



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

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REPORT ON LAW OF SEA CONFERENCE

Statement by Mr. Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, in the House of Commons, July 25, 1958

I would like to take advantage of this debate on external affairs to report to the House of Canada's participation in a very important international gathering which took place some three or four months ago...the International Conference on the Law of the Sea held at the European headquarters of the United Nations in Geneva between February 24 and April 28 of this year. Sometimes in our preoccupation with the high principles and great hopes of the peoples of the world for the achievement of a family of nations living at peace with one another we forget the ordinary workaday procedures of the many hundreds of delegates and representatives of various countries who work, without the bright lights of publicity upon their efforts, and yet move steadily forward in man's progress towards a more peaceful state. This report is a record of one of the more prosaic but none the less tangible steps forward made by mankind in its long and slow progress towards a peaceful civilization.

This Conference is one of the most significant of international conferences of recent years and one that has achieved far-reaching results. It is true that much more was heard of the failure of the Conference to reach agreement on the matter of fishing limits and the breadth of the territorial seas but may I remind the House and the nation that this was merely one article of 74. One hardly ever hears of the articles passed and which became part of international law, but this had a tremendous range of conflicting interests, namely those of 86 different nations. In order to achieve any sort of agreement with so much complexity and among so many nations is in itself a very substantial achievement.

It will, I know, be a source of satisfaction to hon. members on all sides of the House to learn that during the deliberations the Canadian Delegation played a leading role