

1978, and it was never ratified. The result of this suspension was that the U.S. fishermen were excluded from the Canadian fishing zone and Canadian fishermen were excluded from the U.S. fishing zone except for special arrangements for halibut fishing under the halibut fishing treaty on the west coast. Fishing by both countries continued, of course, in the areas of overlapping claims on both coasts.

The suspension of reciprocal fishing by the Canadian government in 1978 was a serious step taken with the full support of the Canadian fishing industry to protect Canadian interests. It had become obvious to both the government and the industry that the U.S. government was subject to powerful influences which were making it difficult or impossible for the United States to live up to its commitment to Canada. The suspension of reciprocal fishing at the initiative of the Canadian government avoided the creation of a situation where U.S. fishermen would be obtaining benefits in Canadian waters out of balance with the benefits Canadian fishermen were obtaining in U.S. waters.

The suspension also served notice to the United States that the Government of Canada would not let the interests of the Canadian fishing industry be eroded under pressure and that any agreement reached with the United States would have to be based on an equitable balancing of benefits and interests. Even though the reciprocal fishing agreement of 1978 never came into force, the arrangement between the two countries on how to handle fishing in the boundary areas was continued under, what I might call a gentleman's agreement.

The gentleman's agreement continued the same regime for the boundary areas as applied under the reciprocal agreements. That is, neither country would licence foreign fishing vessels to fish in the area of overlapping claims and there would be flag state enforcement by the United States and Canada. Canada and the United States now undertook an entirely new initiative to try to resolve both boundaries and fisheries on both coasts through the designation of special negotiators for this purpose, Ambassador Marcel Cadieux for Canada and Mr. Lloyd Cutler for the U.S.A.

I do not wish to dwell at length on the pros and cons of these complex negotiations. Suffice it to say that the negotiations for agreements on boundaries and fisheries on the west coast failed, but after a great deal of work by the special negotiators, the negotiating teams and the fishing industries of both sides, an agreement on the east coast was achieved, and signed on March 29, 1979.

The signing of the complex east coast fisheries agreement may be considered both a tribute to the negotiating teams and a reflection of the painstaking care by the negotiating teams to work out a fair balance between the fishing interests of both countries on a stock by stock and percentage point by percentage point basis.

First of all, the agreement refers the boundary issue to international adjudication. Next, and of overriding significance, the agreement provides for conservation of the fish stocks in the Georges Bank area for the periods both preceding and following the eventual settlement of the boundary by

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establishing a fisheries commission to manage the stocks, and effective arbitration mechanisms to ensure that those stocks will not suffer from any failure to reach agreement within the commission.

Finally, the agreement provides an insurance policy for the fishermen of both countries. No matter where the boundary is placed as a result of the international adjudication, each country is given a fixed percentage entitlement from the total allowable catch limit to be set each year for each stock. This will provide stability for the fishermen of both countries. But the system also provides for a considerable degree of flexibility. The agreed percentage shares are subject to review every ten years, with reductions in shares possible for a variety of reasons. There are ceilings on the amount of the possible reductions for each decade, and a maximum ceiling to avoid the possibility that any group of fishermen would find itself totally excluded from a stock in which it has had a traditional interest.

The situation on the west coast has progressed somewhat differently. Given the impasse reached in the boundaries and fisheries negotiations, discussions between the two countries have focused on individual stocks and, indeed, individual problems.

The salmon interception negotiations have carried on, continuing along the lines developed since the negotiations began in the early 1970s. A full report on the meeting in Seattle last week, which I understand met with some success, is now in the process of being prepared.

Canadian halibut fishermen continue to have access to U.S. waters off Alaska under arrangements worked out two years ago, which are to terminate on or about March 31, 1981. This was in exchange for allowing the U.S. fishermen access to groundfish off the Canadian Pacific coast. It is difficult to say at this time what is likely to happen to this area of reciprocity in 1981-82, but a major success for both countries is that we have kept the Halibut Commission in existence to provide an institutional framework for co-operation between the two countries on halibut conservation.

Finally, as hon. members know, we have had difficulties with the U.S.A. over albacore tuna in the Pacific coast. However, I believe we are well on the way toward a treaty which will provide substantial benefits to Canadian fishermen through access to U.S. ports to sell their tuna catches.

We should not, of course, overlook the fact that difficult issues lie ahead on the west coast. Boundaries remain to be settled, and we are still considerably short of a comprehensive framework to govern conservation and fisheries between Canada and the U.S.A. The difficulties we have had with the east coast agreement must inevitably give rise to misgivings about the possibilities, but the Government of Canada will continue to press for the adoption of a rational relationship with the U.S.A. on both our coasts so as to protect the interests of all those involved in the fishing industry.

On a final note—and I can see, Mr. Speaker, that my time is coming to a close—I believe the hon. member for Malpeque