

Oglesby's *Gringos* — engaging and lively

By Arthur Blanchette

Gringos From the Far North by Jack Oglesby, professor of Latin American history at the University of Western Ontario, is an engaging book, written in a lively style, which sustains the reader's attention throughout. It is well-researched and full of interesting and useful information about Canadian relations with Latin America. The insights it offers into Canadian attitudes — all too frequently paternalistic — towards Latin America are particularly perceptive. In short, it is a valuable book based on wide knowledge of Latin America and extensive travelling there.

It is not a full study of Canada's relations with Latin America, nor does Dr. Oglesby claim that it is. It does not, for instance, deal with Canada's relations with the OAS and the inter-American system as such, though it does touch on them as facets of Canadian/Latin American affairs in other contexts — e.g., as part of Canada's diplomatic representation in the Americas. It does not cover Canadian ties with all the republics south of the Rio Grande, or certain recent developments such as Canada's aid program. It is to be hoped that Dr. Oglesby will give us the benefit of his knowledge and his conclusions about these and other aspects of Canada's relations with Latin America soon. A deeper analysis of trading patterns, for instance, now touched upon only briefly, as in the book's conclusion, and of Canada's relations with the inter-American system, especially in recent years, would be particularly welcome.

In general, however, *Gringos From the Far North* provides a pretty full picture of Canada's main activities throughout Latin America during the 102-year period from 1866 to 1968. It does so in a series of 11 essays dealing with the most important and sustained of Canada's ventures in that vast and populous region.

The year 1866 was chosen as the starting-point because it was in that year that the first large-scale trade and goodwill mission from Canada visited Latin America — a

recurring feature of Canada's approach to that area. The year 1968 was chosen to end the account partly because it was then that the greatest of the Canadian Government's missions to Latin America took place and partly because it was a turning-point in Canada's relations with Latin America. The report made by the mission and the impressions it gained during the trip are reflected in *Latin America*, one of the six booklets published in 1970 by the Federal Government under the series title *Foreign Policy for Canadians*.

Apart from one essay (Chapter 2), aptly entitled "The Belle of the Ball", on Canada's diplomatic relations with Latin America from 1940 to 1946, when several Latin American countries were seeking to persuade Canada to establish diplomatic relations with them and to join the Pan-American Union (as the OAS was then called), the bulk of the book deals with Canada's business and missionary activities in the area. This is not surprising — investments and missionary work were the mainstay of Canada's relations with Latin America during the last century.

Chapter 4, "Business, Banking and Related Activities", the longest in the book, provides — with Chapter 5, on Canadian investments in Brazil, notably Brazilian Traction (now Brascan) — comprehensive and detailed coverage of the important investment side of Canada's links with Latin America.

Religious missions

The last five chapters deal with various Canadian religious ventures in Latin America. Professor Oglesby's analyses of the problems to be faced there in this

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Missionary activities and business predominate