

making this two-day conference a landmark in Canada-Caribbean relations. In particular, the conference provided a timely opportunity for discussion of the future direction of Canada-Caribbean relations.

A number of Caribbean governments faced elections in 1984-85. In those in Belize, the first elections there since independence in 1981, the opposition party led by Mr. Manuel Esquivel came to power. Elections were held in Grenada in December 1984, confirming that country's return to democratic government; Grenadian voters overwhelmingly supported the moderate party led by Mr. Herbert Blaize. Elections were also held in Antigua and Barbuda, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

In Barbados, Prime Minister Tom Adams was replaced after his death in March 1985 by Mr. H.B. St. John. Canada was represented at Mr. Adams' state funeral by the Minister of Finance.

Visits by several Canadian Cabinet ministers in 1984-85 enhanced both political and trade relations with the countries of the Caribbean. In return, Canada hosted visits by such prominent figures as Prime Minister Seaga and other ministers of the Jamaican government. In addition, a Trinidad and Tobago Coast Guard mission and an energy mission from Barbados came to Canada in 1984. Members of the National Defence College of Canada visited Cuba in April 1984 and Jamaica in January 1985. The Canadian ships HMCS Protector, Cormorant and Algonquin made goodwill port calls in the Caribbean during this period.

Canada's relations with Cuba in 1984 included the renewal in April of a bilateral hijacking agreement, and discussion of economic and commercial affairs at the meeting of the Canada-Cuba Joint Committee on Economic and Trade Relations in Ottawa in May.

The Dominican Republic strengthened its relations with Canada by opening an embassy in Ottawa headed by a *chargé d'affaires*.

Although most Caribbean countries continued to face economic difficulties in 1984, Canada maintained its efforts to expand trade activities with the region. Departmental co-operation with provincial and private sector organizations interested in exporting to the Caribbean continued, and in 1984 Canada's exports to the Caribbean once again exceeded \$1 billion. Support was also provided for a mission of the Canadian Association for Latin America and the Caribbean to Haiti in March 1985.

Despite the ongoing political tensions and conflict in Central America, the Contadora Group — Mexico, Venezuela, Panama and Colombia — and the five Central American countries continued their efforts to reach a comprehensive regional peace agreement. Canada has strongly supported the

Contadora peace process, and in November 1984, the Secretary of State for External Affairs met with the Contadora ambassadors resident in Ottawa to explore ways in which Canada could help. At that time, he reiterated Canada's willingness to provide expertise based on its experience in peacekeeping operations. At the request of the Contadora governments, Canada subsequently prepared a new series of written comments on the security and control provisions of the Contadora Draft Act (earlier comments had been prepared in August 1984). The Secretary of State for External Affairs had the opportunity to review this issue when he met with President de la Madrid and Foreign Minister Sepulveda during his January 1985 visit to Mexico. In a parallel initiative aimed at assisting the reconciliation efforts in Nicaragua, Canada was a witness in Bogota to the talks between representatives of the Sandinistas and the indigenous opposition group MISURASATA.

During the year, elections were held in several Central American countries. The Canadian delegation which had observed El Salvador's first round of presidential elections in March 1984 returned in May for the second round, which resulted in a victory for the reformist Christian Democrat leader, Mr. José Napoleon Duarte. A Canadian delegation also attended President Duarte's June inauguration. The Christian Democrats went on to win their first majority in the Salvadoran Legislative Assembly in elections held in March 1985, which Canada again observed. In the meantime, the perceived improved situation in El Salvador, including progress on human rights and the establishment of democratic institutions, led the Secretary of State for External Affairs to announce in December 1984 the resumption of bilateral aid to that country.

In Panama, presidential and legislative elections in May were designed to lead to a return to democratic practices. Similarly, successful constituent assembly elections in Guatemala in July indicated progress towards democracy there, as did the subsequent announcement that presidential elections would be held later in 1985. In November, elections were held in Nicaragua, and a Canadian delegation attended the inauguration of President Daniel Ortega in January 1985.

The interest of the Canadian government in the region, reflected in the visit by then Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen to Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Honduras in April 1984, continued at a high level throughout the year. Consistent with the Canadian government's view that the basic causes of the current tensions and instability in Central America are socio-economic, Canada increased its bilateral assistance to Central American countries. In addition, some 3 000 refugees from the region will be accepted for immigration to Canada during 1985, compared with 2 500 in 1984.