

Pearson Hints That Canada Is Considering Joining OAS

BANFF, Alberta, Aug. 28 (UPI)—Canada may modify its generally neutral role in Latin American affairs and join the organization of American States Prime Minister Pearson has indicated.

"I believe before long we will take our share of responsibility as a member of the OAS," Pearson said last night in answer to a question after a talk at the Banff School of Fine Arts.

Pearson said some Canadians believe the country should not join the organization, which includes most countries of the Western Hemisphere, because at the present time "we are very popular."

Canada has turned down membership in the OAS in the past to avoid involvement in Latin American problems and possible conflict with stands taken by the United States.

"Perhaps we were wise in not hurrying into the organization," Pearson said. But now, he said, the Canadian government is "examining the possibility of joining the OAS with sympathetic interest."

Murray Marder of The Washington Post reported:

Informed sources in Washington noted that the United States long has urged Canada to join the OAS, but they said no evidence is available

in Washington that Canada is actually prepared to take that step now.

Pearson's remark was interpreted in Washington as a generalization, rather than an indication of an imminent decision.

The late President Kennedy

said in 1961 that Canada, the only Western hemisphere nation not in the OAS, should join with the United States as "partners in inter-American affairs." At that time, Pearson, then the opposition leader, said perhaps the time had come for Canada to do so.