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NOTES FOR STATEMENT BY
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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
HEAD OF CANADIAN OBSERVER
DELEGATION TO THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE ORGANIZATION OF
AMERICAN STATES (OAS),
APRIL 11-20, 1972, IN
WASHINGTON

Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates,

It gives me much pleasure to bring to this Assembly the greetings and good wishes of the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs of Canada, who has given me the honour of leading the Canadian delegation to this Assembly. This is the first General Assembly of the Organization of American States which Canada has attended since being accredited as a Permanent Observer to the OAS on February 2.

The Permanent Observer Mission of Canada to the OAS opened here in Washington one month ago. In the near future an Ambassador will be appointed as our Permanent Observer.

For us, then, this is a notable occasion, for Canada wants a closer association -- a closer association with Latin American countries and a closer association with inter-American institutions and organizations.

I would like to express to the Assembly, to the Permanent Council and to the Secretary General Canada's appreciation of their collaboration with us in our endeavours.

Perhaps we have appeared to be a reluctant bridegroom to the OAS. Possibly we should have long ago taken to heart the saying that marriage is, after all, an extended form of friendship. But also, there have always been Canadians who recall the proverb voiced by Samuel Butler: "A man's friendships are, like his will, invalidated by marriage...".

Distinguished delegates, these considerations, pro and con, have never been far from Canadians' minds. So it is no surprise to us that the significance of our Permanent Observer status has been questioned in Canada as it is questioned among some members of this Assembly.

We are asked whether this is a first step toward full membership in the OAS. Or does it reflect a decision to dwell permanently in the twilight zone on the edge of the OAS? Shall Canada always observe, but never become part of the action?

We are also asked why, after a generation of observing the activities of this Organization, we still have not made up our minds whether or not to join in full membership.

Today, I would like to address myself fairly to some of these justifiable questions.

Our association with the OAS as a Permanent Observer need not be interpreted as a first step toward full membership

although, as our Minister, Mr. Sharp, has said, we have no objection if some countries wish to view it in that light.

We would however object to our action being interpreted as a decision to stay on the sidelines indefinitely. That is not its motivation.

Our accession to Permanent Observer status is precisely for the purpose outlined in the Canadian foreign policy paper on Latin America. We want to gain knowledge and experience which will enable Canada to participate more fully in the affairs of this hemisphere, of which we share a portion.

We have, of course, gained some understanding and appreciation of the OAS in years past but in a time of changing relations between countries of this region and in their institutions, we feel that we have much more to learn. We see the Assembly in that light, Mr. President -- a valuable opportunity to gain new insights from our new status as Permanent Observer.

Meanwhile, we feel that some progress has been made since the last General Assembly in San José toward implementation of Canada's plans to strengthen our links with a number of the most important inter-American institutions.

On September 28, 1971, Canada was admitted to full membership in the Pan American Health Organization and we shall endeavour to play an active and constructive role in its programmes. PAHO has demonstrated what can be accomplished in this hemisphere through consultation, co-ordination and co-operation.

More recently, in March of this year, Canada applied for full membership in the Inter-American Institute of Agricultural Sciences and we hope that the formalities involved in our application will soon be completed.

We are continuing to explore the possibility of taking on full membership in several other specialized inter-American organizations.

We also hope to enrich the quality of Canadian participation in the Pan American Institute of Geography and History, an organization which we joined in 1960, and to which we hope we made some contribution last year when the Canadian oceanographic vessel the "Hudson" completed the first circumnavigation of the Americas. We shall continue to be active in other organizations in which we have membership -- the Inter-American Centre for Tax Administrators, the Centre for Latin American Monetary Studies, the Inter-American Statistical Institute and the Postal Union of the Americas and Spain.

Canada's interest in full membership in the Inter-American Development Bank is perhaps one of the best barometers of our policy reorientation in Latin America. Since 1964 Canada has extended some \$74 million in bilateral development assistance loans to Latin America through administrative arrangements with the Bank.

We Canadians find ourselves increasingly drawn to the conclusion that our desire for closer association with Latin America and our more intimate involvement in the destiny of this hemisphere should have a more practical and tangible form than the past arrangement with the Bank provided. Therefore, we seek full membership in the BID. We believe that the Bank is a significant instrument in improving the quality of life in this region in assisting nations to develop their resources, their economies and their societies. This, in our view, is such a vital part of the process of deepening and intensifying Canada's participation as an American nation that we are prepared to devote substantial resources to it.

By the end of March, the preliminary discussion with the Bank and its members had been satisfactorily completed and Canada's formal application for membership was submitted. It is hoped that our accession to the Bank's Charter will have been completed in time for us to be represented as a full member at the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Bank in Quito in May of this year.

As a full member Canada will participate in the ordinary capital of the Bank and will also make a substantial contribution to the Bank's Fund for Special Operations.

We are pleased to note that the President of the Inter-American Development Bank has stated that he regards our decision to seek full membership in the Bank as one of -- he used the word -- "extraordinary" significance for economic and social development in Latin America.

In addition to its contribution to the BID, Canada is contributing to the development of the region through the bilateral technical assistance programme with Latin American countries which was launched last year.

Canada ranks sixth in total exports among the trading nations of the world. Therefore, we're fully conscious of the importance of trade in the evolution of this hemisphere's countries. We recognize that Latin American countries need stable markets for their products. We sympathize with their desire to diversify their secondary industries and their exports to Canada. We are assisting several of these countries in market studies in Canada and in examination of their industrial capacity to supply our market.

Canada supports the general preference scheme of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and we anticipate that the programme I have mentioned will encourage Latin American exports to Canada.

I venture to suggest, Mr. President, that the third United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in Santiago, Chile, this month will demonstrate quite clearly our collective determination to make trade and development work in tandem to the long-term advantage of both the developing nations and the more developed.

Regionally, a beginning has also been made in expanding Canada's participation in the area. On January 3, 1972, our Ambassador in Lima was accredited as a Permanent Observer to the Andean Pact. Last year a grant of \$200,000 was provided to this regional organization by the Canadian International Development Agency for studies designed to promote co-ordinated industrial development in the Andean region.

Bilaterally, steps are also in process to intensify relations with many of the countries where Canada's interests coincide most closely with those of Latin American countries. As our resources permit, we hope to expand these bilateral relationships to other countries and to other forms of collaboration. We anticipate that through a careful cultivation of relations -- particularly those aspects that will enrich the qualities of life that are unique to the countries concerned -- we may help mobilize the strength of our hemisphere.

Mr. President, Canada is conscious of its new role in the Organization of American States. We shall follow with great interest and attention the discussions of this General Assembly. My colleagues and I on the Canadian delegation will welcome discussions with all of the member countries and Permanent Observers that will assist us to a better understanding of the future of this Organization.

Canada has chosen to be associated with the future of the Americas and in order that there may be no confusion on this particular important point, I wish to conclude with the following excerpt from the Canadian foreign policy paper:

"Faced with the choice between letting Canada's relations with Latin America grow at their present rate, undertaking a systematic strengthening of these relations bilaterally and through the agencies of the inter-American system and the United Nations, and joining the OAS as a full member now, the Government has decided to follow the middle course. This will permit Canada's relations with the countries of Latin America

to develop rapidly, and by improving Canadian knowledge and understanding of those countries and their regional institutions, prepare for a better-informed and more useful Canadian participation as a full member of the OAS should Canada, at some future date, opt for full participation. To facilitate this process and to enable the Canadian Government to follow developments of interest to it on a systematic basis, it is intended that, if the OAS member countries agree, a formal link between Canada and the OAS countries will be established at a suitable level."

That link has been established, Mr. President, and Canada is here.