

The new Government of Prime Minister Trudeau initiated, as part of a general review of Canada's foreign policy, a review of Canadian policy with regard to Latin America. The aim of the Latin American review was to find ways in which Canada's political, economic, and cultural relations with Latin America might be strengthened. One important question was whether the strengthening of these relations could best be attained by increasing Canada's role in the multilateral institutions of the Western Hemisphere -- in particular the Organization of American States -- or by increasing Canada's bilateral contacts with Latin American countries. The results of the review are expected in the course of 1969.

As a first step in the review, the Government sent a fact-finding mission at the ministerial level to nine countries in Latin America during October and November. In all, five Cabinet Ministers, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and 28 officials from ten government departments and agencies participated in the mission for at least part of its duration -- the largest such group ever to be sent abroad by the Canadian Government. Because of the size and degree of specialization of the mission, its members were able to hold discussions on a broad range of subjects with their counterparts in each country. The ministerial mission provided firm evidence of the seriousness of the Government's intention of drawing closer to Canada's Latin American neighbours.

During the mission's visit to Mexico, arrangements were completed for the establishment of a joint Mexico-Canada committee for bilateral consultation on political, economic, and commercial questions concerning the two countries. This is the first such committee Canada has formed with a Latin American country. Its formation was a sign not only of Canada's desire to expand its relations with the countries of the Hemisphere, but also of the common interests Canada and Mexico had long shared as North American countries.

While these developments presaged new directions in Canada's relations with Latin America, the year also saw a good deal of activity under present programmes. Canada continued to play an active role in the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, participating in the meeting of the Directing Council in Mexico City in July and August and playing host to meetings on Canada's role in PAIGH in Ottawa in November. In accordance with recent practice, Canadian observers attended the special meeting of ministers of health of the Americas in October, under the auspices of the Pan-American Health Organization, and Canada sent observers to several national reviews of CIAP, the executive committee of the Alliance for Progress. Canada continued to co-operate with Latin American countries in the United Nations and, in accordance with its member status, attended the twelfth session of the Committee of the Whole of the Economic Commission for Latin America in Santiago, from April 23 to 25. Outside the framework of United Nations and inter-American institutions, a delegation of Canadian Parliamentarians attended the fifty-sixth Interparliamentary Conference in Lima from September 5 to 13.

Canada contributed a further \$10 million to its development-loan programme, which is administered by the Inter-American Development Bank