

and other learned societies organized on a Hemisphere basis.

With respect to this last item, I should like to note, in passing, that the Fourth Reunion of Central Bank Governors of the American Continent is now taking place near Montreal. We are delighted to have this meeting of Hemispheric significance in Canada this year.

I know that interest in the countries of the Americas is quietly growing in Canada -- for example, in institutes such as the host organization this evening, the Canadian Institute of International Affairs, and several universities, both French- and English-speaking. With the help of those of us, both Canadians and Latin Americans, who are in a position to increase knowledge and understanding of Latin America in Canada, interest in that part of the world should grow from coast to coast in the years ahead and, I should expect, will significantly increase in the immediate future.

I should like to look forward a little from here and give you some perspective from the Canadian point of view on the future development of Canada's relations with the rest of the Hemisphere.

First a word about the question of Canada joining the OAS. The fact that the Canadian Government has not yet decided to apply for membership in the OAS may be puzzling to some interested observers in Latin America. I should, nevertheless, hope that our attitude may meet with a large measure of understanding on the part of our Latin American friends, and that they will pay attention to what we are doing and seek to do, even if it falls short of applying for membership in the OAS at present.

It goes without saying that we in Canada are impressed by the constructive manner in which the OAS and its agencies are addressing themselves to the basic issues which confront Latin American countries at this time. I should like to suggest to you that, just as we in Canada respect the OAS, so the Canadian attitude toward the OAS is deserving of respect. It is by no means a negative attitude, for we are, in fact, co-operating with OAS agencies in a number of ways.

The fundamental reason for our not yet having decided to apply for membership in the OAS is our desire to be sure that, in taking on new commitments, we are in a position to meet them fully and effectively. We do not easily assume new obligations and, once we have assumed them, we take them seriously. For my part, I have no doubt whatsoever that membership in the OAS is part of the ultimate destiny of Canada as a country of the Western Hemisphere.

In the meantime we are adopting a pragmatic approach to the OAS and to our relations generally with the American countries. That our interest in the OAS and its work is growing is undeniable. Canada has for many years been a full member of three agencies linked with the OAS. Since 1961, we have sent observers to meetings of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council; during the past two years, Canada has been represented at three high-level meetings of leaders of OAS countries; and, as I have already indicated, we are supporting the work of the Inter-American Development Bank.