

no one nation, or even group of nations, has clear property rights to the resource. If the resource is to be effectively managed, the countries whose fishermen are exploiting it must come together and act as joint owners. It cannot be assumed, however, that the interests of the countries concerned will coincide.

Canada faced this problem in acute form on its Atlantic coast, where the fishing industries are important components of several provincial economies. This importance was and is particularly evident in Canada's poorest province, Newfoundland.

Canada made an attempt in the 1960s to protect its Atlantic and Pacific fisheries more adequately by extending its fisheries jurisdiction from three to 12 miles and by introducing certain closing-lines on both coasts. It remained true, however, that large potentially-rich fishing resources on the Scotian Shelf off the coast of Nova Scotia, on the famous Grand Banks, and on the Hamilton Inlet Bank north of Newfoundland lay far outside the 12-mile limit. Most of these resources consisted of groundfish such as cod, redfish and flounder; the groundfish industry is the major employer in Canada's Atlantic fishing industry.

There had for centuries been some foreign fishing off Canada's Atlantic coast, and the country had learnt to live with it. In the late 1950s, however, the level of foreign fishing activity began to rise sharply. Whereas in 1956 the foreign fleets had accounted for roughly one-third (by weight) of the harvested fish, in 1974 the foreign share was almost double that proportion. The ships of the U.S.S.R. had achieved the most spectacular increase in their catch. In 1956 the Soviet share of the catch was negligible; by 1974, it was equal to that of Canada.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the global catch off the Atlantic coast increased with the growing effort. Canada's total catch also increased as it began to expand its offshore capacity. The expansion in catches, however, could not be sustained. A peak was reached in 1968 from which the big catches gradually declined. In 1968 the total catch was about 2,600 thousand tonnes. By 1975 this had decreased to approximately 2,000 thousand tonnes, a decline of roughly 25 per cent. Total Canadian catches had fallen by one-third over the same period.

Inshore fisheries

It was not just Canadian offshore catches that were affected by the expansion of the foreign fishing effort. In Newfoundland, the inshore fishing industry, which employs far more fishermen than the offshore sector,

was directly affected. The mainstay of the inshore industry is groundfish. When the groundfish stocks were subject to heavier offshore exploitation, fewer groundfish came inshore, with a consequent drastic decline in inshore catches. As the Newfoundland inshore-fishing communities are impoverished at the best of times, the decline in inshore catches had serious social as well as economic consequences.

The increasing weakness of the industry was masked in part during the late 1960s and early 1970s by a steady rise in demand for processed groundfish, which reached a peak in the commodity boom of 1972-73. With the collapse of the boom in the recession of 1974-75, however, the industry found itself in serious difficulty. There might well have been widespread bankruptcy had not the Federal Government intervened with a large emergency subsidy program.

These developments on the Atlantic Coast had not occurred without some attempt at regulating the fisheries outside Canada's jurisdiction. As far back as 1949, Canada and the United States, with the five or six European countries then fishing off the Atlantic Coast, had realized that unregulated fishing in the Northwest Atlantic could have serious consequences. They came together, therefore, to form the International Commission for the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries. Eventually the ICNAF area covered the waters from Greenland to Cape Hatteras and east to 42°W longitude (south of Greenland). Up to 1970, ICNAF contented itself with problems of scientific research and the setting of gear regulations (e.g. mesh-sizes). Then it began to impose fishing quotas on various species by area and by fishing nation. The quota regulations gradually increased both in scope and intensity.

Too late

It is fair to say, however, that by Canada in general and by the Atlantic Provinces in particular the increased ICNAF activity was seen as coming far too late and as being generally inadequate. ICNAF had not prevented the massive build-up of foreign fishing effort and the consequent depletion of stocks. ICNAF's membership had grown from the original handful of countries to 18. More thoroughgoing and effective management policies were required than those ICNAF could implement. The pressure for greater Canadian control of the Atlantic fisheries began to intensify.

With regard to the Pacific Coast, the need for extended fisheries jurisdiction appeared less urgent. Far fewer fishing-grounds extended beyond the Canadian 12-

*Realization
that fisheries
required
regulation*