

I should hope that this conference would be one means by which wider Canadian interest in the area would be developed.

Governmental Activities

By the end of 1961, Canada had established formal diplomatic relations with all the republics in Latin America. This, of course, included, and still includes, Cuba. This process started with the establishment of missions in Argentina and Brazil early in 1945. There was a commercial representative in Buenos Aires even before 1900 and trade commissioners in several of the major capitals before the First World War. There are now 14 resident diplomatic missions, apart from the three offices in the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Also in 1961, Canada became a full member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America, following a period of observer status. This, of course, is one of the four Regional Economic Commissions of the United Nations. Since then, Canada has regularly attended its meetings at its headquarters in Santiago and has gone to its major conferences elsewhere.

Canada became a member of the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain as early as 1931. This is a regional organization with the Universal Postal Union but not associated with the latter.

Some inter-American conferences are convened on a non-binding basis and have been attended by Canada. Perhaps the most recent example of this type of conference was the meeting of the governors of the central banks of this continent in Guatemala last April. The Governor of the Bank of Canada attended, played an active part and was elected to the agenda committee for the second meeting to take place a year later.

Over the years a number of Canadian cabinet ministers have made visits or special missions to Latin America. I have to announce plans for a visit to several Latin American countries around the end of this year and I know that other ministers would like to visit particular countries or areas. We must broaden our contacts with Latin America.

In turn, we have had in the past a number of distinguished visitors from Latin America. The most recent was a visit in May by the Venezuelan Minister of Mines and Petroleum. He held talks with many persons in Ottawa, mainly in connection with the export of petroleum products from his country to Canada, a matter of great importance to the Venezuelan economy.

Canadian Participation in the Inter-American System

The OAS is the senior political body of a complex of institutions and agencies which has been called the Inter-American System. Canada had had rather more association and experience with these institutions than is usually thought to be the case. Canada is a full member of three agencies linked with the OAS: the Inter-