

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, today announced that he and the Ambassador of Spain, His Excellency Mr. Juan Jose Rovira, had signed an agreement for the phased withdrawal of Spanish fishing boats from the areas of the sea adjacent to the east coast of Canada.

The Canadian Parliament in 1970 amended the 1964 Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act so as to extend Canada's territorial sea from 3 to 12 miles and establish exclusive fishing zones in certain areas of the sea adjacent to its coasts. These exclusive fishing zones were designated in an Order in Council dated February 25, 1971. This Order in Council prescribed the closing to foreign vessels, as of March 10, 1971, of certain fishing zones, including the Gulf of St. Lawrence. As a consequence of this legislation, the Canadian Government began negotiations to enter into agreements with the principal governments whose nationals had traditionally engaged in fishing in these areas.

Canada has recently concluded phased withdrawal agreements with Great Britain, Denmark, Norway and Portugal. It has also negotiated and signed a new treaty with France, which had fishing rights under former treaties. The Agreement just signed with Spain terminates this negotiation process established following the promulgation of the 1970 Act. In all these bilateral agreements, sufficient time has been provided to allow any fishing boats affected by the Canadian legislation to direct their activities to new fishing spots. There is also an agreement, of a quite different nature, with the United States of America, under which our two countries have conceded reciprocal privileges within their respective fishing zones.

The Agreement with Spain was negotiated at meetings in Ottawa in October, 1971 and in Madrid in April, 1972. The Canadian delegation was headed by Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs. The Spanish delegation was headed by Mr. Fernando Marcitllach, Director General of Maritime Fisheries.

This Agreement, which is now in force, was set out in an exchange of diplomatic Notes. Under it Spain agrees to discontinue all fishing operations in the Gulf of St. Lawrence starting July 31, 1976 and in the outer nine miles of Canada's territorial sea starting November 30, 1978.

Administrative arrangements have also been provided for in the Agreement to deal with any conflicts that might arise between