

## Chapter I

### THE BROAD PERSPECTIVE

Canada and the Latin American countries have for many years maintained relationships bilaterally, in inter-American organizations and in other international bodies. There have been valuable exchanges and associations but neither has been of capital importance to the other. This is changing. In Latin America, Canada is more and more regarded as an influential country with a role of its own to play in the western hemisphere and in the world. Canadians, as they look abroad, are increasingly conscious that Canada is a distinctive North American country firmly rooted in the western hemisphere. Canadians are also beginning to realize that Latin America is not only an important part of the western hemisphere but is also destined before long to become a considerable force in the world.

Though heirs of a common culture and imbued with a strong sense of solidarity *vis-à-vis* the rest of the world, the Latin American countries differ greatly in size, stage of development, ethnic composition and, to a degree, political organization and general outlook. In Latin America—as elsewhere—there will be strains in the years ahead, some of them perhaps severe, but if social and economic development keeps pace with population growth the Latin American countries will make very significant advances in the seventies. On a relatively modest scale at first, the present range of mutually profitable interchanges between Canada and Latin America should broaden and deepen during that period.

The United States and the Latin American countries have a closely-knit history of their own with which Canada has hitherto had very little to do. Geographically, the United States screens Canada from Latin America. This is a constant factor which will always condition Canada's relations with the area south of the Rio Grande. In the seventies, as today, it will cast Canada in the role of a middle power in the hemisphere and it will