

The Minister of State for Fisheries of Canada, the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, and the First Vice-Minister of Fisheries for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Mr. V. M. Kamentsev, announced today that officials of the Canadian and Soviet Governments have elaborated a bilateral ad referendum agreement on fisheries matters.

The agreement will now be referred to the two Governments for their consideration and approval. It provides for the establishment of a Canada/USSR Joint Fisheries Consultative Commission and the appointment of a Soviet fisheries official in Halifax. These arrangements are intended to strengthen bilateral fisheries cooperation between the two countries in the Northwest Atlantic.

Mr. LeBlanc also announced that Canada's Atlantic ports will be open to vessels of the Soviet fishing fleet, in accordance with relevant Canadian laws and regulations, as of September 29, 1975.

Mr. Kamentsev expressed satisfaction with these developments. He stated that the USSR supports the principle of rational, scientifically-based utilization of fishery resources and shares Canada's concern regarding the urgent conservation needs of the fish stocks of the Northwest Atlantic. He indicated that the Soviet delegation supports Canada's proposals for a reduction in the fishing effort and lower Total Allowable Catches for certain stocks of groundfish in critical condition and will cooperate with Canada with regard to the elaboration of appropriate allocations of allowable catches among countries. These proposals are now being considered by the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF).

In accordance with the Agreed Record of Understanding issued after the Canada/USSR fisheries talks of August 25 to 27, 1975, Mr. LeBlanc and Mr. Kamentsev reaffirmed the readiness of the two Governments to have their officials meet at an early opportunity in order to consider the elaboration of a further bilateral agreement on fisheries cooperation.