

men like the Minister of Finance, and consequently what becomes the private view is to take the second place. But really it is difficult to understand the government's position on this. The Prime Minister went to Mexico, and great expectations were created in the minds of the Mexican people on the occasion of that friendly visit. The Secretary of State for External Affairs peregrinated into South America with great success, and also gave the impression there that Canada was giving sympathetic consideration to this problem. And then the minister said last year—and I will repeat it—that he thought it would be a step forward if we were to joint this organization. Now the minister takes the position that this is a matter on which the Canadian people must be allowed to express their view. How long does the minister think that the Canadian people must have to give an expression of their view before the government will make up its mind on this important matter?

Mr. GREEN: It is quite a change for them to be given an opportunity. They did not have it for 22 years.

Mr. MARTIN (*Essex East*): Assuming that is the case—of course I would not agree with it—would the minister mind saying how long he thinks it would take, because usually in matters of foreign policy the government takes a firm position and it takes its chances in parliament—although I admit the chances this government is taking in parliament are not very great, because of its great and overwhelming present support—but how long does the government have to wait before public opinion will give an indication of its intention or desire?

Mr. GREEN: I became very interested in this question when I attended the United Nations in the fall of 1959. I decided at that time that we could be on far more friendly terms with Latin American countries and also that their friendship was of great value to us because, with so many new nations joining the United Nations, it is important that Canada should have all possible support; otherwise we cannot get our ideas accepted. It also seemed to me that here was one field in which the relations should be improved, and we have made quite a few moves to bring about that result, I think with considerable success. We now have diplomatic relations with all but two of the Latin American countries, and eventually we will have relations with them—these two are in Central America; and the visits have of course helped; they were designed to promote good relations.

In Washington we have one of our officers whose main job is to keep in touch with the Latin American embassies and to advise us of Latin American views. We are planning to put a more senior officer on that particular work in Washington, possibly one of the men who is now a Canadian ambassador in Latin America. In the United Nations we are now working very closely with these Latin American countries. Naturally the question of whether or not Canada should join the western hemisphere organization is an important factor in this whole situation, but in my judgment the Canadian people have simply not paid much attention to that question down through the years. At one time we would not have been welcome in the organization.

Mr. MARTIN (*Essex East*): During the war.

Mr. GREEN: Now everyone would like us to joint it; the Latin American countries, the United States and the United Kingdom would like to see us join. The whole world picture has changed a great deal. But it is not a problem which you can decide in a hurry. I think it merits consideration by the members of parliament and by the Canadian people. There are, as you know, some papers, for example, that are very strongly opposed to it; others are very strongly in favour of it, and sufficient thought has not been given to the question to make it wise for the government to decide.

I am not yet in a position to announce any policy. I am only one member of the cabinet—it would have to be a cabinet decision. In the meantime, I am