

## Control of Canada's new fishing zone going smoothly

"A very smooth operation and remarkably effective" is how Fisheries Minister Roméo LeBlanc recently summed up the first eight months of Canada's management of the 200-mile offshore fishing zone.

The extended zone, which came into effect on January 1, 1977, has given Canada an area of more than 600,000 square miles of high seas to patrol and manage.

"...We have the know-how and the equipment to efficiently manage this vast new area," said Mr. LeBlanc. "This isn't a miracle overnight cure for the fisheries, but a long-term plan to build up depleted stocks and develop a new era of prosperity for Canadian fishermen."

"As far as the east coast stocks are concerned, we are applying strict conservation measures to make sure we do not replace foreign overfishing with Canadian overfishing. We see 1977 as the bottom of the trough for the groundfish catch. With good management it should be possible within ten years to restore groundfish stocks to their full potential with an annual yield of about 1.6 million metric tons, which is more than double the 1977 TAC (total allowable catch)."

Mr. LeBlanc said that foreign fishing fleets had been virtually eliminated from a number of fisheries from which they formerly harvested a substantial portion of the allowable catch. Examples are cod, haddock, pollock and herring on the Scotian shelf, American plaice and yellow-tail flounder on the Grand Bank, and flounders generally on the Scotian shelf. There have also been substantial reductions in the foreign allocations of cod, redfish and flatfish off Newfoundland-Labrador and an associated increase in the Canadian shares for these species.

Foreign fleets off Canada's east coast this year will harvest the bulk of the allowable catches of capelin, roundnose grenadier, silver hake, argentinies and squid, species for which so far it has been uneconomical for Canadians to develop a major fishery. By 1978, the foreign fleets will be largely out of the redfish fishery within the Canadian zone and will have smaller allocations of cod and flounder.

"Within the next five years, foreign fishing within our zone will likely be restricted to such species as capelin, grenadiers, argentinies and silver hake, and perhaps some portion of the northern winter

cod fishery off northeast Newfoundland-Labrador," the Minister added. "Even for these species and stocks, the foreign share will be significantly decreased as the Canadian capacity to harvest and utilize these species is increased."

### Research expansion

To manage the fish stocks within the 200-mile zone, the Fisheries and Marine Service has taken steps to substantially bolster its research capability. During 1977, 102 man-years will be added to the marine fisheries research staff, and an additional \$4 to \$6 million will be spent on fisheries research. This represents a doubling of the Service's resource assessment activities in the offshore area. Plans are also in hand for the chartering and construction of new research vessels.

As a condition of licensing, foreign fishing vessels must supply Canadian authorities with information on catch and fishing effort. Canada is also placing observers on some foreign fishing vessels to collect biological data and to obtain more

### Penalties

About 1,000 at-sea and in-port inspections of foreign vessels will take place in 1977. Maximum fines on a single charge are \$25,000; other possible penalties are loss of catch, vessel, and fishing licence. Jail sentences can go up to two years. Given sufficient justification, Canada could also take away the licences of all other vessels from the offender's country.

Up to August 31, 1977, there have been nine arrests that resulted in court-imposed fines, and a number of warnings and administrative actions such as licence cancellations and refusals. On several occasions, the surveillance authorities have caught vessels during their first day of attempted fishing in an illegal area. Besides policing the Canadian zone, Canada retains participation in the mutual enforcement scheme of ICNAF (the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries); this allows Canadian inspectors to board vessels outside the 200-mile zone subject to ICNAF regulations.

detailed information on by-catches and discards. A number of co-operative research-survey experiments involving the use of foreign research vessels have also been initiated. Two of these involve mesh-selection experiments with the U.S.S.R. and Cuban research vessels on the Scotian shelf, which should provide better information on the effects of mesh size on by-catch of other species in the directed silver hake fishery.

Playing a major role in the management of the 200-mile zone is the computer system known as FLASH (Foreign Fishing Vessels Licensing and Surveillance Hierarchical Information System), which keeps track of foreign vessels operating within the zone and provides up-to-the-minute information on fish catches, quotas, etc.

The computer helps keep track of a dwindling foreign fleet. In 1975, there were 1,500 or more foreign vessels fishing off Canada's coasts. In 1977, there have been fewer than 500 fishing vessels, many staying for shorter periods. Next year there will be fewer again.

FLASH, developed by the Fisheries and Marine Service, has generated considerable international interest. Visitors from Iceland, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United States have seen it at work and the latter two countries have expressed strong interest in developing a similar system for their own extension of fisheries jurisdiction.

### Technical exchange with Brazil

Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan recently concluded discussions with visiting Minister of Agriculture for Brazil, Alysso Paulinelli.

Mr. Paulinelli, accompanied by senior officials from both federal and state departments of agriculture, was in Canada at the invitation of Mr. Whelan who had paid an official visit to Brazil last year.

Discussions concerned mainly continuing collaboration between the Brazil and Canada Departments of Agriculture on matters of mutual interest, and in particular technical co-operation.

"Brazil and Canada have enjoyed a close relationship as trading partners in the past," Mr. Whelan said, "and I want to see this pattern grow and deepen. The agreement we reached concerning agricultural technical exchange is one of considerable importance in the development of relations between our two countries."