

cern over their geographic partners in local regroupings.

Whatever their rivalries, Mexico, Argentina and Brazil will find it easy to agree on encouraging these separatist tendencies that threaten the local alliances, which they have never assessed positively.

Continental development

Does SELA, which threatens to offer a forum to forces hostile to regional development, also offer the hope of continental development? At this level, structural development could only be achieved through a "scenario" — smacking of pure fiction — that presupposes an independent political authority encouraging supranational and supraregional socialist or capitalist policies. Nor is it certain that such a "script" would promote a balanced development of the different sub-groups; on the contrary, it is clear that the present forms of continental "co-operation" run the risk of consolidating established situations and national development disparities. Until a unified Utopia is created, it is only through efforts towards regional integration that the following aims can be simultaneously achieved: a) weakening of external domination; b) increase in local investment through growth of intraregional trade;

c) planned division of industrial labour.

Inequalities in development are certainly not lacking in regional common markets, but none of them includes economic giants such as Brazil, Argentina or Mexico. The "little" countries in regional agreements have benefited from a division of industrial labour that opens up new possibilities to them that would have been unthinkable before the integrationist policies. The limited, but real, successes of heavy industry in the Andean Pact, and of light industry in the Central American Common Market, were achieved in opposition to the normative principles and the practical consequences of a liberal free-trade policy. Unfortunately, the embryonic common markets are still too fragile; if they are not threatened by actual break-up, stagnation and even the regression of the common policies are a constant danger to them, and only through rapid consolidation can discrepancies in development be reduced and a continental "dialogue" facilitated that is less unbalanced by the emergence of local sub-imperialist powers, eager contenders for the mantle of the United States. True, one may hope that the new dominant countries will neutralize each other, but this is not enough to make SELA an effective organization.

Integration has opened up a division of labour

We are going to study more deeply the role that Canada can play in relation to SELA, and President Perez was suggestive of some kind of relationship with that organization, and we are very anxious to follow that up, and already our officials are working on the exploration of that suggestion. That is as regards the general economic institutions. I would say that, as regards the political relationships, well, I think that we have, in effect, established a bridge between our traditional relations with the Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean and the Latin American ones. This is new for us — in a sense it may even be new for the countries that we have visited. They are apparently working towards, struggling towards, some kind of regionalism in the Caribbean and then the larger regionalism with Latin America. By their exchanges with me it was quite evident that they are anxious to (I wouldn't say use us as a bridge but) use our knowledge of the other

side and our desire and ability to have relations with the other side and with the Latin American side as a "natural". Every leader that I talked to seems anxious to draw Canada into this regionalism, either as part of it or as having relations with it. Part of that may be due also to their desire, which is very analogous to ours, to create counterweights to the very strong presence of the United States, and they see Canada as a country which has very good relations with the United States and a country which, notwithstanding, wants to maintain its independence from the United States. And this to them fortifies the kind of dialogue that the area wants to have with us and with the United States.

Extract from a statement by Prime Minister Trudeau at a press conference in Caracas, Venezuela, on February 2, 1976.