



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA AND THE STATES OF THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, on the Occasion of the Signing of the Canada/CARICOM Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement, Kingston, Jamaica, January 20, 1979.

The signing of this agreement is another historic step in the evolution of relations between Canada and the 12 CARICOM states. It is historic not least because the agreement once again sets a precedent in the relations each of us has with the world at large, a precedent first set well over a century ago. At that time, what was then the Province of Canada sought to negotiate a preferential tariff with what were the West Indies. And, not so long after, the Honourable George Foster, a minister in the first Government of Canada, as it is now constituted, visited the Caribbean region. This was the first direct government-to-government contact seeking to promote economic relations between our respective states. Since then, the economic relation between us has broadened and deepened, though outside events occasionally have had a negative effect.

Against this historic background, the conclusion today of the Canada/CARICOM Trade and Economic Co-operation Agreement thus becomes a moving and an exciting experience for a Canadian, as it is, I am sure, for my CARICOM colleagues charged with responsibility for their governments' external relations. The agreement is one between a concerted group of Commonwealth Caribbean states and an independent Canada. It is a successor to the 1925 agreement, which governed our relations for more than half a century. But times have changed. Long gone are the days of "wood, wind and water" in which Canadian timber and fish — much of it from my own Province of Newfoundland — were traded for the rum and molasses of the Commonwealth Caribbean. That earlier agreement served us well. During the past 50 years, varied and solid commercial links have emerged. Transportation modes have greatly developed. The movement of peoples has intensified; and despite world war and other international tensions, we continue not simply to share but to build our future on the rich language and heritage we jointly have from the past.

To some extent, what we are signing today is no more than a new and up-to-date framework with which to surround a productive set of exchanges already "in place". A good deal of the commercial content provided for by the new agreement exists. Nevertheless, the agreement is essentially a forward-looking one. It places heavy emphasis upon developing what are real and important prospects for industrial, technical and financial co-operation between us. Thus it does reflect the needs of the signatory states to define anew their relations, and to do so in terms of the rapidly-changing international economic environment.

We live in a world in which economic relations are not measured in terms of trade-flows alone. Rather, we look to the more complex connections created by investment-
