

History at your fingertips

Now the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has a history page on its Web site. Called "The Department in History," the page contains a wealth of information on the Department's past and how Canadian foreign policy has developed since 1867.

For anyone interested in learning about the rich, unique history of Canada's foreign policy and international relations, the new page is a must. The Web address is:

www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/hist



Readers' Corner

Recently, *Canada World View* held focus groups across the country. Among other things, you told us you would like to see a column where you could express your comments, suggestions, criticisms and ideas about Canada's foreign policy and about this magazine. We're happy to do as you asked and to bring you this column, **your** column. Please send your letters to:

Readers' Corner, *Canada World View*
Communications Services Division (BCS)
Department of Foreign Affairs and
International Trade
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

You can also e-mail us at:
magazine@dfait-maeci.gc.ca

Readers' Corner



Where Canada meets the world



Please come and visit the Lester B. Pearson Building, home of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, at 125 Sussex Drive in Ottawa, Ontario. Free guided tours are available until November 10.

For more information or to book a tour:
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DID YOU KNOW THAT ...

Canadian ties with the Americas go back a long way. One of the very first Canadian **trade missions** abroad took place even before Confederation: in **1866**, the governments of Canada (i.e., the future provinces of Ontario and Quebec), Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island sponsored a trade **commission** that visited the **Caribbean** and **Brazil**.

The first Canadian diplomatic mission in **Latin America** was established in Rio de Janeiro in **September 1941** when career diplomat **Jean Désy** presented his credentials as Canadian Minister (later Ambassador) to **Brazil**. Also in the 1940s, Canada opened missions in **Argentina** and **Chile** (1941), **Mexico** and **Peru** (1944), and **Cuba** (1945). Further Canadian diplomatic expansion in Latin America took place only gradually in later decades.

If the proposed **Free Trade Area of the Americas** becomes a reality, it would be the **world's largest free trade bloc**, with **800 million people** and a gross domestic product in excess of **\$10.6 trillion**. Negotiations are under way for the conclusion of a treaty by **2005**.

The **Organization of American States** is the world's oldest regional organization. It originated in **1890** as the International Union of American Republics. In **1910**, this became the Pan American Union. In **April 1948**, 21 countries joined together to establish the modern OAS. The Organization is made up of **35** sovereign states. (The current government of Cuba has been suspended since 1962.) Canada joined as a Permanent Observer in **1972** and became a member on **January 8, 1990**.

Some **45** countries plus the European Union have Permanent Observer status with the OAS.

Approximately **1.5 million** Canadians visited Latin America and the Caribbean last year (**13.5 million** visited the United States). In the same year, Canada welcomed **400 000** visitors from the region and **15 million** Americans.

When travelling in the United States, Latin America and the Caribbean, tune in to **Radio Canada International (RCI)**. On short-wave, it broadcasts Canadian news and other information programs in English, French and Spanish. For information on schedules and frequencies, consult RCI's Web site: www.rcinet.ca

In our NEXT ISSUE

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Scheduled for late August, our next issue will focus on the upcoming United Nations Millennium Summit, expected to be the largest-ever gathering of heads of state and government. We will look at the future of the UN—the cornerstone of Canada's foreign policy since 1945—and how Canada intends to help redefine it for a new millennium. ●—

