

House of Commons on Friday last, I stated that we would assess, of course, the results of the Law of the Sea Conference in New York, and also assess the results of our bilateral negotiations with other countries before we would decide when to proclaim extended Canadian fisheries jurisdiction. But at this moment, we have not established a definite date, but it seems to me that for us, as for other countries, this meeting is the crucial one, this year is the crucial year for Canada.

Q. Mr. Minister, with respect to the bilaterals -- we have four or five of them in the bag now -- would we have to have the United States in that package before we could extend unilateral jurisdiction?

SSEA: I don't think so. We have at present, in terms of bilateral agreements, covered about thirty per cent of the catch -- I don't know if that is the precise way to put it, that is, at present thirty per cent -- if we succeed in our negotiations with the Soviet Union, which will be resumed in May, we will then have covered off eighty-eight per cent, I believe, of the total catch. I believe that is the correct -- is that?

Mr. Beesley: That's correct.

SSEA: Eighty-eight per cent. So that we will have, as a result of these bilateral arrangements, made that very enormous advance. And at that point, it would seem to me, that while we would be ready to discuss and talk to all other countries that have a legitimate interest, the prospect is that others would fall in line with that quite enormous development.

Q. And in the area where we fish together with the Americans? I'm thinking of Brown's Bank and the rest of it. Would we give that up without any kind of a...?

SSEA: No, I think that -- well, I'll ask Mr. Beesley to answer that.

Mr. Beesley: I was going to comment on that because we now have a reciprocal fishing agreement between the U.S.A. and Canada, and I think that illustrates better than anything we might say the nature of our relationship. We have a long history of very close co-operation in the fisheries field, particularly on the West Coast, but also on the East Coast. We've pioneered, for example, in systems where we permit the fishing inspectors of the other country to be on our own vessels, and it's a very close co-operation, but it's also spelled out in treaty form, and undoubtedly, we would need a modification, an updating, of that reciprocal fishing agreement, but it wouldn't be of the same nature, of the same order, as the kind we've been talking about. The distant water fishing state coming across the oceans to fish the resources offshore near a coastal state. These are two countries that fish, in some cases, intermingled stocks, they each fish off one another's shores, and it's always been our view, and it's always been the U.S.A. view, that there is a reciprocal advantage, there's a mutuality of benefit in continuing that kind of relationship.