

and the United States. In 1949, these relations had existed since the liberation of most of the countries of Latin America; they had been characterized both by serious problems and by ever-increasing co-operation. Toward the end of the Second World War, the countries of Latin America and the United States, inspired by the same spirit which had prompted the creation of the United Nations, in which they played an important role, decided to regularize their own relations by signing two regional agreements. The first, the Inter-American Treaty for Reciprocal Assistance, the "Rio Treaty", was signed in 1947; the second, the Charter of the OAS, was signed in 1949.

Canada, wishing to avoid a renewal of the two world wars into which it had been drawn, participated actively in the preparatory work leading to the creation of the United Nations and became a member of this body. However, preoccupied with its own interests, and particularly with its relations with those parts of the world to which it was linked by history, and preoccupied also by its new responsibilities within the United Nations, Canada did not find sufficient reason to join the OAS. I might point out in passing, however, that our country became a member of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America in 1966, and that we have since taken an active part in its work.

The OAS -- and the whole inter-American system of which it is the central part -- have evolved greatly since 1949, especially with regard to activities designed to improve the economic and social conditions of member countries. The Alliance for Progress and the Inter-American Development Bank for Economic Development, the latter established outside the framework of the OAS but composed exclusively of member countries, are the most important instruments from this point of view.

There are also several OAS bodies which are concerned with technical aid and methods to be used in agriculture and other areas of the same nature. Under the new OAS charter, adopted in 1967 but not yet ratified by all member countries, the Inter-American Economic and Social Council and the Inter-American Cultural Council will be given much broader mandates than those they have had up to now. For a long time, there have been several other inter-American organizations outside the OAS dealing with a great variety of questions, which include technical, administrative and cultural matters.

Furthermore, there have been set up recently, again outside the framework of the OAS, agencies or organizational plans, on a scale surpassing even the organizations which I have just mentioned. These are organizations or regional associations formed by some of the Latin American countries: the Latin American Free Trade Association, the Central American Common Market, the Andean Group and the River Plate Group. In addition, there is a plan for a common market of all Latin American countries, theoretically to be formed before 1985.

Canada has not remained indifferent to these developments. In 1961, a Canadian minister attended the meeting of the Inter-American Economic and Social Council as an observer. The Alliance for Progress was launched on this occasion and since that time a Canadian observer regularly has been sent to the Council's meetings and, more recently, to those of the Inter-American Cultural Council, which are held simultaneously. Both bodies are now meeting in Port-of-Spain,