



Peter Goldring, Member of Parliament for Edmonton East, was honoured to be personally invited to accompany Senator Don Meredith to unofficially but officially represent the Parliament of Canada at Jamaica's August 2013 Independence Day. While in Jamaica Mr. Goldring also conducted talks about Canada-Jamaica trade. This is his report.

Senator Meredith was aware of Mr. Goldring's extensive experience in the Caribbean, both in Opposition as critic for the Caribbean under leader Stockwell Day, and as well as a Government member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade. In addition to his committee and critic duties, Mr. Goldring has also served as an election monitor in Caribbean Rim countries, as well as taking part in several fact-finding missions in the area. The Senator is chair of the Canada-Caribbean Parliamentary committee, on which Mr. Goldring has served for many years at vari-

ous executive levels.

While in Jamaica Mr. Goldring attended numerous political events, including "The Grand Gala," and the "Jamaica's: Triumphant, Proud, and Free" extravaganza at the Youth in Agriculture Day at the National Stadium. He also participated in a Global Trade Exchange and Symposium, as well as Prime Minister's Day, on Jamaica's 51st Independence Day, August 6, 2013. Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, the leader of the governing People's National Party spoke on the challenges and triumphs Jamaica has faced throughout the years, reminding Jamaicans that they are now a more prosperous, productive, and peaceful country, a country that now has the freedom to showcase their talent and aptitudes; who now have the chance to enjoy the dignity and respect of their national identity.



Mr. Goldring met Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller, the leader of the governing People's National Party, who spoke on the challenges and triumphs Jamaica has faced throughout the years.

As Prime Minister Miller stated: "We are a people of courage and resilience, putting forward one foot after the other, confident that the Almighty is guiding our steps."



Presented by the Jamaica Agricultural Society, which was established in 1895, the Denbigh Agricultural Industrial and Food Show is the oldest show of its type in the English-speaking Caribbean. From its inception the Jamaica Agricultural Society has been dedicated to bringing together the island's farming community to help individual farmers become more efficient and productive and aid in marketing both domestically and internationally. Mr. Goldring attended the show to discuss opportunities for increased Canada-Jamaica trade, as a key aspect to the 2013 edition of the show was the Global Trade Exchange, a forum to bring Jamaican producers together with those from other countries interested in purchasing their products, and also to allow foreign producers the chance to form alliances with their Jamaican counterparts.

"Meetings like these are important," Mr. Goldring says, "to allow those of us from Canada attending to see what is going on politically and economically in the Caribbean. Historically we have close ties to Jamaica, both in terms of economy and immigration. The country is an important part of the Commonwealth that we share membership in. There are many things that our producers can learn from what is being done in Jamaica."

As well as meetings with Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller while attending the Denbigh Show, Mr. Goldring took the opportunity to meet with other Jamaican political leaders, including cabinet ministers, with the aim of fostering closer ties. He also met to discuss agricultural issues and economic opportunities in Jamaica, including the path of economic growth and national development, with the Honourable Roger Clarke,

Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Honourable Philip Paulwell, Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining, and the Honourable Arnold Nicholson, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade.

Jamaica is Canada's third-largest trade partner among the CARICOM countries (after Trinidad and Tobago and The Bahamas) and is an increasingly im-

portant trading partner, with Canadian imports from Jamaica in 2011 at \$274.1 million. There is however a trade imbalance between the two countries, as Jamaican imports from Canada in 2011 were only \$112.1 million. In his discussions with Jamaican officials Mr. Goldring discussed this imbalance and asked for their input on how the numbers could be brought closer together.

Mr. Goldring identified one distinctive area where Canada and Jamaica could work cooperatively. Jamaica has been pro-



While in Jamaica Mr. Goldring met with several individuals to discuss agricultural issues and economic opportunities in Jamaica, including the path of economic growth and national development.



moting a 'Grow Jamaican, Eat Jamaican' food policy, looking towards being self-sufficient, specifically in meat and potato products. Given that Jamaica has large tracts of developed and undeveloped land available, Mr. Goldring suggested partnering with a Canadian company such as McCain Foods to develop land for domestic use and also to greatly increase productivity.

Mr. Goldring specifically asked for an extensive tour and discussion with management of Kingston Port. Jamaica's port security for imports, and transshipment is of the highest of order with up-to-date container x-ray equipment, television monitoring and physically manned security. Much of the x-raying and other security equipment has been provided as aid assistance by the United States, China, and other countries, most likely having decided that it is better to assist in intervention of contraband or illegal immigrants in Jamaica than in Florida or Texas.

Another area of great interest to the Jamaican Government is energy imports, specifically Liquid Natural Gas (LNG). Should Canada develop fossil fuel export port facilities, fed by the proposed reversal of the East-West gas/oil line, Eastern Canada could be exporting gas and oil to the Caribbean, rebalancing present trade deficits. Jamaica also has some hydroelectric generating facili-

ties and wishes to increase its capacity without harming tourist waterfall attractions.

An example of a manufacturing opportunity for Canada which would benefit Jamaica as well is the Light Emitting Diode (LED); a self-contained street lighting initiative by the Jamaican Government with units made in Canada. Jamaica alone will ultimately require tens of thousands. This fairly large-scale manufacturing provides an opportunity for both countries. The Canadian manufacturers could establish a Jamaican sub-assembly company to assemble components with local labour at dramatically less cost than importing the entire unit preassembled. In partnership with the Jamaican company they could export throughout the region at very competitive rates. Canada benefits from having the head office, the high-tech, the design and engineering here. Jamaica benefits from the jobs and high-tech work experience which could lead to other tech enterprises, as well, having a well-designed, well-manufactured item of high regional need for export revenue.

These are only examples of possible Canada-Jamaica and regional engagement. Mr. Goldring observed that even though the Denbigh Fair predominantly agriculture-focused, including bio-genetics, it did in-



Mr. Goldring asked for and had arranged by Mr. Rick McElrea a full, in-depth briefing and visit of Kingston's transshipment container port and domestic port.

clude many high-tech imports from Asia and the United States. Canadian business was distinctively under represented. Both Senator Meredith and Mr. Goldring agreed that perhaps there should be a Canada trade mission organized to Jamaica.

The trade promotion should comprise not just those already doing business in Jamaica but those that might want a presence in the Caribbean Rim region - a marketplace of 100 million people.

There are companies that produce world-class products that could be assembled or processed in Jamaica which could be exported through the Caribbean with the Canadian -Jamaican partnership label of quality. There should be companies that want to part-

ner with Jamaican companies so that both gain profit and move forward together for mutual prosperity.

Accompanying Mr. Goldring on all government and business meetings was Rick McElrea, Canada's Senior Trade Commissioner in Jamaica. This proved to be very valuable as it denoted the interest of the High Commission on the visit but also was great to have Canada's perspective annunciated. Mr. McElrea must be commended for his excellent and sensitive role to all parties engaged in this visit and all consultations.

UPDATE: The Canadian Trade Commissioner Service in Kingston, Jamaica, assists Canadian firms looking for market opportunities not only in Jamaica but also in the Bahamas, Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands.

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This brochure series is intended to highlight special issues that Member of Parliament, Peter Goldring, has been involved in. If you wish to comment, please take a moment to fill out the survey below, write or call to the address above.

Your Opinion Matters...

Q1: Do you think Canada should be making efforts to increase trade with Jamaica and other Caribbean countries?

Yes

No

Q2: Do you think Canada should organize a special trade mission for Canadian companies interested in investing in Jamaica?

Yes

No

Comments: _____

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