Interim arrangements are especially necessary in the absence of agreed maritime boundaries off the coasts of the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon. While France has given itself enabling legislation to extend jurisdiction off any of its coasts, there has been no indication to date by France of its intentions regarding the area off St. Pierre and Miquelon. In the preamble to the Order-In-Council extending jurisdiction, we clearly indicated that the establishment of an extended fishing zone is not intended to prejudice ongoing consultations on the delimitation of waters with France, and this matter is also being pursued.

Another important factor in our fisheries relations with France is that the bilateral fisheries agreement concluded in 1972 grants certain rights to French vessels, and in particular, to vessels registered in St. Pierre and Miquelon, in the areas that are now under Canadian jurisdiction, that is, in our 12 mile territorial sea and in the Gulf. These rights, which are not modified by the creation of our new zones, were granted in exchange for the abandonment by France of important treaty rights in extensive areas dating back to the time of French settlement in the area. Similar rights were granted to Canadian vessels off the coast of St. Pierre and Miquelon. We have made very clear to the French that the rights granted to their vessels by this agreement are exclusive to France, and cannot in any way be claimed or exercised by other members of the European Community.

The 1972 bilateral agreement also refers to the possibility of extension by either country. In Article 2, the Agreement states that each country will, in the event of a modification of the areas under its jurisdiction, undertake on the basis of reciprocity to recognize the right of nationals of the other country to continue to fish in the modified areas, under rules and regulations to be applied by the country having jurisdiction, including, in our view, regulations on quotas, licensing and enforcement.