

The Commonwealth

A few moments ago I mentioned the Commonwealth. May I interpolate here — and this is a personal note — that after I reached the United Nations in the middle of September I was asked to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth group. It was not a bloc but a group. I am sure that no one else in the room could appreciate how thrilled I was, indeed how excited I was, at that first meeting. Here sitting around a horseshoe table were representatives of ten independent nations of the British Commonwealth, men and women coming from various climes, of various religions and cultures. There they sat. It seemed to me — and this is the basis of my thrill and my excitement — that there was before me a brilliant page of British history, the bringing of colonies to nationhood. There was no treaty binding them together. Indeed I would say, for the want of a better word, that there was something mystical in their adherence to common ideals of the dignity of the individual, of justice, fairness and fair play.

Latin America

I now come closer to home, Mr. Speaker, and I desire for a moment or two to mention our neighbours in this hemisphere. I would point out first our relationship to the republics of Latin America. Some of my first conversations at the United Nations in September were with representatives of the republics of Latin America. Since I have been in Ottawa I am gradually beginning to get to know better the Ambassadors from Latin America. I know that in the Assembly and the Councils of the United Nations our Canadian representatives over the years have acquired a deep appreciation of the strength, the wisdom and the vision which representatives of the Latin republics have brought to the discussions, deliberations and decisions of that body.

I refer, just by way of example, to only two. Colombia and Brazil made contributions in men and equipment to UNEF. Colombia and Brazil have each served three times on the Security Council. I think of Brazil today, which is the largest Latin nation in the world, with a population larger than that of Spain or Italy or France, with enormous natural resources scarcely tapped, a country of great promise. We have traded with those countries over many years, indeed for a century, I am informed. I hope that the substantial volume of our two-way trade with the Latin American nations today is only a stage on the way to greater expansion.

But it is only in the post-war years since 1945 that there has been an increased exchange of personnel, visitors and businessmen between Canada and the Latin American republics. Attending our colleges and universities are a considerable number of students who have come to us from Latin America. Visitors and tourists are increasing. Commercial aviation has been a significant factor in helping us to become better acquainted with the Latin American countries. The Mexican air line operates a regular service between Mexico City and Windsor, Ontario. Our own Canadian Pacific Air Lines now ranks as a major air service in the Americas. Those 20 independent nations are playing an increasing part in deliberations that are designed for the solution of international problems — and I express the hope that the cordial relations which now exist with those 20 nations will be enhanced and increased.