

Western Hemisphere

Commonwealth Caribbean

Canada enjoys close relations with the countries of the Commonwealth Caribbean. Barbados, Guyana, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago maintain high commissions in Ottawa. There is also a Commissioner for the Eastern Caribbean in Montreal, who represents the West Indies Associated States. Canada has high commissions in Georgetown (Guyana), Kingston (Jamaica) and Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago).

These relations were strengthened during 1973 when Canada established its fourth high commission in the area at Bridgetown, Barbados, indicating its continuing interest in political developments in the Eastern Caribbean, and in trade, investment, tourism, immigration and aid. The High Commissioner in Bridgetown will be accredited to the Leeward and Windward Islands, formerly covered by the High Commission in Port of Spain.

The Commonwealth of the Bahamas, a British possession since 1629, became an independent state on July 10, under a government led by the Honourable Lyndon Pindling. The Solicitor-General and Mrs. Warren Allmand were the special representatives of Canada at the independence celebrations.

As the year ended, Grenada, the most southerly of the Windward Islands, moved towards independence.

Economic developments

The Commonwealth Caribbean attempted to come to grips with some of its problems by forming the Caribbean Community, including a common market (CARICOM), successor to the Caribbean Free Trade Association (CARIFTA). The agreement was signed on July 1, uniting the four major nations of the Commonwealth Caribbean — Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana and Barbados — with the smaller states that joined in 1974. It pledged its members to a common external tariff and other initiatives for mutual aid.

Canada continues to provide a large amount of aid to the Commonwealth Caribbean, which now receives the highest *per capita* disbursements in Canada's aid program. As in other years, Canada's program was concentrated in social and industrial infrastructure, with assistance by Canadian experts on agriculture, transportation, water-development, education and development-planning. In the fiscal year 1973-74, disbursements were expected to total \$15.4 million: \$8.2 million in grants and \$7.2 million in loans.

Negotiations for association with the EEC made little progress, and discussions concerning future Canadian trade and economic relations with the Commonwealth Caribbean were postponed. The Caribbean is specially concerned about continuing access to Britain for its agricultural products, particularly sugar and bananas. As an associate, the region would be able to draw on funds available to developing countries associated with the EEC.

In 1973, Canadian investment in the Commonwealth Caribbean was estimated at about \$500 million. Canadian exports increased from \$114 million in 1972 to \$130 million; imports decreased from \$77 million. Immigration to Canada from the region increased from 9,300 in 1972 to 16,400, making it the third-largest source of Canadian immigrants for the year.