

V DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

1. *General*

Development assistance, in its broadest sense, has been the dominant theme in the Committee's discussions of Canada-Caribbean relations. Given the commitment of the Canadian people and successive Governments to the task of international development, the Committee believes that the Caribbean presents a unique opportunity for concentrated effort with a high probability of worthwhile results.

The factors which make the Caribbean a promising area for concentrated Canadian assistance have been discussed in previous sections of this Report. Clearly, they have also been recognized by the Canadian Government. While such statistics can be slightly misleading, the per-capita figures on CIDA allocations to various areas reveal a unique emphasis on the Commonwealth Caribbean.

The same factors which favour such intensive focussing of aid allocations—limited size, a rising level of development, proximity, and familiarity—also permit broader types of development assistance and the use of new techniques and approaches. Increasingly, in the course of this inquiry, it has become apparent to this Committee that the kind of help needed by the Caribbean countries extends beyond the traditional, narrow definition of "aid" activities.

The Committee is convinced that development assistance is an activity which has important and integral ramifications in the operations of all government departments concerned with the area. It is a frequent and bitter complaint of recipient countries that donor-governments are inconsistent, extending assistance on one hand and at the same time frustrating development efforts through other areas of government policy.

One of the Committee's main conclusions is that much can and should be done to harmonize and co-ordinate government policies toward developing areas like the Commonwealth Caribbean. The need is probably particularly acute in the case of the Commonwealth Caribbean owing to the extent and relative importance of the Canadian involvement and perhaps also to the great diversity of the region itself. Because of the special need and the special potential, the Committee has proposed a number of new forms of development assistance to the Caribbean. In many cases, the Committee believes, these measures could greatly augment development prospects, often at relatively low cost.

The Committee recognizes that co-ordination of the policies of the many departments and agencies involved in external relationships is an intrinsically complex and difficult task. This is particularly the case in the Canadian Government where the Canadian International Development Agency, which has responsibility for initiating and executing assistance programmes, does not enjoy departmental status and therefore has limited co-ordinating authority. Under the present structure, the Committee believes that there is an urgent need for one Department,