



#### UPDATE

Faced with the imminent extension of fisheries zones to 200 miles by the coastal states bordering the Northwest Atlantic, ICNAF amended its convention in Dec. 1976 to restrict its management authority over fish stocks to the area beyond 200 miles. A preparatory conference on the future of ICNAF was held in Ottawa, March 14-25, 1977 to discuss the creation of a new Commission designed to provide (a) for scientific cooperation both within and beyond 200 miles and (b) for management of fish stocks beyond the 200 mile limit

Canadian Forces Tracker aircraft flies over a Portuguese fishing vessel while on a routine coastal patrol. DND photo

resources. Within the last two decades, the number of European fishing fleets on the banks has grown to 16. At the beginning the most formidable newcomer was the Soviet Union, but the other nations soon began to expand their fleets. Where once there were dozens of vessels on the fishing grounds, now there are hundreds.

By the late 1940's, the fishing pressure started to increase at a heavy rate. Scientists of the nations involved began to concern themselves with the effects of such heavy fishing on the northwest Atlantic fish stocks. That led to the formation of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries of which Canada is a member. This commission instituted conservation measures to promote the best use of the fishing resource. This management program mainly involves regulating mesh sizes for the nets used. Minimum sizes

have been set to permit the escape of fish under commercial size. More recently, national catch quotas have been established for the more heavily-fished species such as herring, cod, plaice and hake.

While fish has been the main source of wealth in the northwest Atlantic, that sprawling piece of ocean also contains other wealth beneath its rolling surface. Oil and minerals are there, and the day may not be far off when these new resources will be yielding bountiful returns to those exploiting them.

All the large fishing banks have their stories. So do the smaller ones. On their bottoms lie the bones of ships wrecked in recent times and long ago. The most notable of these sea-bed wrecks is the mighty 40,000-ton Titanic. One still and chilly night in April 1912, the luxury liner sank a few miles south of the

Grand Banks on her maiden voyage from England to New York. She struck an iceberg and sank, carrying more than 1,500 persons to their deaths. Since then the International Ice Patrol ships of the United States watch the north Atlantic sea lanes and warn ships of drifting bergs.