

## Canada-Ireland Relations

- Relations between Ireland and Canada are grounded largely in family and cultural ties and increasingly on investment and trade links. Almost four million Canadians, some 14 per cent of the population, claim some degree of Irish ancestry. By far the largest influx of Irish immigrants to Canada occurred between 1831 and 1855, the peak year being 1847 when poverty and famine forced hundreds of thousands of people to leave Ireland.
- The strong and friendly political relations between Canada and Ireland are founded on cultural affinities and common social values and principles, such as democracy. These relations are enhanced through frequent high-level contacts. Recent examples of Canadian government visitors to Ireland include the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for International Trade, the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Premier of Nova Scotia, the Premier of Newfoundland and the Premier of New Brunswick.
- President Mary McAleese made a state visit to Canada in October 1998 and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern made a private visit to Canada in March 1998. Between 1995 and 1997 former prime minister John Bruton visited Canada four times: three times as leader of Ireland and once, in December 1996, during Ireland's presidency of the European Union, to sign the Canada-European Union Action Plan.
- Parliamentary and provincial relations with Ireland are active. They were enhanced early in 1998 by the creation of the Canada-Ireland Inter-Parliamentary Group, which has become Canada's largest informal parliamentary association.
- Membership in the United Nations enables Canada and Ireland to co-operate on a number of issues of international concern. These include UN reform; peacekeeping; and humanitarian and human rights issues, such as landmines, child soldiers and good governance. As core members of the recent Canada-Norway multinational initiative on human security, Canada and Ireland will work jointly on humanitarian and human rights issues.
- The clearing of landmines constitutes another international issue on which Canada and Ireland share views and objectives. Ireland was a leader with Canada in building international support for the landmines treaty, as evidenced by the September 1997 Dublin Landmines Support Meeting in which Canada participated.