

Soon after we began to establish our own direct diplomatic relations with other nations, we opened missions in the larger Latin American capitals. We now maintain diplomatic relations with all these nations. Well before that, however, we had trade representatives in Latin American countries - in Buenos Aires in the last century, for example, and in several other capitals before the First World War. Trade has expanded very considerably. In the past 20 years, it has trebled both in sales to the area and purchases from Latin American countries. Last year Canada exported \$315-million worth of goods to Latin America and imported \$411-million worth.

We have, of course, been associated with Latin American nations in specialized fields of interest to the United Nations. In addition to accepting United Nations commitments, however, we have, in the past, tended to pursue regional interests chiefly in terms of Commonwealth and Atlantic-European associations. In recent years we have balanced these with a new interest in organizations of this Hemisphere.

We have become members, for example, of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, the Inter-American Statistical Institute and the Inter-American Radio Office. Canada was represented by an official observer - for the first time - at the conference of the Organization of American States last November. We have good working relationships with the Secretariat of the Organization of American States and with specialized agencies of which we are not members.

Canada has been closely concerned with disarmament efforts and has had a long experience in the application of nuclear energy to peaceful purposes. We have followed with particular interest developments towards a nuclear-free zone in Latin America. Our officials in other fields, too, keep in touch with developments in Latin America. Many of you will recall the presence of representatives of our Department of Labour at the second conference of ministers of labour of the OAS in Venezuela last May.

There are many examples of contacts by private institutions. The churches have engaged in fruitful measures for co-operation - often in the welfare and educational fields - for over a century. Volunteers from the Canadian University Service Overseas are working in several South American countries.

Economic Assistance - Latin America

Since 1964 a new dimension has been added to our relations with Latin American nations in a field which will be, I am sure, of increasing significance. Canada's bilateral economic assistance for developing nations in Latin America began in that year, when development loan funds were allocated for that purpose. Since then, further allocations were made to help finance vital economic projects in Latin America. Only two months ago, in signing the latest exchange of letters concerning the allocation of funds, I assured President Herrera of the Inter-American Development Bank that "it would be our intention - subject to economic and other relevant circumstances - to make still further amounts of soft Canadian loan funds available...".