

although, as our Minister, Mr. Sharp, has said, we have no objection if some countries wish to view it in that light.

We would however object to our action being interpreted as a decision to stay on the sidelines indefinitely. That is not its motivation.

Our accession to Permanent Observer status is precisely for the purpose outlined in the Canadian foreign policy paper on Latin America. We want to gain knowledge and experience which will enable Canada to participate more fully in the affairs of this hemisphere, of which we share a portion.

We have, of course, gained some understanding and appreciation of the OAS in years past but in a time of changing relations between countries of this region and in their institutions, we feel that we have much more to learn. We see the Assembly in that light, Mr. President -- a valuable opportunity to gain new insights from our new status as Permanent Observer.

Meanwhile, we feel that some progress has been made since the last General Assembly in San José toward implementation of Canada's plans to strengthen our links with a number of the most important inter-American institutions.

On September 28, 1971, Canada was admitted to full membership in the Pan American Health Organization and we shall endeavour to play an active and constructive role in its programmes. PAHO has demonstrated what can be accomplished in this hemisphere through consultation, co-ordination and co-operation.

More recently, in March of this year, Canada applied for full membership in the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences and we hope that the formalities involved in our application will soon be completed.

We are continuing to explore the possibility of taking on full membership in several other specialized inter-American organizations.

We also hope to enrich the quality of Canadian participation in the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, an organization which we joined in 1960, and to which we hope we made some contribution last year when the Canadian oceanographic vessel the "Hudson" completed the first circumnavigation of the Americas. We shall continue to be active in other organizations in which we have membership -- the Inter-American Centre for Tax Administrators, the Centre for Latin American Monetary Studies, the Inter-American Statistical Institute and the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain.