

of the international meetings establishing agreements on new telecommunications facilities. The Commonwealth telecommunications network forms a major link among Commonwealth nations, and Canada's continuing interest in the maintenance and development of this system, involving both cable and satellite networks, was underlined by the Canadian Government's acting as host to the Commonwealth Telecommunications Conference in Ottawa in November 1972.

## **International Law**

Through its Bureau of Legal Affairs, the Department provides a general advisory service to the Government on issues of international law, including advice on treaties to which Canada is a party. The Bureau also acts as the operational arm of the Government in the development and maintenance of international law. The following matters were highlighted in the course of a year of intense activity in a wide range of subjects.

### **Law of the Sea**

During 1972, Canada continued its active participation in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Seabed and Ocean Floor Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction, which met in New York in February and March, and in Geneva in July and August. During these sessions, Canada tabled working papers on fisheries management principles, marine scientific research and the preservation of the marine environment, in addition to the working paper it had previously tabled on the proposed régime for the seabed beyond national jurisdiction. These documents represent a major contribution to preparations for the Law of the Sea Conference to be held in New York in November and December, 1973 and in Santiago, Chile, in April and May, 1974. The Conference will deal with a variety of issues comprising the establishment of an equitable régime (including international machinery) for the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction; a precise definition of this area of the seabed;

the breadth of the territorial sea and the question of international straits; fishing and conservation of the living resources of the high seas, including the preferential rights of coastal states; the preservation of the marine environment and the prevention of marine pollution; and marine scientific research.

The Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act which received royal assent in 1970 was proclaimed in force on August 12, 1972, and appropriate regulations were promulgated under the statute. The act sets forth Canada's view of the special status of Arctic waters and ice and the special rights and responsibilities of Arctic coastal states, with particular respect to the preservation of the Arctic environment. It constitutes the assertion of a limited form of jurisdiction required to ensure the preservation of the Arctic environment, having regard to the unique nature and the particular vulnerability of this environment, the disastrous consequences which could flow from its pollution or degradation, and the especially severe risks involved in the navigation of Arctic waters.

At the bilateral level, Canada carried out intensive negotiations with Denmark and France, which it is believed will soon result in treaties concerning the delimitation of the continental shelf between Canada and those countries. In the area of fisheries, Canada concluded phasing-out agreements with Portugal, Denmark, Britain, France and Spain. These agreements, added to the two signed with Norway in 1971, concerning fishing and sealing operations, brought to an end the series of negotiations which have been held over the past ten years with the European states whose fleets have traditionally fished in the waters now enclosed by Canada's territorial sea and fishing zones, and provide for the virtual elimination of their fisheries in these zones by 1978. The agreement signed in 1970 between Canada and the United States on reciprocal fishing privileges in certain areas off their coast was extended unchanged for a further year. Further developments in the extension of Canadian fisheries jurisdiction await the results of the Law of the Sea Conference in 1974, but these are likely to include provisions for extending coastal state jurisdiction over a broad area beyond the 12-mile limit.