

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Mitchell Sharp, and the Minister of the Environment, the Honourable Jack Davis, today announced the conclusion of an Agreement between Canada and France respecting the future conduct of the fishing practices of France and Canada in areas off the east coast of Canada.

The Agreement was negotiated at a three-day meeting in Ottawa in May last year. The Canadian Delegation was headed by Mr. J. Alan Beesley, Legal Adviser to the Department of External Affairs. Officials from the Department of the Environment, Fisheries Service, also participated in the negotiations. The leader of the French Delegation was Mr. Christian Girard, Deputy Director, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and included the Delegation representative from the General Secretariat of the Merchant Marine and from the Ministry of State responsible for overseas departments and territories. A list of the delegates on both sides is annexed hereto.

The Agreement, which comes into force at once, was signed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs for the Government of Canada and the Ambassador of France, H. E. Pierre Siraud, on behalf of the French Government. It takes into account the June 1970 amendments to the Canadian Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act whereby the breadth of Canada's territorial sea was extended from 3 to 12 miles and the basis was laid for the establishment of exclusive fishing zones in certain special bodies of water off Canada's east and west coasts. These special bodies of water which include the Gulf of St. Lawrence, were enclosed by fisheries closing lines which came into force on March 10 last year.

The present agreement supersedes all treaty provisions relating to the fishing by French nationals off the Atlantic coast of Canada, in particular the 1904 Convention which contained certain treaty shore privileges for France along the coast of Newfoundland. It provides for a reciprocal fishing arrangement for Canadian and St. Pierre-Miquelon fishermen in the waters off the coast of St. Pierre-Miquelon and Newfoundland. French vessels registered in metropolitan France, however, may only fish in the eastern half of the Gulf of St. Lawrence from January 15 to May 15 each year until 1986, after which the long-standing treaty rights France has enjoyed for metropolitan vessels in this area will be terminated. The Agreement also provides for the delimitation of the territorial waters and fishing zones between St. Pierre-Miquelon and Newfoundland.

The Agreement was concluded in a spirit of continuing Franco-Canadian co-operation and in an atmosphere of cordiality. It will further enable the Government of Canada to ensure the effective management of the fishing stocks in the waters concerned.