

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, today signed an Agreement between Canada and Britain respecting the future conduct of British fishing practices in Canada's territorial sea and fishing zones.

The Agreement was negotiated at meetings in Ottawa in April and June last year. The Canadian delegation to the negotiations was headed by Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs and the British delegation by Mr. J. Graham, Fisheries Secretary from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. A list of the delegates is annexed hereto.

The Agreement, which comes into force at once, is included in an exchange of diplomatic Notes signed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the British High Commissioner, His Excellency Sir Peter Hayman. It reflects the legislative action of the Government of Canada in June 1970 to extend the breadth of Canada's territorial sea to 12 miles and to enable the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing zones in certain special bodies of water off Canada's east and west coasts. These special bodies of water, including the Gulf of St. Lawrence, were enclosed by fisheries closing lines which came into force on March 10, 1971. Under the Agreement, British vessels will discontinue their fishing operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence at the end of this year and in the outer nine miles of Canada's territorial sea at the end of 1977. Arrangements are also provided for in the Agreement to ensure that during these periods the possibility of conflicts between British fishermen and Canadian inshore fishermen will be avoided.

The Agreement, which takes into account the concerns of each side, was concluded in a spirit of cooperation and cordiality. It recognizes the jurisdiction of Canada to carry forward its efforts to protect and conserve the fisheries in these waters.