

I have long been anxious to visit Africa. I considered it an essential part of my new duties to do so as soon as feasible after assuming my present portfolio in August last year. Africa is today a focal point of creative change and a major area of Canadian concern. At this time, I have been able to pay only a brief visit to West Africa but my stay in Ghana is naturally a highlight of this short tour of five important African states.

We, in Canada, are well aware that Ghana was the pioneer and crucible of decolonization, independence and unity in Africa, a political, economic and cultural process which is entering its culminating phase. We know what an effective contribution Ghana is now making in the achievement of closer ties among West African states. Your important role in the creation of the convention of Lome between the ACP (African-Caribbean-Pacific) and the EEC (European Economic Community) was underlined when the final and crucial meeting of ACP Ministers took place in Accra. It is not surprising that a very able Ghanaian has for a long and creative period been the Executive Secretary of the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

There are also strong bilateral reasons for my visit here. Canada has had diplomatic relations and, more important, close and friendly ties with Ghana for longer than with nearly all African states. Our bilateral relations have developed in many fields of mutual concern. We have consulted and cooperated closely on a variety of important foreign policy questions. Official and personal visits and exchanges between our two countries have been a warm and many-phased feature of our relations since before your independence in 1957.

Economic development has been a strong theme in our relationship. We have been very pleased to collaborate with you in a number of successful projects. In accordance with your wise and vigorous policy of self-reliance these cooperative ventures have, of course, been based on your national priorities and your desire to strengthen the economic sinews for self-sustaining growth. We are pleased that our own slight contribution to your strenuous economic development programme has had such creative results in a variety of fields from power to water to transport to education, food and communications. We have been much impressed by the achievements to date of Operation Feed Yourself and hope very much to find further ways for cooperation in the development of Ghana's abundant agricultural potential.

We know how crucially important to your economy the next few years will be in the furtherance of your economic goals as outlined in the five-year development plan guidelines. We