



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA EXTENDS ITS FISHING-ZONES

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, in the House of Commons, Ottawa, November 19, 1976.

I stated in the House on November 5, 1976, that I would be reporting on my recent talks in Paris regarding Canada-France fisheries questions. I propose to do that today, but first I think it would be useful to review in a more general way developments relating to the implementation of our 200-mile fisheries zones.

The decision to extend our fisheries zones on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts was taken in the light of the urgent need to halt the rapid depletion of our fish stocks and arrest the decline of our inshore-fisheries industry, a situation that had reached crisis proportions. The urgent nature of this problem required us to take action before conclusion of the Law of the Sea Conference, where fisheries questions are among the many matters being discussed. Nevertheless, the new extended jurisdiction is in conformity with the consensus emerging at the Law of the Sea Conference. The principle is now firmly embodied in the Revised Single Negotiating Text that a coastal state has the sovereign right to manage the living resources of the seas in a 200-mile zone adjacent to its shoreline. The main features of the new Canadian regime are based on the relevant provisions of the RSNT.

A number of countries have enacted, or are soon to enact, 200-mile zones, including Mexico, Norway, Denmark, France, Britain, and the U.S.A. Most recently, the foreign ministers of The Nine agreed that a European Economic Community 200-mile fisheries zone should be in place as of January 1, 1977. Altogether, there are now some 50 states that have already established or will soon establish extended fisheries zones beyond 12 miles and, in many cases, as far as 200 miles.

Thus, from the standpoint of both emerging treaty law and cumulative state practice, there is a sound basis in international law for the action Canada has taken to protect the living resources in waters contiguous to its shoreline.

Canada has not only acted in accordance with emerging international law but has also made every effort to take into account the interests of those states directly affected by our extended jurisdiction.
