

# Independence of Barbados

At one minute past midnight on November 30, 1966, the new ultramarine and gold flag of Barbados was raised at the Garrison Savannah near Bridgetown, to mark the independence of the new island nation. A few minutes later, His Royal Highness the Duke of Kent, representing Her Majesty the Queen, presented the constitutional instruments of independence to the Prime Minister, the Honourable Errol Barrow.

Barbados is the fourth Commonwealth country to attain independence in the Caribbean, the fifth in the Western Hemisphere, and the twenty-sixth in the Commonwealth. One of the smallest independent nations in the world, with a population of approximately 240,000 and an area of 166 square miles, Barbados nevertheless moves forward into independence with advantages not possessed by many other newly-independent countries: a tradition of parliamentary government which originated three centuries ago, a high level of education, and a well-deserved reputation for stability. The economy is based on tourism and agriculture; the beauty of Barbados' beaches is attracting an increasing number of visitors, many of them Canadians, while the island's fertile soil is carefully cultivated, making it one of the major West Indian sugar producers.

## Close Ties with Canada

Like the other Commonwealth countries and territories of the Caribbean, Barbados has long had particularly close ties with Canada. The progress towards independence of the Commonwealth Caribbean countries, including Barbados, was the background to the holding of the Commonwealth Caribbean-Canada Conference in Ottawa in July 1966. This conference, at the heads of government level, was the first stage in what Canada hopes will be a continuous development of closer collaboration and practical co-operation between the Commonwealth Caribbean and Canada, in trade, development assistance, transport and communications and cultural affairs, etc.

Canada was officially represented at the Barbados independence celebrations by the Honourable J. W. Pickersgill, Minister of Transport, and Mrs. Pickersgill. Official Canadian representation also included Mr. J. Russell McKinney, Canadian High Commissioner to Barbados (Mr. McKinney is also High Commissioner to Trinidad and Tobago, and resides in Port of Spain), and two ships of the Royal Canadian Navy, HMCS *Gatineau* and HMCS *St. Laurent*. A detachment of officers and men from the RCN ships joined detachments from the Royal Navy, the Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard, and the Barbados Regiment in forming the honour guard during the independence flag-raising ceremony.

## Exchange of Gifts

To mark its independence, the Canadian Government presented to Barbados a