

Washington. The office of Commissioner for the Eastern Caribbean in Montreal, which had been closed when Barbados established a diplomatic mission in Ottawa, was reactivated by the Council of Ministers of the West Indies Associated States.

A number of distinguished leaders from the region visited Canada during the year on formal or informal visits. Among these were the Honourable Hugh L. Shearer, Prime Minister of Jamaica; the Honourable W. Barrow, Prime Minister of Barbados; the Honourable L.F.S. Burnham, Prime Minister of Guyana; the Honourable E.M. Gairy, Premier of Grenada; the Honourable R.M. Cato, Chief Minister of St. Vincent; the Honourable R.L. Bradshaw, Premier of St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla; the Honourable V.C. Bird, Premier of Antigua, and the Honourable J.G.M. Compton, Premier of St. Lucia. A parliamentary crisis in February forced the postponement of state visits by the Governor-General of Canada to Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados.

One development in the area of considerable interest to Canada was the formation of the Caribbean Free Trade Area. The new trading arrangement will offer a larger internal market for producers in the region, and provide a basis for increased economic co-operation among the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Canada has indicated its willingness to participate in a Caribbean Development Bank, which is associated with the new trading arrangements, but at the end of 1968 discussion on the establishment of the Bank has still not concluded.

Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore

Canada's relations with Australia and New Zealand continued to strengthen in 1968, and co-operation calculated to promote political and economic stability among the non-Communist countries of the Pacific and Asia continued through the medium of the Commonwealth and Colombo Plan. Economic relations with Australia and New Zealand continued to develop, with benefit to the Canadian West Coast. The total volume of trade between Canada, on the one hand, and Australia and New Zealand, on the other, has continued to expand, as has tourism.

Some elements of the Canadian Forces were trained in jungle warfare in Australia. There were exchanges of technical and other topical information between Canada and Australia on a variety of subjects in 1968.

Australia and New Zealand continued to broaden their roles as leading nations of Southeast Asia. Both countries maintained their civil and military assistance to the Republic of Vietnam. In January, the Right Honourable John G. Gorton assumed the office of Prime Minister, following the death of Mr. Holt the previous year. Mr. Hasluck, the Australian External Affairs Minister, visited Canada during the latter part of 1968 and conferred with Prime Minister Trudeau and Mr. Sharp on a variety of matters of mutual interest, especially with relation to the Pacific.

Canada's principal relation with Malaysia has developed in aid and technical assistance, and its relation with Singapore in the latter field. Malaysia is deemed a country of concentration for Canadian aid. The gradual withdrawal of British military forces from Southeast Asia is imposing additional defence burdens on Malaysia and Singapore, and Canada has extended some military assistance and advice to the former country.