

Commonwealth cable system, and, of greatest significance, a decision to fund a comprehensive system of scholarships for Commonwealth students [Documents 374-386].

Although the Trade and Economic Conference proved to be a disappointment in terms of securing a dramatic economic breakthrough benefiting Canada, the Commonwealth link nonetheless proved to be of considerable importance in other policy areas. Diefenbaker's Conservatives remained committed to maintaining Canada's exemplary record of contributing generously to the Colombo Plan. Although Canada continued to fund capital programs to assist recipient countries, the Conservatives also chose to use Colombo Plan channels to aggressively dispose of portions of Canada's considerable wheat surplus [Documents 414-428]. The sentimental link many Canadians enjoyed with the Commonwealth was emphasized and reinforced by Prime Minister Diefenbaker's extensive world tour beginning 29 October 1958. Diefenbaker first toured European capitals and conducted important conversations with British, French, and German leaders. He then proceeded to tour Commonwealth countries in the Far East, returning to Canada in mid-December fully convinced that the tour had been an outstanding publicity success.

Despite the increased attention paid to Commonwealth issues, Canadian officials, as the documentation in Chapter One indicates, continued to place a high priority on United Nations matters. Indeed, Canada's most important multilateral initiative in the first eighteen months of Diefenbaker's mandate centred on efforts to broker an agreement codifying the international law of the sea, particularly in the delineation of the breadth of the territorial sea. The St. Laurent government had originally supported a twelve-mile territorial sea, but had ultimately adopted a policy, under strong pressure from the United States and Great Britain, calling for a territorial sea of three miles with an additional nine-mile zone contiguous to the territorial sea in which a coastal state would have exclusive control of the fisheries. In preparation for the first United Nations conference on the law of the sea, to be held in Geneva beginning 24 February 1958, the new Conservative government chose to accept the three plus nine formula as the formal Canadian position on the territorial sea [Documents 37, 40, and 43]. Based on pre-conference consultations that had occurred in New York between Canadian officials and their British and American counterparts [Documents 39 and 42], the Canadian delegation in Geneva assumed that some measure of cooperation from their primary allies would be forthcoming.

This hope, however, proved illusory. After the Canadian position on the territorial sea was unveiled at the conference on 17 March 1958, both the United Kingdom and the United States abandoned their rigid pre-conference positions embracing a three-mile territorial sea with no contiguous fishing zone. On 2 April, the British delegation tabled a resolution calling for a territorial sea of six miles with no contiguous fishing zone. Shortly thereafter, the American delegation introduced a proposal calling for a territorial sea of six miles with a six-mile contiguous zone in which a coastal state would exercise exclusive control over fisheries after a phasing out period of at least five years had elapsed for countries exercising traditional fishing rights. In light of the fact that the Canadian position had "steadily deteriorated," the chairman of the Canadian delegation, George Drew, concluded that the Canadian proposal stood "no hope whatever" of being accepted [Document 61]. Eventually, Drew sought and received approval from Ottawa to table another proposal that called for a six-mile