

I do not think that I can overstress to an audience of Maritimers the importance of the sea, its protection and the orderly management of its bounty. The early settlements in this region and your livelihood over the centuries have been bound up with it and the water-bourne commerce of Canada entering the outward bound through your ports. The outcome of the Caracas Conference will have a particular and direct bearing on the future development of the Maritimes.

The Conference will be drafting texts of international conventions in much the same way that many past conferences have done. The great difference will be the codification of concepts for the management, regulation and establishment of a joint world ownership of a vast part of the globe. This is something very new and very important in the growing interrelationships of countries and continents. If the Conference succeeds in its work, the world will have taken an enormous step in the direction of working out collectively the responsible global exploitation, use and conservation of world resources.

To accomplish its work, the Conference, which will meet throughout the summer and probably again in a further session, will address itself to several broad areas of common concern:

- the breadth of the territorial sea;
- the further area of national jurisdiction - the so-called economic zone or patrimonial sea;
- the water and seabed area beyond the limits of national jurisdiction and concept of "the common heritage of mankind";
- navigation in the different zones and areas of the sea;
- fisheries and their conservation; and finally
- the protection from pollution of the marine environment.

Not only the Maritimes, but all Canada has a strong and direct interest in the outcome of the Conference in each of these areas.

The Territorial Sea

For centuries, the distance of a cannon shot, the classical three miles, was the accepted limit of the territorial sea. By 1958, however, it had come to be recognized that, with the advance in technology of all sorts, including the speed of ships, modern communications, the numbers of ships entering and leaving busy ports, the growing efficiency of distant fishing operations -- and perhaps also, the longer range of cannons -- had led many governments to the conclusion that some adjustment was necessary. The 12-mile concept had gained considerable currency, or at least, a continuous territorial sea and fisheries protection zone beyond three miles out to twelve miles. Canada, with its important traditional fishing interests put forward such a compromise at the 1960 conference. The 1958 conference, that had achieved an important success on the continental shelf question, had failed to reconcile the different points of view on the limits of full sovereignty.