implementation of the resolution. Canada's desire for observer status is not a compromise gesture but rather a positive step through which it can learn about OAS operations and play a fuller role in the inter-American organizations to which it already belongs or which it is about to join. The Permanent Observer Mission will be independent of the Canadian Embassy in Washington. Its principal functions will be to maintain a close liaison with all OAS activities, and to represent Canada at meetings of inter-American organizations.

In order to participate more vigorously and effectively in the economic and social development in Latin America, the Canadian Government has expressed its intention to seek full membership in the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). Full membership in the IADB will substantially increase the funds Canada would be allocating to Latin American development. Moreover, one of the benefits of full membership would be the eligibility of Canadian firms to compete for procurement under the Fund for Special Operations.

The goals set out in the foreign policy review for intensifying Canada's relations with Latin America are well on the way to realization. In 1971 Canada applied for and was granted full membership in the Pan-American Health Organization, and steps leading to Canada's full membership in the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences (IAIAS), the Inter-American Indian Institute (IAII), and the Inter-American Conference on Social Security (CISS) are being taken.