

Canadian and Norwegian representatives met in Ottawa April 26-27 to discuss Norwegian traditional fishing practices and sealing operations in Canada's territorial sea and exclusive fishing zones. The Norwegian delegation was led by Mr. Jens Evensen, Director General Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and included representatives from the Ministry of Fisheries and the Norwegian sealing and fishing industry. The Canadian delegation was headed by Mr. J.A. Beesley, Legal Adviser, Director General Bureau of Legal and Consular Affairs, Department of External Affairs, and included representatives of the Department of Fisheries and Forestry and the Canadian sealing and fishing industry. The names of the delegates are listed in the attached annex.

In June 1970, the Canadian Government amended the Canadian Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act to extend the breadth of Canada's territorial sea from 3 to 12 miles and to enable the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing zones in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and the Bay of Fundy off Canada's east coast and Dixon Entrance and Hecate Strait and Queen Charlotte Sound off Canada's west coast. These special bodies of water were enclosed by fisheries closing lines which came into force on March 10, 1971.

Norway is one of seven countries whose fishermen have traditionally frequented the fishing grounds off Newfoundland and the Gulf of St. Lawrence. Norwegian sealing vessels have also participated for many years in the annual seal hunt in the Gulf of St. Lawrence and along the southeast coast of Labrador and northeast coast of Newfoundland generally known as the "Front" area. Throughout this long association there has been continued and growing cooperation between Canada and Norway in the adoption of measures for the conservation of seal stocks and humane methods for the hunt.

During the discussions the economic importance of these fishing and sealing activities to the livelihood of the people engaged in them was stressed by both sides. In some areas, in both countries, the sealing and fishing industry is the main source of income. The Norwegian side was particularly concerned about the longer term prospects for the sealing industry and recognized, along with the Canadian side, the need for effective conservation methods to achieve a sustained yield.

Both sides put forward constructive proposals as the possible basis for agreement between the two countries on the future conduct of fishing and sealing