

Canadian Ministerial Mission to Latin America

A STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE MITCHELL SHARP,
IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS ON NOVEMBER 29, 1968.

THE ministerial mission to Latin America returned to Ottawa on Wednesday of this week. I wish today to make a brief statement about the mission and its work, a mission which I am convinced marks a turning-point in our relations with Latin America.

The House will recall that, shortly before the mission left Canada, the Prime Minister stated that its purpose was to assist the Government in its review of policy toward Latin America, a part of the world with which we believe Canada should develop closer relations. The mission's main tasks were as follows :

To explore the common benefits that might result from closer relations with Latin America;

to explore all important aspects of Canada's relations with Latin America — political, economic and cultural;

to demonstrate our desire to draw closer to Latin American countries on a bilateral basis and the importance we attach to our relations with the hemisphere as a whole;

to enable ministers to have direct consultations with important Latin American leaders and to observe at first hand developments in some of the more important Latin American countries;

to review not only relations with the Latin American countries but also world issues in which we and they have a common interest; and,

to make Canada better known in Latin America, and to establish a basis for better understanding of Latin America on the part of Canadians.

The Government felt that, to accomplish these objectives, it was necessary to send ministers who could speak with authority on matters of foreign policy, trade and economic questions and cultural affairs, supported by a strong team of officials drawn from the departments and agencies of government principally concerned with our relations with Latin America. To gain a broad perspective on our relations with Latin America, the mission visited as many countries of that area as possible.

Ministerial Members

At one time or another five ministers took part in the mission. They were the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce; the Minister of Energy, Mines and