

*Law of sea
Press papers*

PRESS CONFERENCE OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE ALLAN J. MACEACHEN, AND MR. J. ALAN BEESLEY, DEPUTY
HEAD OF THE CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS LAW OF THE SEA CONFERENCE, NEW YORK, MARCH 18, 1976

Chairwoman:

Excuse me, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to welcome you to the press conference and interview with these two gentlemen to you. First, there's Alan Beesley, who is the Alternate Head of the Delegation and Representative to the Canadian Law of the Sea -- Canadian Delegation, and Allan MacEachen, who is the Secretary of State for External Affairs for Canada and the Head of the Canadian Delegation to the Law of the Sea. Mr. MacEachen will answer questions on the Law of the Sea.

SSEA:

Well, I would be pleased to answer questions on the Law of the Sea insofar as it affects Canada, but I do want to say that the Government of Canada attaches a great deal of importance to the work of this third session, I believe, of the Law of the Sea Conference. This is my third occasion for participation in the Law of the Sea Conference: first at Caracas, and then at Geneva, and now in New York, and on each occasion we had great hopes about results. Undoubtedly progress has been made at each of these meetings, but this particular meeting, I believe, has a very special significance for Canada and probably for other countries. We had a debate in the Parliament of Canada last Friday on this question of the Law of the Sea, and of course, there was expressed once again the sense of urgency that we attach to rapid progress and a conclusion to the work of the Law of the Sea Conference. It's probably too early to make final judgements about the work that will be accomplished here, but certainly the Canadian Delegation will be working vigorously to make progress and, if possible, to conclude the work of the Law of the Sea Conference at this session.

Q.

Mr. Minister, there's mounting criticism that the 200-mile zone which you favour, and the economic zone which the U.S. favours too, amounts to a tremendous rip-off on the domain of the world's countries by the few coastal states. How do you deal with that criticism?

SSEA:

Well, I believe it is an inaccurate description of what is at play here, to describe our efforts as a tremendous rip-off. As a coastal state, we are greatly concerned about the management, for example, of the fisheries within the 200-mile economic zone. Certainly at the present time, particularly off the Atlantic Coast, the stocks of fish are seriously depleted and it is essential that the coastal state like Canada should have the responsibility for the management of the fisheries, and indeed to take the responsibility for conservation and for replenishment. And, as you know, in any régime that is foreseen, certainly any régime that is foreseen by Canada and any régime that is presently being negotiated with distant fishing states, it is expected that any harvest of the fisheries surplus to Canadian requirements will be available for the use of other fishing states.