

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, today presented a cheque for \$45,000 to the Canadian Association for Latin America (CALA). The contribution is intended to assist CALA to expand the scope of its activities and the size of its membership in the coming year as a complement to efforts by the Federal Government to improve Canadian relations with Latin America.

CALA was created in 1969 in order to coordinate and enhance the activities of Canadian businesses, industries and individuals pursuing Latin American interests. It has approximately 90 corporate members and maintains an office and an excellent information centre on Latin America in Toronto. CALA has established useful contacts in Latin American countries and in inter-American institutions. The Mexican-Canadian Bilateral Businessmen's Committee that it created has been quite successful and CALA proposes to organize similar committees with other countries of the area.

In 1973 with the assistance of an officer of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and under a \$10,000 contract from the Department of External Affairs, CALA organized a series of seminars in some of the principal Canadian cities in order to stimulate Canadian interest in Latin America. The response was very encouraging.

The two main projects which CALA has planned for the future are a major conference to be held in Toronto in June, 1974 ("CALA IV"), which will offer Latin American businessmen and officials the opportunity to learn more about Canadian industrial potential and a reciprocal conference in 1975 in Latin America ("CALA V") designed to introduce Canadian companies to the opportunities existing in the region.

Much of the contribution will be put towards the recruitment of a second executive officer for the Association, to assist the present Executive Director, Mr. Michael Lubbock, and towards increased stenographic assistance, which together would enable CALA to carry out the proposed expansion of activities while simultaneously attracting more Canadian members and financial resources.

In approving this contribution, the Minister also encouraged CALA to continue its effort to expand the national scope of its membership, particularly with a view to attracting more participation by French-speaking Canadians in the Association's activities.

Mr. Sharp pointed out that this contribution followed from the decision taken in the Government's Foreign Policy Review of 1970 to pursue new ways of intensifying relations with the nations of Latin America. The Minister stressed that it is becoming increasingly apparent that if Canada is to expand and diversify its exports and interests, Latin America, which is the fastest-growing and most advanced part of the Third World, must be one of the principal areas of endeavour; to do this effectively, in competition with European and Japanese enterprises especially, coordinated efforts by the Canadian public and private sectors are essential.