

In the area of commerce, it would be possible to enlarge our bilateral trade, not to mention the beneficial results we could achieve by working together within certain international bodies to improve the conditions of sale abroad for certain products, particularly those of the developing countries.

The recent decision to put into effect immediately all the tariff reductions which Canada negotiated during the Kennedy Round represents a step forward in this general direction on the part of the Canadian Government. This decision was made public in the budget, as was the Government's new system of customs exemptions for tourists returning to Canada, a measure which could benefit some Latin American countries. These two measures are a consequence of our development policies towards these countries. It would be unrealistic on our part to expect to contribute to the industrial development of these countries if we do not open our consumer markets to their products.

In short, even though economic relations between Canada and Latin America are not yet of capital importance, and even though there are real difficulties to overcome, closer relations are indeed possible and would be of advantage to both sides.

Cultural and Personal Ties

In the not-so-distant past, Canadian motivation with regard to international problems was far more the result of government initiative than of marked personal interest. The attitude of the average Canadian toward the outside world was very similar to the attitude toward Latin America for which we may be blamed today. Preoccupied with our own affairs, we did not in those days seek to become greatly involved in world problems. Though Canada participated in two world wars, it was only in the forties that a change in our people's basic attitude toward international affairs could really be noticed. This movement was first in the direction of our traditional external relations or, in other words, our relations with the United States, Europe and the Commonwealth. Nevertheless, Canadian attention to international affairs also grew as Canada took new initiatives in which our participation resulted from the force of external circumstances, from our responsibilities toward the United Nations, or from Canada's internal situation.

It is only relatively recently that the majority of Canadians have become truly aware of Latin America and of the importance which that part of the world has for Canada. Of course, there had long been Canadians who had felt drawn toward Latin America. I am thinking of people from all parts of Canada who have become interested in Latin America for one reason or another and also, in particular, of French-Canadians, for whom this region was made more attractive by its cultural affinity.

This interest has also more recently coincided with the need which French-Canadians feel to draw closer to other people of Latin background, more particularly to those of the French-speaking world.

This spontaneous interest on the part of French Canadians, and also that of many English-speaking Canadians, is important in cultural terms. The tendency of Canadians to consider Latin American culture a source of enrichment should be encouraged. The fact remains, however, that, in general, Latin American culture is little known in Canada, even though, with certain exceptions, this culture is remarkably rich, both in its classic and in its contemporary works. The