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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS - AFFAIRES EXTÉRIEURES
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CONFIDENTIALc) 1974 Policy Statement

By way of official response, a statement was read in the House of Commons by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, on April 10, 1974, which made the following points.

- It was by no means evident that association would be of greater mutual benefit compared with the friendly relations that already existed.
- Canada should not seek to alter its present boundaries.
- Canada should not, in fairness to all, pursue the question of association with the Turks and Caicos Islands.
- From the point of view of the Turks and Caicos Islanders, association with Canada would mean that they would be overwhelmed by visitors from the north and likely become strangers in their own land.
- The complications which annexation or formal association would create for the Islanders and for Canadians could reach into many areas such as tariffs, taxation, defence, immigration, and the relations of the islands and of Canada with the Caribbean area as a whole.
- A Canadian extension into the Caribbean of the sort envisaged would introduce a destabilizing element into the region, particularly if it favoured, financially, a small number of people over their neighbours, who numbered several millions.

The government's decision of 1974 was also influenced by the following considerations.

- Section 146 of the British North America Act (BNA) provided for the admission into Canada of all the colonies and territories of what was then British North America, but did not provide for the addition of territory in the Caribbean. It would have been necessary to amend the BNA Act before the Turks and Caicos could become part of Canada.