



Statements and Speeches

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CANADA-U.S. FISHERIES RELATIONS

A Statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Don Jamieson, House of Commons, June 2, 1978.

In the past few weeks, the Government has encountered several difficulties with respect to the implementation of the 1978 Canada-U.S. interim fisheries agreement on both the Pacific and Atlantic Coasts. On the Pacific Coast, the problem relates to the terms under which Canadian fishermen would be allowed access to waters off Washington State to troll for salmon. On the Atlantic Coast, the problems relate to unrestricted U.S. scallop and pollock fisheries in the Gulf of Maine/George's Bank area and what we view as excessive allowable U.S. catch-levels for cod and haddock.

These difficulties were discussed at a meeting between Canada and U.S. officials in Washington on April 28 and at meetings between the Canadian and U.S. Special Negotiators for Maritime Boundaries in Ottawa on May 11 and 12 and again in Washington on May 26. At the May 26 meeting and during subsequent conversations, it has become clear that these problems cannot be resolved in a way that would protect Canadian interests. My colleagues and I have come to the reluctant conclusion that the 1978 interim reciprocal fishery agreement cannot be implemented by the U.S. in a manner compatible with preserving and protecting our fisheries interests. Accordingly, I wish to announce that the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs has called in the U.S. Ambassador and given him a diplomatic note stating that the Government of Canada is not prepared at this time to continue provisional implementation of the agreement. The note states that, consequently, U.S. fishing vessels will not be permitted to continue fishing operations in Canadian fisheries waters after 12 noon June 4. This means, of course, that the U.S. will take corresponding action against Canadian fishing vessels in U.S. waters.

The Government has taken this action with great reluctance, but under the circumstances we believe it is the most appropriate means of maintaining a balance between the fishing interests of the two countries. I am confident that we can work out, on a co-operative basis, enforcement arrangements in the boundary regions that will avoid confrontation.

The problems we have experienced with the interim agreement demonstrate clearly the need for an early settlement of maritime boundaries and for a long-term agreement on reciprocal fishing. My colleagues and I continue to believe that a comprehensive maritime-boundaries resources agreement, arrived at by negotiation, is the preferred means of providing for the effective and mutually-beneficial management of maritime resources in Canada-U.S. boundary areas.

The Government recognizes that, in negotiating an overall agreement of this kind, difficult problems remained for both sides in reconciling the various regional and in-
