

ing to have to opt either for the Latin Americans or for the United States in a manner which might offend either group. Mr. Lyra said that in the political field no commitments would require to be undertaken by Canada. (Presumably he meant that Canada could always make reservations to treaties giving rights or imposing obligations). As for hemispheric defence, he could not see that Canada would have anything to do in South America. Canada is inextricably bound, it is true, with the USA for defence of North America, but that is the situation which obtains today. Mr. Lyra thought that our main interest was in the economic field and that the OAS might be of some use.

3. I dwelt (as indeed did Mr. Stark)⁷ upon some of Canada's potential domestic political difficulties concerning Canada's membership in the OAS. These difficulties stem mainly from indifference of the Canadian public to the OAS, due possibly to lack of knowledge. It was not likely, under present circumstances, that the Government would wish to join the OAS outright. As to being an Observer State, we would have to consider the matter seriously in the not too distant future and Mr. Lyra could rest assured that he would be among the first to know of our views on this subject once we come to a decision.

E.A. C[ÔTÉ]

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*L'ambassadeur au Venezuela
au secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures*

*Ambassador in Venezuela
to Secretary of State for External Affairs*

DESPATCH 370

Caracas, October 20, 1953

10TH INTER-AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF THE OAS — COLONIES OF
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES IN SOUTH AMERICA

Reference: My despatch No. 267 of December 30, 1952.

In my despatch under reference, I gave you my preliminary views on the desirability of Canada accepting observer status at the 10th Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States, which is being held in Caracas in the spring of 1954.

2. It was then my view that it would be undesirable for Canada to accept observer status since this would materially weaken our position when the question of our full membership in the OAS was subsequently raised. I still believe that full membership may not be in Canada's interest since, on most major issues where the United States and the Latin-American group differed, we would be placed in the unenviable position of losing rather than gaining friends by our support of either side. I believe that it would be most difficult and embarrassing to decline an invitation to

⁷ W.G. Stark, chef de la section de l'Amérique latine, Direction de l'Amérique.
W.G. Stark, Head, Latin American Section, American Division.