

I have mentioned these subjects only to make it clear that when we place our arguments before you with the utmost respect for the opinions expressed by the representatives of every other country, we are not speaking of something merely of legal or academic concern but rather about things which will have a very important bearing on the prosperity of our people and the economic development of our country.

We do most earnestly hope that this conference may reach agreement on every important question which has been placed before us. I find it difficult to believe that anyone here has not been deeply moved by the knowledge that these eighty-seven delegations which have been brought together come as close to representing the whole of mankind in one particular field of activity as has ever happened at any time. I feel sure that every one of us has been impressed by the spirit of goodwill and the genuine desire to find common grounds of understanding in dealing with subjects in which we all have a mutual interest.

There is little doubt that there is general agreement on most points covered by the report. We also know that there is a wide divergence of opinion in regard to some particular articles which are of the utmost importance to all of us. May I presume to suggest now that when we come to the detailed consideration of those articles, time may be gained if the articles which are known to be contentious are deferred so that the committees can proceed quickly to reach agreement upon the subjects about which there is little dispute. I make this suggestion, not for the purpose of postponing a decision, but because we could then establish a wide basis of agreement early in the conference. I think it is not too much to hope that the spirit of friendly co-operation which would be generated in this way might well make it easier for us to tackle our more difficult problems later. There would also be opportunities in the meantime for all of us to discuss privately the various possible solutions of those particular questions.

The speeches which have been made during this general debate have dealt mainly with the distance over which authority is to be exercised in controlling fishing rights in coastal waters and also in the measurement of the territorial sea. I think it is clear that on all other subjects general agreement will not be too difficult. Many countries, including Canada, are greatly interested in the continental shelf. There are some differences of opinion. Nevertheless, I think there is sufficiently general agreement as to the principles involved to find common ground without too much difficulty. Then there is the new field of law embraced in the effort to assure freedom of the sea to the landlocked states. Canada will do everything it can to assure the right of landlocked states to the use of the high seas which Prince Wan has so aptly described as "the common heritage of all mankind." We will welcome suggestions and advice and will co-operate wholeheartedly in an effort to make it possible for landlocked states to carry their trade with other parts of the world in their own ships. But these and other similar subjects about which there is broad agreement in principle if not yet in detail will best be advanced by examination of specific proposals in each committee.