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politics

havana, jan 28, reuter -- eight canadian members of the house of commons arrived here tonight on a canadian air force convair 580 on the last leg of a fact-finding tour to five nations of central america and the caribbean.

maurice dupras (liberal), the head of the delegation, said that the motive for the visit stems from the role cuba plays in the caribbaean basin, from its emergence as a political power and from canada's economic and political ties with the island.

the eight members of parliamente belong to the house of commons subcommittee on latin american and caribgbbean affairs of the standing committee of external affairs and national defense.

the eight mp's are: maurice dupras (lib), stanley hudescki (lib), william robinson (lib), jim schoder (lib), flora macdonald (cons), walter mclean (cons), jack murta (cons) and joseph ogle (ndp).

the mp's were met at the airport by the canadian ambassador in cuba, james bartlemann and by the cuban deputy minister of external relations, ricardo alarcon.

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alarcon told reuter that +the parliamentarians are very welcome because we believe that the trend is in favour of strengthening trade and other relations between cuba and canada.+

on friday the mp's will visit a cuban secondary school, lunch with mr. alarcon, visit a pediatric hospital and meet with cuba's leading foreign trade and foreign policy expert, vice-president carlos rafael rodriguez. in the evening they will attend a dinner in their honour sponsored by the chairman of cuba's parliament, its national assembly of people's power.

prior to visiting cuba the mp's visited trinidad-tobago, haiti, costa rica, nicaragua and nicaragua.. they plan to fly to canada sunday morning.

= reuter/lem