

ship in the OAS could flow from a straightforward belief that it is Canada's duty to participate in collective hemispheric deliberations on defence and security and to accept the corresponding collective obligations.

In joining the OAS, Canada would enter into an association for the defence of the western hemisphere as a whole but would assume no actual commitment with regard to provision of forces for peacekeeping or combat purposes in an emergency. This would be at the discretion of the Government in the light of actual circumstances.

On the other hand, the potential obligation to apply political and economic sanctions against another country by virtue of an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the members is a difficult feature of the OAS from the Canadian point of view. ⁽²⁾ If Canada had been a member of the OAS in 1964, it would have been called upon to sever diplomatic, commercial and transportation links with Cuba. The same steps could be proposed and taken against another country in future. This could limit the Canadian Government's freedom of action with regard to a future security crisis in the hemisphere.

If Canada joined the OAS, there would be room for further evolution of relationships with Latin American countries along certain bilateral lines. At least in the early years, this would probably be concentrated mainly in the commercial fields and in interchanges of people for various reasons. At the same time, Canada's relationship with Latin America as a whole would assume new and larger dimensions in all main fields and would become increasingly multilateral in character.

The Balance Sheet

A decision to seek membership in the OAS could be based upon the recognition that there is a certain trend toward regionalism in the world as a whole and on a conviction that the most effective manner for Canada to make its weight felt in all matters of importance in the hemisphere is to participate fully in the work of the OAS and the organizations related to it. On the other hand, soundings indicate that, while the OAS countries would welcome Canada as a member of the organization, they are not so much interested in Canadian membership as such as in closer relations with Canada inside or outside the OAS. The Government's purpose is to develop closer relations with Latin America to the mutual advantage of

⁽²⁾ This obligation arises essentially from the Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance (the Rio Treaty), which the OAS expects all new members, on joining, to sign or to undertake to sign. If Canada should join the OAS, it would seem desirable that the treaty be signed at the time of joining.