

with our Ambassadors to Mexico City and Buenos Aires heading the Canadian delegations. Since last year, the Canadian Government has also been sending an observer to some of the annual meetings of the Alliance's Executive Committee; during these meetings, the progress achieved by those members which are developing countries is reviewed. As I have already explained, Canada has been contributing to the operations of the Inter-American Development Bank since 1964. Moreover, our country belongs to some inter-American technical organizations; these bodies, which may be joined by countries that are not members of the OAS, are not all dependent on the OAS. They have rather varied interests -- for example, the operation of central banks, statistics, taxation methods, broadcasting, postal services and the continent's history and geography. There are also Canadians who participate, either individually or as members of groups, in the activities of several non-official inter-American organizations. Finally, the Canadian Government, through its embassies in Latin American countries, is following with a great deal of interest the evolution of the regional and intergovernmental groups, especially as they affect trade and economic development.

All this is obviously no more than a modest effort, carried out within a multilateral framework, toward more effective co-operation with the countries of Latin America. We could follow up this co-operation by becoming a member of the OAS.

From several points of view, the OAS is an admirable association. Of course, this Organization is not without its weaknesses. It seems to me that it has not always achieved its desired objectives nor always used the appropriate means according to the circumstances. It has done a great deal in the past to preserve the peace of the Hemisphere and to provide this region of the world with a stability and a cohesion which it would not have had otherwise. As the present time, the OAS is in a period of transition. The new charter still has to be ratified. The new Secretary-General, Mr. Galo Plaza, a most distinguished Latin American statesman, is most remarkable in his efforts.

It remains to be determined whether the Canadian Government will decide that the time is now favourable for applying to join the OAS, or whether it will feel that our country should first take suitable measures to effect closer relations with the countries of Latin America and to increase its knowledge of Latin American affairs before reaching a decision on the more fundamental issue.

Conclusion

In this review of the principal aspects of our relations with Latin America as they have existed in the past and as they exist in the present, I have also tried to give you some idea of the future of these relations as foreseen at the present time. To make this part of my remarks a bit clearer, I should like to recall what the Prime Minister said before the departure of the ministerial mission last year. He stated, among other things: "The Government considers our relations with the countries in this Hemisphere as being of high priority." Farther on, he added: "I am confident that this review (the review of policy then being undertaken) will demonstrate that there is real scope for strengthening Canada's relations with Latin America to the mutual advantage of both."