THE CARIBBEAN

Canada has had a long and fruitful link with the countries of the Caribbean, particularly with fellow members of the British Commonwealth.

The Bank of Nova Scotia built a branch in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1889, eight years before it built one in Toronto, and the Royal Bank of Canada, the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce and the Bank of Montreal also have branches in the Islands. Canada does a brisk trade with Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados, Honduras and Jamaica.

In per-capita terms, the Caribbean nations receive the greatest share of Canada's world-wide aid programs. They are concentrated in agriculture, human resources and energy and have totaled $360 million since 1965. In 1980 Canada gave priority status for overseas development aid to the Caribbean Commonwealth countries. In 1981 Prime Minister Trudeau announced that Canada would double its aid to the Caribbean for a total amount of $350 million by 1986. Between 1980-81 and 1982-83, it disbursed $130 million to the Caribbean Commonwealth countries and $50.9 million to other countries in Central America.

The Canadian International Development Agency has contributed to scholarships, personnel and building construction at the University of the West Indies, which is supported by fourteen island governments.

Other CIDA projects encourage beef production and offer technical assistance to local airlines.

Some projects are regional, some limited to single countries. Grants to Jamaica, for example, have been used for food, fertilizer, steel and zinc bridge components, agricultural machinery and hospital equipment.

Canada's International Development Research Centre helps researchers in developing countries find their own answers to problems of hunger, health and education.

It currently directs $8 million to projects in the Caribbean, ranging from establishment of a local oyster culture industry, development of disease resistance in plantains and bananas and treatment of dehydration in children, to development of computer information systems.