

Law of the Sea

In response to a question on November 9 as to whether "the Government is now taking action to initiate the calling of a further international conference on the law of the sea under the auspices of the United Nations, in order to resolve many outstanding differences in this field of international law", Mr. Martin stated :

Mr. Speaker, it would not be accurate to say that we were having consultations about calling a Conference on the Law of the Sea under the auspices of the United Nations, but the Government is considering along with certain other countries the possibility of a conference that would cover such matters as conservation

"Is it the intention of the Government to ask Parliament during this session to ratify the four conventions on the law of the sea, to which Canada subscribed and which, I believe, are now in force?" another Member asked. Having ascertained that the question referred to the Continental Shelf Convention, Mr. Martin replied :

The Continental Shelf Convention is one of four conventions signed by Canada at the conclusion of the Law of the Sea Conference in 1958. It has not yet been ratified by Canada. It was felt best to ratify the four conventions together. However, I can point out . . . that it is not necessary to ratify the Continental Shelf Convention in order to exercise the rights which are recognized in the Convention. These rights are, in general, part of international law and Canada has continuously exercised them.

As far as ratification of the four conventions is concerned, there are technical aspects which have been under examination and we hope to have a clarification of these very soon.