

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, today announced the conclusion of an agreement between Canada and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on fisheries matters.

The agreement was negotiated at meetings held in Ottawa from August 25 to 27, 1975, and in Montreal from September 23 to 26, 1975. The Canadian delegation was led by Mr. L.H.J. Legault, Director General, International Directorate, Fisheries and Marine Service, Department of the Environment. The Soviet Delegation was chaired by Mr. A.A. Volkov, Deputy Chief of External Relations Department, Ministry of Fisheries.

The agreement, signed today by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and His Excellency A.N. Yakovlev, the Soviet Ambassador to Canada, comes into force at once. It provides for the establishment of a Canada/USSR Joint Fisheries Consultative Commission and the appointment of a Soviet fisheries official in Halifax. Among the functions assigned to the commission will be the facilitation of coordination of statistical and scientific information, the improvement of bilateral cooperation under the scheme of Joint International Enforcement of the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF), a regular exchange of information with regard to areas of concentration of fishing operations of both countries, and the promotion of other cooperative measures for the purpose of preventing damage to fishing gear and facilitating the settlement of any claims arising from such damage.

The commission will consist of four members, two appointed by the Soviet Union, and two appointed by the Government of Canada.

Arrangements are now being worked out in connection with the appointment of the fishery official of the USSR who will reside in Halifax. Among the functions which he will carry out will be the regular exchange of statistical and other information with regard to fishing operations conducted in the Northwest Atlantic off Canada's coast and the comparison of such information with estimated catch data by species, sub-areas and statistical areas, as well as the regular provision of data concerning the number of Soviet vessels operating within the area.