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LAW OF THE SEA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, made the following statement in the House of Commons today:

The House will recall that on April 5, 1969 the Minister of Fisheries announced the Government's intention to draw further straight baselines delimiting Canada's territorial sea and exclusive fishing zones along the east coast of Nova Scotia and the west coast of Vancouver Island and the Queen Charlotte Islands. I am pleased to announce that the Governor-in-Council has now issued a list of geographical coordinates of points from which these baselines are to be drawn.

This new series of coordinates will be effective upon their publication in the Canada Gazette on June 11, under the authority of the 1964 Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act. That legislation created, beyond Canada's previously existing three-mile territorial sea, a further nine-mile zone within which Canada has exclusive jurisdiction over fisheries. At the same time the 1964 legislation empowered the Government to establish along the coasts of Canada a system of straight baselines which, in the areas where they were established, would replace the sinuosities of the coast as the starting point for measuring the breadth of Canada's territorial sea and fishing zones. Such baselines may be drawn from headland to headland, from island to island and across the mouth of bays. Sea areas landward of the straight baselines have the status of internal waters of Canada.

A first series of baselines was established by the Government in November 1967 for the coast of Labrador and the southern and eastern coasts of Newfoundland.