

INTERNATIONAL FISHERIES

Several matters of international fisheries law have been of particular importance to Canada.

Pacific Salmon Agreement

In the spring of 1985, after many years of negotiations, Canada and the United States ratified the Canada/USA Pacific Salmon Treaty.

The treaty is founded on equitable principles in that each country is to receive benefits equivalent to the salmon produced in its rivers. It is anticipated that the treaty will prevent overfishing and lead to enhancement of these valuable stocks. The treaty provides for the creation of a new Pacific Fisheries Commission that will make recommendations to the two countries regarding their fisheries in general, as well as on the conduct of their respective intercepting fisheries.

In ratifying the treaty, however, several issues concerning the Yukon River fishery were left for future resolution. A first round of negotiations, intended to seek a equitable sharing of Yukon River salmon and to ensure a prosperous commercial fishery in the future, is to be held later this year.

Gulf of Maine

With the maritime boundary now settled, it is logical to turn attention to the possibility of cooperation in fisheries management. The Canadian Government is now engaged in careful study of the fishery resource implications of the new boundary in close cooperation with all concerned parties, including in particular the fishermen and the fishing industry. The US Government is engaged in a similar process with the US fishing industry.

When these assessments have been completed it will be possible to evaluate the possibility or desirability of negotiating arrangements for cooperative fisheries management in respect of certain stocks. Increasing pressure from the New England fishing lobby to impose countervailing duties against imports of Canadian fish products has focused attention on this issue.