

I have attempted to make it clear why we think that a decision in regard to both articles must be made at the same time under one motion. Now let me explain why we advocate a 12-mile contiguous zone for fishing as well as for the other subjects already included in the draft of Article 66.

First is the fact that in Canada we have had a contiguous zone for fishing of 12 miles ever since 1911. It has applied only to our own fishermen because we have never at any time taken unilateral action which would affect fishermen from other nations. We ask for a 12-mile contiguous zone with the knowledge from our own experience that it will work satisfactorily as long as it becomes part of an international code.

Every nation must of necessity look first to the welfare of its own people. I wish to leave no doubt that the vital interests of hundreds of fishing communities along our east and west coasts and the livelihood of hundreds of thousands of hard-working Canadians are directly affected by, and in a large number of cases entirely dependent upon, fishing.

There is a demand on the part of our fishermen, and the communities in which they live, that they be protected from the unrestricted activity of the new and very large fishing trawlers within an area along the coast which is the natural source of their livelihood. This demand has increased greatly with the advent of the modern mechanized trawlers which are really floating canning factories. Operating in large numbers - and their numbers are increasing all the time - they will scoop up a large part of the living resources on which we have spent a great deal to conserve and protect.

I do not think our views have been better expressed than in the statement presented by Portugal for consideration at The Hague Conference in 1930. It shows that the problem is the same for most coastal states, particularly those with rugged coastlines. Since Portugal has had such a long and friendly association with Canada in its fishing activities, it is not without significance that their statement should so accurately describe our own situation in these words:

"As lands bordering on the coast are often entirely unproductive or yield very little, their inhabitants would starve or would be compelled to emigrate if they could not find the means of subsistence in fishing, which generally gives them a satisfactory return for their labour. These fisheries, however, might soon disappear altogether if the enormously destructive modern fishing appliances were used in these waters without restriction, or if fishermen coming from other parts deprived the coastal population of resources essential for their food supply and their very existence.