

In the result, treaties were negotiated with Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Ecuador, which provided for most-favoured-nation treatment in both tariff matters and exchange control. Arrangements were also made to exchange diplomatic representatives with certain Latin American States. The first Canadian minister to a Latin American country was appointed in June, 1941, when Mr. Jean Desy was named minister to Brazil. On July 31, 1941, the Hon. W.F.A. Turgeon became the first Canadian minister to Argentina; and on January 2, 1942, he presented his credentials as the first Canadian minister to Chile. In 1944 a Canadian legation (later elevated to the rank of an embassy) was opened in Mexico, and an embassy in Peru. Our missions in Brazil and Chile have also been elevated to the rank of embassies.

Official governmental action was accompanied by a growing public interest. Notwithstanding the extraordinary claims of the war for attention in their columns, Canadian newspapers began to devote more space to Latin America and the Pan American movement than ever before. The same thing was true of Canadian periodicals. A number of societies were organized for the express purpose of fostering relations with Latin America. Exchanges of students and professors were arranged with some of the republics; and there was a great increase in the number of Canadians learning Spanish and Portuguese. And at the same time Pan Americanism became a popular topic of discussion at public meetings and over the radio. This public interest was reflected in the political arena. Representatives of the principal Canadian parties, including the Liberal Party, have advocated Canadian membership in the Union of American States, although the government itself has never committed itself on the question.

It is nevertheless a fact that when, in January, 1944, the results of a Gallup Poll on the question were published, it appeared that 72 per cent of the adult population of Canada did not know what the Pan American Union was. Of the 28 per cent who did know, however, 84 per cent thought that Canada should be a member. The poll also showed that Canadians living in British Columbia knew more about the Union than did their compatriots in other provinces, something which surprised many observers; for the chief impetus in favour of Canadian membership in the Union had been the French Canadians, whose Catholic religion and Latin culture gave them special reasons for being interested in Latin America.

Much has been made in certain quarters of the fact that so many Canadians apparently did not know what the Union is; but the poll may not be as significant as some people think. There are many Canadians who do not know what the International Labour Organization is and many more who have never heard of the Universal Postal Union. It has never been suggested, however, that this is a reason why Canada should not maintain her membership in these organizations.

Why Canada was not a member of the Union of American States in the early period is not difficult to understand. There was, in the first place, no particular desire on the part of Canada to join. We had no political interests in Latin America and our trade with the area was negligible. Rarely had Latin America taken as much as three per cent of our total exports and it supplied us with an even smaller proportion of our imports.

On the other hand, there were good reasons why the other American countries would hesitate before inviting Canada to participate in the movement. For, until 1919 at least, Canada's international status (whatever her position with the British Empire may have been)