

Sixth session of the Law of the Sea Conference

The Canadian delegation to the sixth session of the Law of the Sea Conference, which opened in New York on May 23 and will continue until July 15, is headed by Ron Basford, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, and Roméo LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries and the Environment. J. Alan Beesley, Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs and Legal Adviser to the Department, is deputy head of the delegation.

The current session of the Law of the Sea Conference occurs during a critical phase in these long and difficult negotiations. Though the previous session ended in an impasse on the issue of the rights to explore and exploit deep-seabed resources beyond the bounds of national jurisdiction, significant progress has been achieved on most of the other key issues, including: general agreement in favour of the principle of the common heritage of mankind in respect of deep seabed resources; a 12-mile territorial sea; the idea of the 200-mile economic zone, including coastal-state sovereign rights over living and non-living resources and jurisdiction over the prevention and control of marine pollution. Canada's action, like that of many other countries, to extend its fisheries zone to 200 miles was based on the emerging consensus regarding an economic zone of this width.

This significant progress, which has already contributed to a radical revision of the law of the sea through state practice, must still, however, be translated into a convention commanding universal support. Before such an instrument can be adopted, the Conference has to resolve the outstanding, and most difficult, issues – in particular the regime applicable to the deep seabed beyond national jurisdiction. There are still differences of opinion on the question of access to the deep-seabed mineral resources by private and state entities, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an international organization that is to be established under the terms of the hoped-for law-of-the-sea convention. Discussions held between sessions of the Conference have produced, for the first time, a constructive exchange on this issue

that gives solid ground for believing that an accommodation between opposing views will be realized at the next session. Nevertheless, tough negotiations lie ahead on this and related issues, as well as on such other questions as marine scientific research in the economic zone, coastal-state powers to protect the marine environment, the rights of landlocked and "geographically-disadvantaged" states and settlement of disputes.

In the light of the progress already made, and without minimizing the difficulty of the problems still to be solved, Canada remains committed to the realization of a new, comprehensive law-of-the-sea convention, and the Canadian delegation will be working energetically to that end during the present session.

Canada's views on international water-quality report

The Department of External Affairs announced on May 20 that the Government of Canada had conveyed to the International Joint Commission a com-

bined Canadian response to the recommendations to governments contained in the Commission's fourth annual report on Great Lakes water quality. The report identified several of the recommendations in the 1975 report of the Great Lakes Water Quality Board to which the Commission believed the parties to the 1972 Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement should give priority consideration.

The Government of Canada and the Ontario government recently completed a comprehensive review of Great Lakes water-quality matters in the light of the IJC report. The two governments recognize the importance of the concerns addressed in the recommendations. Their combined response informs the Commission of the specific status of Canadian federal and provincial programs and other measures in recognition of these concerns. The response also reaffirms that the federal and Ontario governments continue to give high priority to Great Lakes programs and to encourage co-operation at all levels of government in order to reach the water-quality aims of the Canada/United States Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.



Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson (centre) presents eskimo carvings to Governor James B. Edwards (left) of South Carolina and Governor Ray Blanton of Tennessee. Mr. Jamieson who was in Atlanta, Georgia, re-

cently to address the Southern Council on International and Public Affairs (see Canada Weekly dated May 18), also met privately with a group of prominent Atlantans as well as the two governors.