

**HAITI**

When I appeared in front of the Committee last year, I emphasized my determination, as well as the Government's, to enable the return of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to his rightful post. Since the beginning of the crisis in Haiti, Canada has been a major player. Now that President Aristide has returned, Canada will continue to help Haiti create the necessary environment in which the rule of law can take root.

We recognize the role the military forces of the United States have played in the first phase of re-establishing constitutional order in Haiti. This phase will end on March 31 and, consistent with our commitments, Canada will participate substantially in the United Nations Mission in Haiti [UNMIH]. The civilian police force of UNMIH will be headed by a senior officer of the RCMP. An officer of the Canadian Armed Forces will be the senior staff officer for the military contingent. This is one of the most important files my Department is working on, and I am personally following it very closely.

Since the return of President Aristide, the results of the presence of foreign military and police forces have surpassed our expectations. Violence, particularly that of a political nature, has practically ceased, and in general, Haitians are no longer afraid to speak their minds or to go about their day-to-day business. However, the void left by the virtual disappearance of the Haitian military and police forces has led to a certain amount of banditry. Although we no longer fear the possibility of another coup d'état, we need to be vigilant and to continue the collection of weapons.

At the request of the then exiled Haitian Government, Canada agreed to train a hundred young Haitian expatriates to serve in a future civilian police force. These young people are now in Haiti, where they will receive training on the Haitian justice system while awaiting their assignment. Although Canada is no longer directly responsible for the project, we are following its evolution with keen interest.

I believe that this Canadian assistance is the most direct and most useful support we can offer the Haitian people in order to ensure the establishment of the rule of law in their country.

Canada has also committed itself through a bilateral agreement with the Haitian government to participate in the training of new Haitian police officers, almost the majority of whom have never served in either the army or the police force. Training offered in Regina formed the basis of the course now being given in Haiti. In principle, our commitment to supply 25 trainers will last 18 months, that is, until the end of the first phase of training for 3000 officers. France and Denmark are also involved in this project.