
CANADA-FRANCE MARITIME RELATIONS

There are two key issues involved in maritime relations between Canada and France: the first relates to fisheries quotas for France in Canadian waters, taking into account the 1972 Fisheries Agreement, and the second, concerns the maritime boundary dispute off the southern coast of Newfoundland and St. Pierre-Miquelon, including the serious overfishing taking place in that area. The issue of overlapping claims became more significant in 1977, when Canada adopted a 200-mile fishing zone off all its coasts, and France established an exclusive economic zone south of St. Pierre-Miquelon.

The close relationship between these two issues stems mainly from the fact that Canada considers the quotas allocated to France in the disputed zone to meet Canadian obligations under Article 2 of the Agreement. France, on the other hand, argues that these quotas relate to the French economic zone around St. Pierre-Miquelon and therefore have no validity. Only by a delimitation of the maritime boundary can this matter be resolved.

On the basis of its maritime claim, which Canada rejects, France has recently considerably increased its catch in the disputed zone to the detriment of conservation and fish stock management. Canada, the coastal state, allocated to France a quota of 6,400 tonnes of cod for 1987 in North West Atlantic Fisheries Organization (NAFO) zone 3Ps, which is consistent with previous Canadian allocations in this area. However, France has systematically exceeded these allocations and, for 1986 and 1987, set its own annual quota at 26,000 tonnes of cod. In response to such overfishing, which is having serious economic repercussions in Newfoundland, Canada decided last March to ban French trawlers from Canadian ports, except in cases of emergency, and to close the French fishery in zone 3Ps. Nevertheless, because of the overlapping claims, this latest decision is being enforced only in the undisputed part of 3Ps.

In order to resolve, once and for all, the basic difference over delimitation of the maritime boundary, and in view of the failure to reach a negotiated settlement, the parties signed

an agreement on January 24 of this year setting out a program for negotiations in 1987. It provided for: negotiations in order to reach a specific agreement, or *compromis*, the purpose of which will be to set forth the terms and conditions for a compulsory international judicial settlement of the boundary dispute and to set it in motion, and for negotiation of temporary fisheries arrangements for the period 1988-91, during which time the legal proceedings concerning the maritime boundary will be taking place.

Canada earnestly wishes to reach agreement on a *compromis* and a temporary fisheries arrangement at the negotiations initiated earlier this year on terms satisfactory to both parties. A solution will make it possible for judicial settlement of the boundary dispute once and for all, and will facilitate mutually-acceptable fisheries relations in the meantime.