

I should also mention that the Canadian Protestant churches are also active in Latin America, notably the Baptists, who have been in Bolivia for some 60 years. Various evangelical churches run hospitals, schools and other institutions.

There is naturally a special affinity between French-speaking Canada and Latin America. We share the same broad Latin culture. The Province of Quebec, also, has a further link through its legal system, which, like that throughout Latin America, is founded in Roman Law and is largely codified in accordance with the common model of the Code of Napoleon. The French-speaking Canadian can often, more readily than his Anglo-Saxon fellow citizen, learn the two great languages of Latin America, Spanish and Portuguese. These factors taken together constitute a most valuable asset for Canada in its dealings with Latin America, of which we are making greater and greater use.

Increasing interest is being shown by Canadians in the numerous professional, scientific and other learned conferences of the Americas. Because this is an activity in the private sector, it is rather difficult to tabulate and measure. One thing is certain — whenever Canadians have gone to these non-official conferences of an inter-American character, they have been given a very warm welcome. I was interested to see a little item the other day to the effect that Canadian medical schools were participating in a Pan-American Federation of Medical Schools and at this moment are being represented at a meeting in Brazil by two deans of medical faculties, one French-speaking and one English-speaking.

I should hope that our universities, professions and intellectual groups would deliberately take a more active interest in the organizational and institutional life of our hemisphere as a whole. While governments can lead and can do much, a broad and firm public interest in an area like Latin America requires, to an even greater extent, active participation of Canadians in terms of their occupations and their cultural pursuits. There is a need for closer relations within the hemisphere on a people-to-people basis, and I should hope that this conference would be one means by which wider Canadian interest in the area would be developed.

GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES

By the end of 1961, Canada had established formal diplomatic relations with all the republics in Latin America. This, of course, included, and still includes, Cuba. This process started with the establishment of missions in Argentina and Brazil early in 1941. There was a commercial representative in Buenos Aires even before 1900 and trade commissioners in several of the major capitals before the First World War. There are now 14 resident diplomatic missions, apart from the three offices in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Also in 1961, Canada became a full member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, following a period of observer status. This, of course, is one of the four Regional Economic Commissions of the United Nations. Since then, Canada has regularly attended its meetings at its headquarters in Santiago, and has gone to its major conferences elsewhere.

Canada became a member of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain as early as 1931. This is a regional organization linked with the Universal Postal Union but not associated with the OAS.

Some inter-American conferences are convened on a non-OAS basis and have been attended by Canada. Perhaps the most recent example of this type of conference was the meeting of the governors of the central banks of this continent in Guatemala last April. The Governor of the Bank of Canada attended, played an active role and was elected to the agenda committee for the second meeting, to take place a year later.

Over the years a number of Canadian cabinet ministers have made visits or special missions to Latin America. I have tentative plans for a visit to several Latin American countries around the end of this year and I know that other ministers would like to visit particular countries or areas. We must broaden our contacts with Latin America.

In turn, we have had in the past a number of distinguished visitors from Latin America. The most recent was a visit in July of the Venezuelan Minister of Mines and Petroleum. He held talks with many persons in Ottawa, mainly in connection with the export of petroleum products from his country to Canada, a matter of great importance to the Venezuelan economy.

CANADA IN THE INTER-AMERICAN SYSTEM

The OAS is the senior political body of a complex of organizations and agencies which has been called the Inter-American System. Canada has had rather more association and experience with these institutions than is usually thought to be the case. Canada is a full member of three agencies linked with the OAS: the Inter-American Radio Office, since it was formed in 1937; the Inter-American Statistical Institute since 1943, shortly after it was created; and the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, since 1961. It has also sent observers to conferences of other specialized organizations and agencies concerned with such varied matters as public health, Indian affairs, and the peaceful uses of atomic energy.

Canada has sent delegates or observers to an increasing number of conferences called by the OAS in various fields of transportation and communications. For example, a few weeks ago, Canadian officials went to the second meeting of experts on civil aviation, which met in Santiago.

Consideration is given from time to time to the possible participation as members or otherwise in some of the technical functions and activities of bodies related to the OAS of which Canada is not already a member. The decisions depend both on the Canadian interest involved and the extent to which we can make a useful and effective contribution.

A Canadian observer group attended a special meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council (one of the important organs of the OAS) held in Uruguay in 1961, at which the Alliance for Progress was launched as a co-operative programme of self-help, local reforms, development plans and outside financial and technical assistance. Since then, Canada has been represented by observers at the annual meeting of the Inter-American ECOSOC.

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