

## Ports policy encourages trade

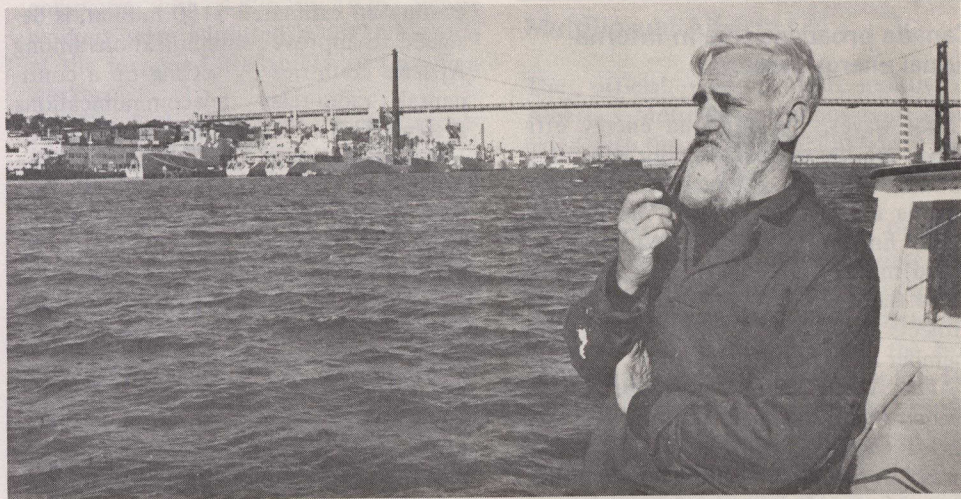
A more liberal policy allowing greater use of Canadian ports by foreign fishing vessels was announced recently by Fisheries Minister Roméo LeBlanc. The change could lead to substantially increased revenues for Canadian ports and shipyards, and for Canadian fishermen.

Under the new policy, vessels from countries with which Canada has bilateral fisheries agreements may be allowed more use of Canadian ports to purchase supplies, to exchange crews, and to undertake major repairs in Canadian shipyards.

"We are not throwing our ports wide open," Mr. LeBlanc said. "We will examine individually each proposal for expanded port privileges, to make sure that we gain significant economic benefits.

"This could include gains such as major ship-repair contracts for Canadian shipyards, increased sales of Canadian-made equipment, fishing gear, and other supplies to foreign vessels, and increased access to foreign markets for Canadian fishery products."

The first major repair contract for foreign fishing vessels at a Canadian shipyard is an experimental operation expected to bring about \$200,000 to the CN Dockyard at St. John's, Newfoundland. Under provisions of the Coastal Fisheries Protection Act, the Minister of Fisheries will allow two Soviet fishing vessels to transfer crews while the vessels are at the shipyard. A longer-term contract



Ted Grant

Chebucto, "the great long harbour", was the Micmac Indian tribe's name for Halifax before explorer Samuel de Champlain described it in 1607 as a "very safe bay". Commander "Mac" MacGowan looks out over the port and naval dockyards from which mighty fleets have sailed to foreign wars since Halifax was established as an imperial naval base by Governor Edward Cornwallis in 1749.

for annual repairs to a substantial number of Soviet vessels at the CN Dockyard is under discussion.

### Canadian industry no longer threatened

In recent years the Federal Government denied port access to foreign vessels except for strictly limited purposes, to discourage foreign fishing off Canada's coasts.

Until Canada's introduction of the 200-mile fishing zone on January 1, 1977, Canadian and foreign fishermen were in direct competition for the same fish. Restricting use of Canadian ports by

foreign fleets was one of the few effective ways to discourage foreign fishing, considering that some of the foreign vessels were as much as 3,000 miles from their home ports.

With the extension of jurisdiction to 200 miles, foreign fishing off Canada's coasts came under Canadian management. Within the 200-mile limit, foreign fishermen are permitted access only to fish surplus to Canadian requirements, under licences for which fees are charged.

The number of foreign vessels in the Canadian zone has dropped by two-thirds from the 1974 level. In Atlantic fisheries last year, both inside and outside the 200-mile zone, Canadian fishermen regained dominance of the industry by taking an estimated 58 per cent of the catch for all species, and 76 per cent of traditional finfish species (cod, haddock, pollock, redfish, flatfish, and herring). The majority of foreign catches allowed in the zone are of species, such as capelin, of which the Canadian industry has traditionally made little or no use. Canadian fishermen already dominate the important salmon and herring fisheries of the Pacific coast, and catch all the lobster, crab, and scallops taken in Canadian fishing zones.

"I am confident this new ports policy will benefit all Canadians, and that we will soon see more money flowing to the major Atlantic and Pacific coast ports as well as commensurate benefits accruing to the Canadian fishing industry," Mr. LeBlanc said.



Fishermen haul in a good catch of mackerel off the coast of New Brunswick.