



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 70/26

PROMULGATION OF FISHERIES CLOSING-LINES

A Statement Tabled in the House of Commons by the Honourable Jack Davis, Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, December 18, 1970.

With the adoption of the amendments to the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act earlier this year, Parliament laid the foundation for the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing-zones comprising certain areas of the sea adjacent to the coast of Canada. As explained to the House on April 17, these provisions were enabling only and the creation of the new zones required executive action by way of an Order-in-Council. The required action is now being taken to draw "fisheries closing-lines" across the entrances to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy, Queen Charlotte Sound and Dixon Entrance-Hecate Strait. A Government notice to this effect will be published in the *Canada Gazette* on December 26. The fisheries closing-lines will then be brought into force immediately upon the expiration of the mandatory 60-day waiting period imposed by the amended Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act.

There are special geographic and legal factors pertaining to the areas affected by the Government's action, and Canada has historic and other claims to these areas. The establishment of exclusive fishing-zones in the bodies of water under reference, as has been made clear on previous occasions, can in no way be construed as an abandonment of those claims by Canada. It is also well known that the new fishing-zones we are creating are of vital importance to Canadian fishing interests. The Gulf of St. Lawrence alone has had landings of up to 550 million pounds valued at some \$31 million, the Bay of Fundy's landings of 300 million pounds are worth \$12 million, while the Pacific coast area contained within Dixon Entrance and Queen Charlotte Sound has landings of 180 million pounds, worth \$37 million a year.

These are, of course, important considerations, but the Government objectives in introducing this imaginative concept of fisheries closing-lines go beyond the securing of immediate economic benefits, as was outlined by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in his statement to the House of April 17. On that occasion, he pointed out that:

"Now that the world is becoming aware that living resources are not infinitely renewable and that they can, indeed, be exhausted or depleted by over-