

join and, in my opinion, the receipt of such an invitation would be a logical result of our acceptance of observer status at the forthcoming conference. With your despatch No. X-179 of October 28, 1952, you sent to the Consulate General here a State Department memorandum of September 3, 1952, which discussed observer status for Canada at the Conference. I believe that the reasons advanced by the State Department for our acceptance are inconclusive arguments why we should get involved.

3. I am more strongly than ever of the opinion that it would not be in Canada's interest to accept observer status. I have had this confirmed by the Venezuelan reaction to the recent political difficulties in British Guiana. The press has given considerable front-page publicity to the United Kingdom Government's handling of the situation there and most reports have been based on the premise that European countries have no right to have colonies in the Western Hemisphere. By chance, I had no matters to take up with Dr. Otañez,⁸ the Foreign Minister, at his regular Wednesday afternoon meeting with members of the Diplomatic Corps which was held on October 14 and, consequently, I did not attend. Apparently, members of the press were waiting at the Foreign Ministry and, as each Ambassador or Minister came out, they were asked to give their views on the political situation in British Guiana. The following day these interviews were front-page news and I was pleased that I was not placed in the awkward position of having to make a statement. In this connection, I assume that in due course I will be receiving the Government's views on the situation. Since Canada has such a large investment in British Guiana, it is only reasonable that at some time I will be asked the Government's views and I would like to know how you wish this dealt with.

4. On Friday evening, October 16, the Foreign Minister, Dr. Otañez, called a special press conference and made a statement concerning Venezuela's attitude on the situation in British Guiana. I am attaching hereto a translation of Dr. Otañez' remarks† and you will note that he stated the Venezuelan "government confirms its conviction that to-day more than ever the existence of vassal countries and the continued existence of a colonial régime is inappropriate within the boundaries of the Americas." He reiterated this point in answers to questions following the handing out of the communiqué by saying that "colonies must disappear from the Americas", although he qualified this in a later statement that they must disappear "without violence through the self-determination of peoples". He also stated that it was his opinion that the whole question of European colonies in South America would be discussed at the 10th Inter-American Conference and that, while Venezuela would not itself raise the question, the government was disposed to support any motion condemning the existence of European colonies.

5. I believe that it is likely that considerable discussion will take place at the 10th Conference on the question of the European colonies in South America and it is but one of the problems that Canada would find embarrassing should she be a full member of the OAS. I visualize that this and other similarly awkward questions will be raised periodically and it strengthens my belief that we have little to gain

⁸ Aureliano Otañez.
Dr. Aureliano Otañez.