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Fisheries and Oceans: The Canadian Experience

Canadian scientists working in ocean research are engaged in frontier exploration and not merely in a metaphorical sense. For Canada, the ocean is the frontier — or more accurately, three frontiers: the Atlantic (including the Gulf of St. Lawrence), the Pacific and the Arctic — and the excitement and sense of arrival is no different than it was for the Prairies in the late 1800s and the Yukon at the turn of this century.

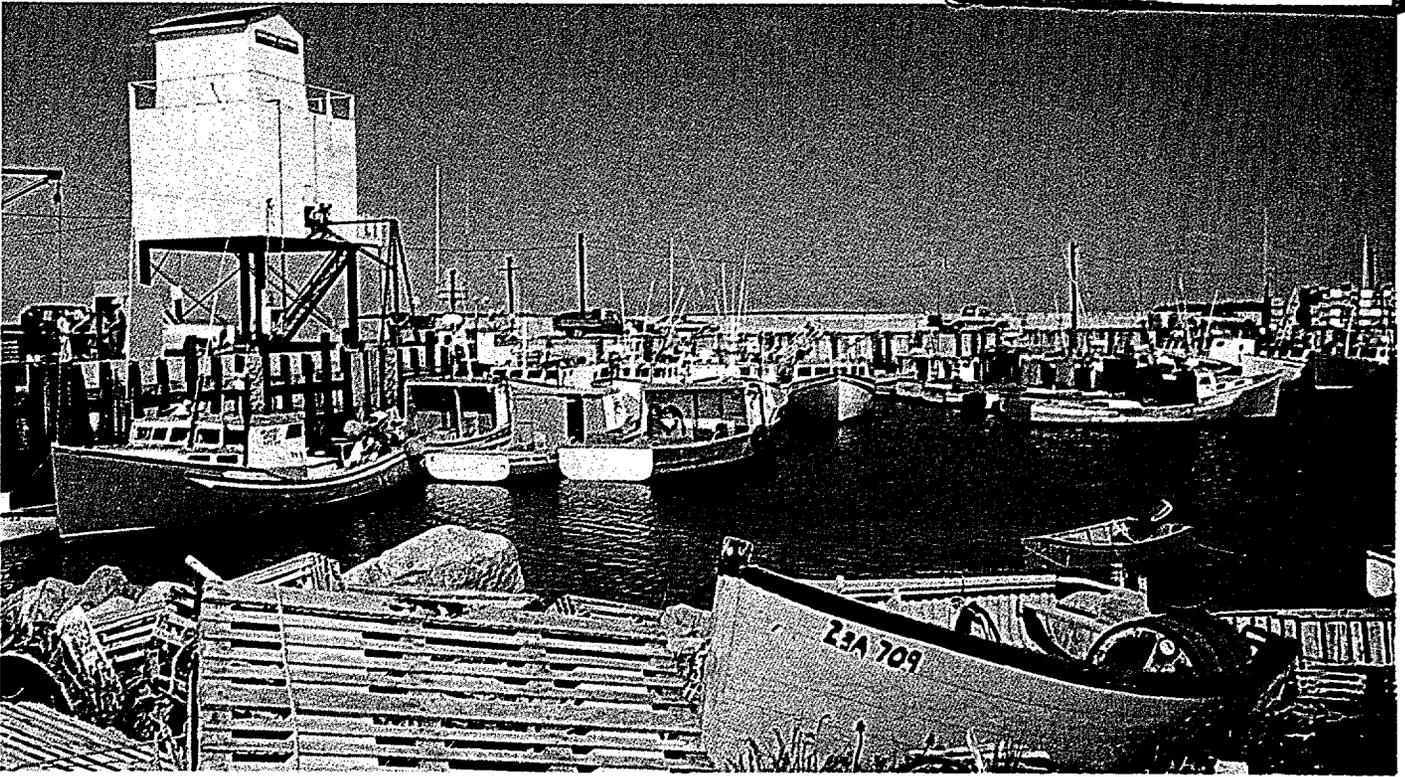
In the 1970s, world energy hunger and the depletion of oil reserves under the land pushed exploration seaward, and some of the most promising oil and gas finds were in Canadian areas of the Arctic and the Atlantic. Oil reserves in the

Beaufort Sea, for instance, have been estimated at between 9 and 32 billion barrels, and discoveries off Newfoundland, including the giant Hibernia field, are believed to be large enough to supply 250 000 barrels a day over 25 years, starting in 1990. Canadian natural gas resources have been discovered recently in bonanza proportions near the north shore of Melville Island in the western Arctic.

But fossil fuels are only one resource in the seas off Canada's coasts. The nation also has jurisdiction over massive stocks of fish, brought under Canadian control with the extension of fishing limits in 1977 from 12 to 200 nautical miles.

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