

Approximately one-third of Canada's population is French-speaking. This, in itself, provides a basis of rapport between the peoples of Latin America, whose mother tongues are Spanish and Portuguese. The law of Quebec is based upon the old French civil law, which antedated the Code Napoleon. The lawyers of Latin America are brother civilians of mine.

Twelve of the Latin American countries consider Canada to be of sufficient interest to them to have diplomatic representation established in Ottawa. The Canadian Government, on its part, has representatives accredited to all 20 of the countries of Latin America and resident representatives in 14.

Through the United Nations, Canada participated in the work of the Economic Commission for Latin America and, through Specialized Agencies and other organs of the United Nations, Canada is making a substantial contribution to the development of the Latin American republics. Canada has been associated with the United Nations peace-keeping operations in the Congo with Argentina and Ecuador, in Lebanon with Argentina, Chile and Ecuador, and with Colombia in Korea.

Canada is not a member of the Organization of American States. Membership will probably come in time, if you want us, and when Canadian public opinion is more conscious than it now is of conditions in this region and of our own interests here. But this does not militate against closer ties of an economic, political and cultural character.

In the Government, we have followed closely the work of the World Bank in Latin America. Some of our export-credit facilities have been extended in association with the Inter-American Development Bank. The Canadian Government thinks that this kind of association with the Inter-American Development Bank is a worthwhile course to pursue and is working in this direction.

We have watched with interest, too, the development of the Latin American Free Trade Association and the Central American Common Market. Both have been patterned on the concept of the European Common Market. They are bold and progressive steps. We wish you well with them, because we believe they can do much to strengthen economies, open new markets, develop efficiency of production and raise standards of living. We would indeed hope, however, that these associations would look outward as well as inward, as we hope the European Common Market will do. Otherwise they can defeat their purpose. Our Prime Minister has, at all times, been an advocate of the freest possible trading arrangements. Philosophically, his and my Party is dedicated to the principle of the freest possible trade, in the belief that freer trade will strengthen the economies of the countries which develop it and, as well, create for the Western world overwhelming economic strength.

My Government attach great importance to the current GATT negotiations, the "Kennedy round". These are very significant meetings. They are significant to the industrialized countries; they are significant to countries like Canada which are increasing their industrialization; in my view, they are equally significant to developing countries. The West must be awake to the opportunities they present. In passing, I pay tribute to the leadership given by the United States in this field since the Marshall Plan was enacted.