

regrets." A Fisheries and Oceans press release that day said:

Mr. De Bané stated that the Commission's decision is irresponsible because it ignores the body of objective international scientific opinion which indicates that harp and hooded seals are not an endangered species. Moreover, the Commission's recommendation comes before the completion of a study by a working group of experts of the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas (ICES) on the status of the seal population. This study was commissioned jointly by the EEC and Canada earlier this year, and its results are expected in early November. "I find it incomprehensible that the European Commission has made a recommendation before it had the results of the joint study" said Mr. De Bané.

The press release also said that according to the Minister, an offer by Canada to co-sponsor a study on seal harvesting methods to determine whether they are any less humane than killing methods used in European abattoirs had been refused. As well, the Minister said that the recommendation is particularly hard to understand in view of the fact that it apparently did nothing to interfere with the seal hunts conducted in several EEC countries. Mr. De Bané said that Canada is hoping that member states "will take a rational position where the Commission has essentially bowed to pressure from a small but vocal sector of European public opinion . . . To introduce emotional and irrational criteria can only harm the interests of all responsible members of the world trade community."

The Commission's recommendation raises "serious questions" about the Commission's adherence to its obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and Canada will urgently pursue consultations with the EEC under the GATT, the press release said. To justify the ban, the EEC had argued that it could be imposed under the so-called general exception clause in GATT which permits restrictions based on morality. This was disputed by Canada, which will protest the GATT's administrators if the ban is imposed, because the section specifies the restrictions "must be necessary to protect the public morals" in the importing countries. A Canadian fisheries official told reporters that Canada's protest to GATT would make it necessary for the European countries to show an appeal tribunal "how a few people wearing seal-skin coats can destroy public virtue" (*Globe and Mail*, October 14). A European delegate told reporters in Geneva that it is a question of public morality because, "Over five million signatures have poured into European capitals in the last six months encouraging action to stop the slaughter of baby seals in Canada" (*Globe and Mail*, October 22).

The Canadian lobby in Europe to prevent the ban had engaged Canadian officials, politicians and diplomats. Fisheries Minister Pierre De Bané explained in the House of Commons November 4 that he had personally met with MPs from each country in western Europe, with the President of the Common Market, with officials in Canada and Europe, and with Canada's ambassador to the European Community in Brussels, in addition to his offers to establish a joint commission with the Common Market to study every aspect of the seal hunt.

As well, it was suggested by Newfoundland politicians that Canada retaliate if a ban is imposed by barring Euro-

Canadian exports such as fish and fisheries products, forest products and non-ferrous metals and minerals. According to the same article, Canada was disappointed by the lack of progress made in defining safeguards, measures that countries are allowed to take within GATT to give temporary protection to domestic industries. But, an External Affairs official said, "the will is there to try to reach an agreement on safeguards." Canadian officials described the common declaration as positive and realistic, given the economic times. The signatories agreed to a series of resolutions, and generally agreed that the contracting parties make a determined effort to refrain from taking or maintaining measures inconsistent with GATT's objective of trade liberalization and expansion.

In the House of Commons November 29, Flora MacDonald (PC, Kingston and the Islands) questioned Finance Minister Marc Lalonde about the impact of the talks, which she said had failed to create the conditions for an expansion of world trade, on the Canadian economy and the Minister's forecast for 1983. Mr. Lalonde responded, "It is very unfortunate that the GATT ministers meeting did not come up with more productive results. Canada . . . did everything it could to strengthen the cause of anti-protectionism at this conference. Unfortunately, it seems we were not very successful. The Canadian Government is going to continue its campaign to encourage a lessening of the protectionist tendencies existing everywhere, including Canada." He said that the GATT conference had not changed his forecasts for 1983. The government had also been criticized in the House of Commons November 25 by John Crosbie (PC, St. John's West) for maintaining some protective policies while trying to persuade others to lower their barriers. Prime Minister Trudeau said that although Canada can't, for economic reasons, remove quotas overnight on soft goods such as textiles, its policy is to try to phase out those protectionist measures.

EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY

Proposed Ban on Seal Products

The European campaign to ban the import of pelts and other seal products was countered by Canadian officials and politicians during October and November. The activity on both sides was in anticipation of a decision expected to be made December 3 in Brussels by the ten-nation EEC's executive on whether to ban the imports, as recommended by the European Parliament last March.

Canada lobbied to save the industry, which depends on export to Europe, and is responsible for the livelihood of several thousand Canadians from Newfoundland, the Maritimes and Quebec. The central issues disputed concerned the scientific data relating to the danger to the population of the Canadian seals, and the humanity and morality of the hunt. The conclusion of a report in October by the European Commission was to favor the ban, which the Canadian government found "deplorable."

Fisheries Minister Pierre De Bané responded on October 13 to the news reports about the recommended ban. He called the European Commission's decision "an irresponsible action which the Canadian government greatly