

-- PORT HAWKESBURY (Nova Scotia) SEPTEMBER 13 -- The Honourable Allan J. MacEachen announced today that the Canadian Government would intensify in coming weeks high-level consultations with countries with fishing fleets in the North Atlantic Ocean. These consultations, which began almost immediately after the regular meeting of the International Commission for Northwest Atlantic Fisheries (ICNAF) in Edinburgh, last June, seek to ensure that the special meeting of the Commission to be held in Montreal September 22-28 will lead to concrete results -- results which will bring about a reduction in foreign fishing efforts, the enforcement of appropriate regulations for the maintenance or rebuilding of stocks and, consequently, an improvement in the long-term economic prospects of Atlantic Canada's fishing industry.

"Even if the outcome of the Edinburgh meeting was disappointing, the goals of the Canadian Government remain the same," Mr. MacEachen emphasized. "Both my officials and those of my colleague, the Honourable Roméo LeBlanc, have impressed upon the representatives of foreign fishing nations the urgent need for a 40% reduction of foreign fishing efforts, reduction of allowable catch limits for stocks in critical condition, and increased allocations to Canada, within conservation limits where there is a demonstrable capacity and need.

The M. P. for Cape Breton Highlands-Canso pointed out that the discussions held with representatives of the Soviet Government in late August, after the temporary closure of East-Coast ports to the Soviet fishing fleets, had led to some progress: "at least enough to reach an agreement on specific procedures concerning the enforcement of fishing quotas, coupled with the re-opening of our ports, when and only when we are satisfied that these procedures are working effectively".

"The discussions we had with Spain and Portugal have also been encouraging," the Minister went on to say, "and we expect to have similar consultations before the Montreal ICNAF meeting with fisheries officials from other member states such as the United States, Norway, Poland and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The Federal Minister pointed out that this series of meetings, prepared and conducted in "very close co-operation" by the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Environment (Fisheries), had proven quite effective in emphasizing the seriousness of Canada's concern over the resource crisis in the North Atlantic and the very real economic difficulties which Canadian fishermen are facing as a result of continuing and persistent overfishing by