The group of wide margin states (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, U.K., Ireland, India, Argentina, USA) on the other hand, remained united in insisting, consistent with the established rule in the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf and the "natural prolongation" principle established in the 1969 North Sea Continental Shelf Case, that states have the right to exploit the shelf out to the edge of the margin even where it extends beyond 200 miles. As well, the wide margin states supported a draft provision proposed by Ireland which defined the continental margin in precise fashion by reference to the thickness of sedimentary rock. The wide margin states or "margineers" as they are known, reiterated their willingness to agree to a formula for the contribution of payments to the international community derived from revenues earned from resource exploitation on the continental shelf beyond 200 miles, provided that the Irish formula for defining the margin was accepted by the Conference. As a result of the continuing opposition of the LL/GD group of states to coastal state sovereign rights to the edge of the margin, the ICNT does not contain the Irish formula in the definition of the continental shelf in Article 76. However, the position of the margineers is protected in Article 76 of the ICNT (old RSNT Article 64) which recognizes the continental shelf as extending to the outer edge of the margin. Furthermore, a revised revenue sharing formula along lines which would be largely acceptable to the wide margin states — from 1% up to a maximum of 5% of the well-head value — has been included in Article 82 of the ICNT. Canadian acceptance of a scheme for payments or contributions is conditional on an acceptable definition of the outer edge of the margin and the retention of coastal state sovereignty over shelf resources.

2. Legal Status of the Exclusive Economic Zone

One of the most difficult issues at the Conference is the problem of defining the legal status of the exclusive economic zone. On the one hand, the major maritime states wanted the zone legally defined as high seas in order to prevent erosion of traditional high seas freedoms of navigation and overflight. On the other hand, many coastal states considered that this zone was a zone of national jurisdiction and ipso facto distinguishable in law from the high seas. Canada together with several other members of the coastal state group took the position at the Fourth and Fifth Sessions that the solution to this impasse was to consider the zone sui generis, neither high seas nor territorial sea but partaking of some of the attributes of both; to a large extent, the new provisions in Part V of the ICNT reflect this conceptual approach. They result from intensive informal negotiations (which also concerned marine scientific research in the economic zone and exceptions from the settlement of disputes procedures, see below) and their effect is to avoid the problem of a specific definition in law of the exclusive economic zone and instead to provide a satisfactory balance between the rights of coastal states within the zone and the