

GUATEMALA PRESIDENTIAL RUN-OFF, DECEMBER 8, 1985

CANADIAN OBSERVERS REPORT

In response to the invitation of the Foreign Minister of Guatemala, the Secretary of State for External Affairs appointed three observers to the second and final round of the Presidential Elections on December 8. As in the case of the first round on November 3 (which was held in conjunction with the congressional and municipal elections), our role was to provide an independent evaluation of the integrity of the electoral process in the context of generally recognized democratic principles.

We were again able to draw on support facilities to assist in full verification of the electoral process and we had complete access to the locations of our choosing. We were accompanied to Guatemala by Mr. Aharon Mayne, Deputy Director, Caribbean and Central America Relations Division, Department of External Affairs and in Guatemala were also assisted by the Canadian Ambassador to Guatemala, M. André Potvin, and members of his staff, including Mr. Fred Spoke (Counsellor), M. Pierre Giroux (First Secretary) and Mr. Neil Brockenshire (First Secretary).

Our group separated into several sections and visited polling stations in the capital and elsewhere in the country including Amatitlan, Antigua, Barberena, Chimaltenango, Chiquimula, Cuilapa, El Tejar, Escuintla, Fraijanes, Mixco, Oratorio, Palin, Puerto Barrios, San Jose Pinula, San Lucas Sacatepequez, Villa Canales, and Zacapa. We observed a total of approximately 280 polls which the Canadian team considers to be a representative number.

We were impressed by the openness and efficiency of the Guatemalan Supreme Electoral Tribunal and our opinion was endorsed on many occasions by party representatives and voters at the polls. We found the Tribunal members at the national level and their departmental (provincial) representatives to be most candid and knowledgeable in responding to our queries and cooperative in assisting us in fulfilling our mandate.