

My responsibilities as Trade Minister often take me to Europe, to pursue more open markets for Canadian goods ... especially through the Multilateral Trade Negotiations ... and to help develop new customers for Canadian goods ... for example the major trade mission to the Soviet Union I will lead next week. But another very important responsibility that has taken me to Europe a number of times over the past year and a half is to deliver Canada's message against overfishing outside 200 miles, a message that appears to be receiving greater recognition there.

Last October, I addressed the overfishing issue at the Fisheries Council of Canada meeting in Fredericton. Much has happened since then and some important progress has been made. However, we continue to face a serious problem. Last October, we were in the early stages of a dialogue with the EC on overfishing outside 200 miles. Relatively little had changed since the reversal of the EC's policy toward NAFO which occurred in 1986, following the accession to the EC of Spain and Portugal.

In 1988, the EC objected to virtually all quotas set by NAFO for 1989 and established its own quotas totalling almost 160,000 t, including 84,000 t of northern cod. In the spring of 1989, the EC reduced its unilateral quota for northern cod from 84,000 t to 58,400 t. a figure that considerably exceeded its catches.

In his opening statement at the September 1989 NAFO meeting in Brussels, EC Fisheries Commissioner Manuel Marin indicated that the EC would be guided by concerns for conservation and responsible resource management. The EC representative at the 1989 NAFO session did not engage in the confrontational rhetoric of earlier years. As well, the EC abstained on most votes on quotas, rather than voting against as it had since 1986. That left open the question of whether the EC would accept NAFO's decisions or set its own unilateral quotas for 1990.

In St. John's in October 1989, I announced that the Prime Minister had appointed Alan Beesley as Canada's Ambassador for Marine Conservation. Ambassador Beesley was given the mandate to marshal the resources of the Government of Canada toward ending overfishing outside 200 miles, a mandate he has carried forward with great ability. At the same time, the Government of Canada announced three initiatives toward ending overfishing outside 200 miles, building on our role in NAFO and the policies adopted against overfishing at the First Ministers' Conference in November 1987.