

Eastern Caribbean governments for different types of assistance, and particularly for expanded aid to the agricultural sector.

7. Other Policies

It is well-known that a number of general assistance policies of donor countries have been bitterly resented by recipients and have been repudiated by international organizations and commissions of enquiry. In the Canadian assistance programme to the Commonwealth Caribbean there are three main areas in which policy changes would bring about considerably improved relations and more effective development assistance.

a. Programme Assistance

Early in this inquiry, an eminent witness from the Caribbean area strongly recommended that Canada experiment with more "programme" assistance in its allocations to the Caribbean countries. In this context the term "programme" assistance means general, long-term financial support of the recipient government's development plan rather than aid specifically tied to designated sectors or projects. It was argued that this policy would result in a "technical improvement" of the aid effort by eliminating costly and time-consuming paperwork and supervision at both donor and recipient ends.

In addition to the technical considerations, the Committee believes that this suggestion has a very important political and psychological dimension. For reasons of self-respect and independence there is a strong desire on the part of West Indians to decide for themselves which projects should receive assistance and the manner in which it should be applied.

The Committee does not believe that this proposal is necessarily incompatible with the responsibility of the Canadian Government to ensure that assistance funds are efficiently utilized. The extension of programme assistance would be a major gesture of Canadian confidence in the planning and administrative capabilities of these countries. CIDA could offer supplementary advisory and administrative support which would almost certainly be gratefully accepted when required. The responsibility of the Canadian Government to its taxpayers could be well discharged by overall reviews toward the conclusion of the "programme" period (probably five years at a time).

The Committee urges that the Government discuss the possibility of extending some "programme" assistance with the Caribbean governments and respond generously to interest on their part. This is not advanced as a rigid global policy, but as a flexible assistance strategy of the kind proposed by the Pearson Commission:

Aid-givers should adapt the forms of aid to the needs and level of development of the receiving country and recognize the great value, in many cases, of more program aid.