

I would like to turn to the question of rum. Access to Canada for Caribbean rum has long been a major issue and I am pleased to tell you that we have made some progress. We are now ready to formalize the protocol on labelling in the Canada/CARICOM trade and economic agreement. In addition, we will amend our legislation to permit the bottling of rum in Canada without blending. I am discussing your general concerns about the provincial liquor marketing systems with provincial premiers. I am prepared to approach them on your behalf with specific cases or proposals.

To strengthen your export capacities, we will be in touch with CARICOM about a pilot project to develop a sourcing directory. This will provide an inventory of Commonwealth Caribbean manufacturing and export capacity. This kind of data base has proved an effective tool in Canada for the development of export marketing initiatives.

The Commonwealth Caribbean already has trade offices in seven Canadian cities. I propose to make available to them a program which would enable Caribbean trade commissioners to receive assistance through the area offices of our Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. Furthermore, we will be discussing with CARICOM technical assistance in export marketing through trade and diplomatic seminars. To ensure the implementation of these proposals, we will appoint a CARIBCAN co-ordinator in Ottawa.

A specific CARIBCAN request was in the area of scholarships. I am pleased to tell you that Canada will be making available, through the Canadian International Development Agency, at least 50 new scholarships for the region — in addition to other scholarship programs.

Finally, my Minister of Finance will expedite the negotiation of double taxation treaties with Commonwealth Caribbean governments, where such treaties do not now exist.

This is a wide ranging set of measures. To me this is appropriate. CARIBCAN is not just about a duty-free agreement. CARIBCAN is about strengthening the broad and diverse relationship between Canada and the Commonwealth Caribbean.

Let me turn for a moment to our efforts in the security field. These programs play a key role and they forge an important bond among us in our pursuit of freedom and democracy. In this context, I should mention coast guard training, which has a special significance for island or coastal states. Over the past five years, 446 men and women from the Commonwealth Caribbean have received training in Cornwall, Ontario and Sydney, Nova Scotia, as well as in selected Caribbean locations. This training program will continue.

These measures demonstrate anew that Canada has a real and continuing interest in the vitality and well-being of the Commonwealth Caribbean.

It is important to continue to discuss frequently and informally, as we are today, the means by which our relationship and the prosperity of our peoples can be advanced.

However, before we do so, I should like to ask you to lift your glasses and join me in a toast to the strengthening of our special relations.

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