

America. A few newspapermen here and there asked the odd question about the attitude of Canada on this matter but no real interest was shown either by the press, Government officials or private individuals we happened to meet. There was much more interest shown in Canada's role at the United Nations, centering particularly on Mr. Pearson's Presidency and on our participation in the Korean conflict than there was on the Pan-American issue.

Our Heads of Missions on the other hand, at least those that were willing to be drawn out of the usual clichés, held varying opinions. General LaFlèche told me that he feels that Canada should join the Organization to help combat Communism and the influence of General Perón⁴ throughout Latin America as well as to give a helping hand to the United States within the Organization. Mr. Hébert on the other hand pointed out that in his view it would be useless to join the Organization until we had made up our minds that Latin America should become a major field in Canadian policy and economy.

This situation coupled with the interest shown in Washington about our eventual role in the Organization should prompt us to review our position on that question.

At present our policy, in summary, is that we are quite happy to remain outside the Organization, that we should do nothing to encourage an invitation but that if an invitation were unanimously addressed to Canada by Member States we could not very well turn it down. The reasons advanced for this lukewarmness towards the OAS have not varied much over the years. They are those that were advanced ten years ago. The situation, however, has changed in some respects.

The main change is probably related to our trade with Latin America. We have now passed the \$500,000,000 a year mark and look forward to increasing that trade as rapidly as possible. The general line taken up till now is that the fact that we do not belong to the OAS has not prevented the growth of our commercial relations with Latin America. There is a more positive way to envisage the situation: would our being associated with the Organization actually help further our commercial interests in that part of the world? Competition is getting more and more keen, particularly from European countries, and there is little doubt in my mind that we would be helping at least indirectly Canadian trade if we were more forthcoming in our position about the OAS. There is a psychological factor here which cannot be weighed in dollars and cents but which nevertheless has some importance.

A second reason why Canada's attitude vis-à-vis the OAS should be reviewed is found in the opening of the three new missions we have recently established in Colombia, Venezuela and Uruguay. The more missions we have in Latin America the more interest will be shown in our joining the Association. The initiative of one Latin American country would be sufficient at any Organization meeting to create an atmosphere leading to a unanimous invitation. It would be odd indeed if while opening new missions on the one hand we were less forthcoming about our joining the Union on the other. We are more exposed today to a unanimous invitation than we were before opening the three new missions.

⁴ Général Juan Domingo Perón, président de l'Argentine.
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