

General Assembly with a view to the early conclusion of a Convention on Diplomatic Intercourse and Immunities. This resolution was adopted by a vote of 60 in favour, none against, with 9 abstentions (including Canada).

The Law of the Sea

The United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, which was held in Geneva from February 24 to April 28, 1958, was one of the most significant legal conferences ever held. Attended by representatives of 86 countries, the Conference adopted four international agreements dealing with almost the entire range of the law of the sea. These were: (1) a Convention on the Territorial Sea and Contiguous Zone; (2) a Convention on the High Seas; (3) a Convention on Fishing and the Conservation of the Living Resources of the High Seas; and (4) a Convention on the Continental Shelf. In addition, the Conference adopted a protocol for the compulsory settlement of disputes arising from the application of these Conventions. The Honourable George Drew, Chairman of the Canadian Delegation to the Conference, signed them on behalf of Canada. The Conventions will come into effect when they have been ratified by at least 22 nations.

The Conference was called by a resolution of the General Assembly on February 21, 1957 (Resolution 1105 (XI))¹. The five main committees of the Conference used as the basis for their deliberations, the 73-article Report of the International Law Commission of the United Nations which constituted a suggested code for almost all aspects of maritime law, drawn up by the Commission after eight years of intensive study.² Although the Conference was unable to come to any agreement on the breadth of the territorial sea and fishery limits, nevertheless, agreement was reached on almost every other major issue dealt with in the Commission's Report.

In a statement in the House of Commons on July 25, 1958, the Honourable Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and National Resources, who was in Geneva for part of the Conference, described as follows the highlights of these Conventions and their significance for Canada:

"The Continental Shelf Convention gives to the coastal state sovereign rights over the exploration and exploitation of the natural resources of the sea-bed and subsoil off its coast out to a depth of 200 meters. It also provides that these rights may be exercised beyond that depth if the exploitation of the resources is a practical possibility. In the long term, this agreement may have consequences of far-reaching importance to Canada in the development of underwater oil and mineral resources. It means, in effect, a very substantial addition to the potential area of Canada's natural resources . . ."

"The second Convention dealt with fishing and the conservation of the living resources of the high seas. The Convention on high seas fishing is the first such general convention regulating high seas fishing and it accords well with Canadian interests. It recognizes the special interest of the coastal state in maintaining the productivity of the living resources of the high seas in areas adjacent to its territorial sea. It also entitles the coastal state to take part on an equal footing in any system of research or regulation for purposes of conservation in that area even though its own nationals may not carry

¹ See *Canada and the United Nations 1956-57*, p. 118, 120.

² See *Canada and the United Nations 1956-57*, p.118.