

However, in the light of the important interest shown by the Senate of Canada in our relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean, I thought it might be of value to pass on some of my general impressions. Frankly, I had had doubts before I left in September about how useful such a special mission could be. I had heard some say that there had been a deterioration of our relations with the area. I had heard some say that Canadians were unpopular in the Caribbean. I had heard others say that unless I could go down and promise more special favours from Canada there was little point in my going or I would only be creating unwarranted expectations. Let me say openly and emphatically from the start that my trip proved there was no substance to these views.

I found no evidence of any serious deterioration in our relations. It was a subject I asked about everywhere I went. The responses were overwhelmingly warm and not merely perfunctory. Personally I was extended what can only be considered great courtesy. In every country I was met on arrival by a senior minister, and frequently by the head of government. In every case the key figures of government took off a great deal of time to spend with me in both formal and informal meetings. Touching and sincere words of greeting were spoken to me, not in my personal capacity but as a representative of the Canadian Government and the people of Canada. The tone of every working session with governments was cordial, intimate and, I believe, frank. Certainly, the receptions given to me by governments demonstrated in very clear terms the great fund of goodwill which they have towards Canada.

Moreover, the press, newspapers and radio paid a great deal of attention to my visit, and I was particularly struck by the accurate nature of the reporting, the balanced nature of the views expressed in it, and the almost complete absence of any emotional bias against Canada.

I do not wish to imply that there are not problems between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean, that new problems will not grow, or that the governments in the area to whom I spoke overlooked them. On the contrary, I found concern about them and a mature appreciation of them. A large number of bilateral problems were raised with me of a political, commercial, aid, and other nature. It would be clearly inappropriate for Canada to try to meet every demand from the area, as it would be for us to expect the governments there could meet every one of our requests. I generally went on to indicate my view, however, that it was not the presence of inevitable problems which determined whether or not relations were good between any two countries but rather the willingness on both sides to recognize the validity of each other's views and the desire to resolve those problems quietly in a spirit of co-operation.

There was no question but that this feeling was reciprocated. Most leaders were prepared to admit that there had been a period earlier this year, in the spring and early summer, when a number of unfortunate circumstances had come together to create some problems. One of these was obviously the Sir George Williams University incident. Even at senior levels of government, I found that some misunderstandings still persisted, such as, for example, why ten Trinidadian students had been tried first, the fact that a larger number of Canadian students had faced charges, and the nature of the court procedures involved. I think I was able to explain successfully some of the facts and the necessarily limited role of the Canadian Government, and indicate the lack of any racial prejudice in Canadian policies, including our immigration policies. The governments welcomed and in some cases seemed relieved by the explanations I was able to give.