

I would first like to thank your government for the kind welcome we have received. I want you to know how very much I feel at home here in Barbados. This feeling is due perhaps in part to the fact that Barbados and my home province of Newfoundland are islands which alike share this particular longitude of the globe's surface. We are both island people washed by the Atlantic waves but at this time of year Newfoundlanders would dearly like to use some of your Caribbean waters. This desire is common to hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have to come down here for warm ocean waters.

We--you "Bajans", and we "Canucks" go back a long way together. The early settlement and political development of Barbados, advancing in time with that of Canada, favoured the development of economic and political ties between us. For many years, our relations consisted mainly of a remarkable flow of trade. I refer of course to the traditional carriage of rum, sugar, molasses-dried fish and spars; the days of "wood, wind and water" such was the early underpinning.

Time gave the "Triangular Trade" a romantic aura, particularly in the eyes of those of us who come from Atlantic Canada, and there is no doubt that these exchanges were the source of important benefits in the early decades of both our national lives. Indeed in 1885, Canada's Prime Minister demonstrated our national interest in the Caribbean by appointing a former governor of Barbados, Sir Francis Hincks, as advisor on Caribbean affairs. I like to think that this wisp of history played some part in creating the kind of environment in which we find ourselves today. I can say in all sincerity then, that I am here to affirm and to strengthen ties between old friends.

Mutual respect and long experience give us a rare ease of exchange. In the past few months alone, I have had contacts with Foreign Minister Forde, in Canada and at the United Nations, to compare notes on many topical issues. Prime Minister Adams visited Toronto in November, and found, I trust, his Barbados-born Canadians in good spirits. Only last September, Barbados hosted a seminar in which Barbadians and Canadians together offered their experience in the conduct of international relations to nations shortly to become independent in the eastern Caribbean.