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PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1960.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Howard Green, announced to-day that the Canadian Government, through the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization in London, has transmitted a Declaration to all Contracting Governments to the International Convention for the Prevention of the Pollution of the Sea by Oil, 1954, of its intention to extend to 100 miles, the maximum allowed under the Convention, the zone off the Atlantic coast of Canada within which ships may not discharge oil. At the present time the zone is 50 miles. The Declaration is provided for in Paragraph (3) of Annex A to the Convention, to which Canada is signatory, but extension to 100 miles from 50 miles would not come into force until six months after the Declaration is made. Each of the other contracting Governments has four months within which to declare its opposition to the extension should it believe that its interests are affected either by reason of the proximity of its coasts or by reason of its ships trading in the area. If no such declaration is made, the extension will take place at the end of the six-month period.

The reason for the Declaration is the concern of the Canadian Government at the increasing number of reports of oil pollution on the Atlantic coast; the hundreds of thousands of sea birds killed annually by floating oil in the Newfoundland area so that certain species face extinction; the loss of food supplies of which these birds form part in certain areas; the threat to the ecological balance of nature; and the contamination of bathing beaches.

If no other countries signatory to the Convention raise objections, the extension to 100 miles will come into effect on February 25, 1961.