

A REPORT ON PRACTICAL MEASURES
TO INCREASE TRADE, INVESTMENT AND
ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN
CANADA AND THE TURKS AND CAICOS ISLANDS (TCI)

I. INTRODUCTION

For the past ten years I have had an interest in the Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), a British dependency in the West Indies. In fact, over the years many Canadian firms, institutions and individuals have expressed a similar interest. Hundreds of Canadians have contacted me about the prospects for increasing trade, investment and other forms of economic cooperation between Canada and the TCI. The Department of External Affairs has received inquiries from over 75 persons, firms and institutions in the past nine months.

A Committee of the Progressive Conservative Caucus was formed in 1986 to study the desirability and feasibility of Canada developing a political or economic association with the TCI. That Committee, like a Senate Committee which also studied the question, concluded it would be most inappropriate for the Canadian Government to initiate the negotiation of a political or economic association with the TCI. (See Appendix 1: Turks and Caicos Islands, Press Release, David Daubney MP, House of Commons, September 14, 1987 and Appendix 2: Eleventh Report of the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Appendix "A" to the Minutes of Proceedings, December 2, 1987. pp 1634-36.

The Daubney Committee recommended, inter-alia, that the Canadian private sector consider investing in the TCI based on its own assessment of the commercial opportunities and risks involved.

In March 1988, the People's Democratic Movement (PDM) formed the new TCI Government - a government supportive of improving relations between Canada and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

In May 1988 the newly appointed Chief Minister of the Turks and Caicos Islands, Oswald Skippings, indicated that he supports strengthening ties between Canada and the TCI - particularly in the fields of trade, transportation, education and foreign aid. For its part the Government of Canada indicated that it is open to discussion of ways to facilitate and promote trade with the Turks and Caicos Islands.