

Under the Statute of the International Court of Justice, a country that is not represented on the Court may nominate one of its nationals to sit as judge ad hoc in any case involving that country. The Government of Canada intends to nominate Maxwell Cohen, Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Law, McGill University, and formerly Canadian Chairman of the International Joint Commission, to be judge ad hoc in the Gulf of Maine case.

The Legal Adviser of the Department of External Affairs, Léonard H. Legault, has been appointed Agent for Canada in the case and will be responsible for the conduct of the proceedings on behalf of Canada.

The Gulf of Maine area in dispute includes the valuable fishing grounds of Georges Bank. The single maritime boundary to be established will delimit both the fishing zone and the continental shelf appertaining to each country in this area.

The treaty referring the boundary dispute to binding third-party settlement was originally signed in Washington on March 29, 1979 and was part of a "package" together with the East Coast Fishery Resource Agreement. The latter agreement, which provided for joint management and reciprocal access by both countries in respect of the Georges Bank fisheries, was withdrawn from the U.S. Senate by President Reagan on March 6, 1981, after failing to obtain the Senate's advice and consent over a period of two years. Owing to this and other developments, the text of the maritime boundary settlement treaty entering into force today differs slightly from the original treaty signed on March 29, 1979.