

of pollution remains high and is environmentally unacceptable". As a result of these new studies, the Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs reaffirmed, in a letter dated December 1, 1976, to the Pittston Oil Company, Canada's continued opposition to the movement of tankers through the waters of Head Harbour Passage. The Under-Secretary stated that "in view of the well-established Canadian position, it will not be possible for the Canadian Government to enter into any such agreements, extend such approval or grant such permits" as would permit tankers to use Head Harbour Passage.

In the Far North, environmental discussion centred on oil-drilling activity in the Beaufort Sea. Canada initiated discussions with the United States in February 1976 in the light of accepted principles of international law and practice as reflected, for example, in the OECD declaration of 1974 calling for prior notification of projects having potential transfrontier pollution effects. Consistent with general Canada-U.S. practice in environmental matters, talks were held with U.S. officials both before and after the issuing of drilling authorization to Dome Petroleum Ltd. Since there were legal difficulties in extending to potential U.S. claimants a statutory right to compensation for pollution damage available to Canadians, an arrangement was developed whereby an amount of \$10 million would be made available by the operators to satisfy U.S. claimants in the event of an oil-well blow-out in the Beaufort Sea. Inter-agency discussions also began on the drafting of a joint oil-spill contingency plan applicable to any clean-up operations that might result from a blow-out in the area.

On the West Coast, discussions took place between Canadian and American officials in expectation of an increase in tanker traffic resulting from the completion of the pipeline from the North Slope oil-field in Alaska to the West Coast. Negotiations with American officials were scheduled for early 1977 to develop a mandatory traffic-management system for the Strait of Juan de Fuca, involving procedures to control the movements

of vessels and minimize the likelihood of collision and other marine accidents.

At the multilateral level, Canada has been a leader among the governments advocating further international efforts to obtain stricter environmental standards. Canada continued to press for agreement at the Law of the Sea Conference for adequate authority and controls over marine pollution in the proposed 200-mile economic zone. In the Intergovernmental Maritime Consultative Organization, Canada has been negotiating for higher international standards. At the December 1976 session of the Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), Canada pressed for standards on such important technical aspects of marine transportation as segregated ballast, double hulls and sewage-treatment plants on ships. As a member of the United Nations Environmental Program, Canada participated in the Working Group on Shared Natural Resources, advocating that states recognize the obligation to notify other nations and provide them with information regarding activities that could have extra-territorial effects on the environment.

International fisheries

The year 1976 was decisive for the protection of fishing resources off Canada's shores. Following the spring session of the Law of the Sea Conference, and to counter the threat of depleted fish-stocks off the Atlantic Coast, the Secretary of State for External Affairs announced in the House of Commons on June 4 the Government's decision to extend its fishing-limit to 200 miles. The five bilateral agreements that had been negotiated in less than a year with Norway, Poland, the U.S.S.R., Spain and Portugal prepared the way for this extended fisheries jurisdiction, for which the groundwork — the articles that are being drafted by the Law of the Sea Conference — was laid during the two sessions of the conference held in New York in 1976.

In order to ensure a smooth transition to the new management regime that Canada was to establish on January 1, 1977, bilateral and multilateral discussions took place through-