



CANADA

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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CANADA AND THE COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN

A Statement in the Senate by the Honourable
Paul Martin, December 8, 1970.

Honourable Senators, several weeks ago I indicated to the Senate that I would report on my special mission to the Commonwealth Caribbean, which I had earlier undertaken on behalf of the Government.

In September and October I made two separate trips to the area, calling on the governments of 13 countries. Between September 8 and September 22, I visited in turn Barbados, St. Vincent, Grenada, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Kitts-Nevis-Anguilla, Montserrat and Antigua. Between October 9 and October 18, I returned to the area to visit Guyana, Jamaica, British Honduras and the Bahamas. I had, of course, been in the area on numerous occasions in the past but I had not visited every one of the above countries. It is difficult to realize how richly varied, and different one from the other, each of these countries is until you have visited them concurrently, seen their topographies, talked to their people, heard about their aspirations and problems, savoured their way of life and, I might add, even swum at their glorious beaches.

The purpose of my visit was both narrow and broad. It was narrow in the sense that I was there basically to talk to the governments of each of the countries. The purpose of my trip was broad in the sense that I was under no restricted mandate in my talks with the governments. The Canadian Government viewed the mission as an opportunity to open a dialogue with the governments in the area and to listen to any points of view which they might wish to advance or subjects which they might wish to discuss. On the Canadian side, the two specific issues which we wished to bring up were the Canadian offer to extend the sugar-rebate payments for the calendar year 1970 and the Canadian offer of a regional agricultural development fund.

I have, of course, prepared a report for the Canadian Government on this special mission. It would obviously be inappropriate for me at this time to say what is in this report. My conversations with the governments in the Commonwealth Caribbean were extremely frank and necessarily of a confidential nature. My account of them to the Canadian Government, and conclusions I have reached, must similarly remain government matters at least until the Government has dealt with the report.