

and scholars to Canada. This trend was, as it were, formally recognized only two months ago, when the Canadian Association of Latin American Studies, a new learned society uniting scholars wholly or partly devoted to the study of Latin America in several disciplines, was established.

This increased awareness of Latin America, and particularly of Latin American culture, is a source of great satisfaction to me personally. I have had occasion to spend considerable time in Brazil and to become acquainted with some of the major works of Brazilian literature. As anyone must be, I was impressed by that literature's individuality, depth, and range of subject. This Congress will certainly bring the wealth and variety of Latin American literature to the attention of the public in Canada, and in so doing it will have made a significant contribution to greater mutual understanding of the peoples of the hemisphere.

This increased Canadian awareness of Latin America, as many of you already know, has been reflected in the policy of the Canadian Government. In May 1968, a review of all the major areas of Canadian foreign policy was requested by the Prime Minister. One of these areas was Latin America. Since that time, a task force of the ministers and officials concerned with Canadian relations with the area has been actively engaged in an exchange of views with both Latin Americans and Canadians in many fields. A mission at ministerial level visited nine Latin American countries and held talks with Latin American political, economic and cultural leaders. The task force is now in the final stages of preparing a report to the Government. This report has not yet been received or discussed by the Cabinet, and I cannot, therefore, comment in detail on its recommendations here, even if time allowed me to do so. However, I am able to assure you that the cultural dimension of Canadian relations has been in the forefront of the task force's thinking from the very beginning of the review. We believe that this is an area in which Canada can benefit greatly from increased contacts, as well as one in which it has something to offer. I expect that the policy review will inaugurate a new and far more active era of cultural exchanges between Canada and Latin America, exchanges of scientific and academic personnel and in the performing and creative arts. It will not, of course, be possible to do everything at once, particularly in view of the financial limitations within which the Government must work at present. Nonetheless, a new course has been set for Canada in this field, and I hope that as many as possible of those of you present tonight will in due course participate in the programs we hope to set up.

S/C