

My delegation has considerable sympathy for the suggestion contained in the draft resolution which has been circulated by the delegation of Iceland. We think there is much merit, from a practical and realistic point of view, to defer final decision on articles relating to specific aspects of the regime of the high seas until the International Law Commission has completed its studies on all aspects of this general subject. On the other hand, we fully appreciate the desire of other delegations to have the United Nations approve drafts on specific aspects in which they have a direct and immediate interest. It is our view that the recommendation contained in the draft resolution circulated by the distinguished delegate of Panama is impractical and unrealistic. We cannot ask the International Law Commission to do what that resolution requires; neither can we expect that most governments will be ready to discuss all aspects of the regime of the high seas at the ninth session of the General Assembly next year. It is for these reasons that Canada was pleased to co-sponsor draft resolution (A/C.6/L.318) which recommends postponing of a final decision on the articles relating to "the Continental Shelf" and "Fisheries" until the tenth session in 1955. The reasons we prefer the tenth rather than the ninth session are: First, we have a heavy agenda next year including the two very important items, the definition of aggression and international criminal jurisdiction; in second place, it would give governments more time to conduct the proper study and investigation which the importance of this subject requires; and the third reason is that possibly, by the tenth session the International Law Commission may have completed more studies on other aspects of the regime of the high seas. I think all delegations will agree that it would be more desirable and realistic to discuss the items now before us in the light of the recommendations of the International Law Commission on other topics relating to the regime of the high seas.

Note: The following is the text of the resolution adopted by the Sixth Committee on November 25, 1953. It was approved by a vote of 19 in favour, 14 against (including Canada) and eight abstentions. The resolution was sponsored by Iceland (U.N. DOC A/C6/L 314)

The General Assembly,

Considering that at its fourth session the General Assembly recommended that the International Law Commission study simultaneously the regime of the high seas and the regime of territorial waters, and

Having regard to the fact that the problems relating to the high seas, territorial waters, contiguous zones, the continental shelf and the superjacent waters are closely linked together juridicially as well as physically,

Decides not to deal with any aspect of the regime of the high seas or the regime of territorial waters until all the problems involved have been studied by the International Law Commission and submitted to the General Assembly.