



news release

Date

March 29, 1989.

No. 063

For release

MINISTERS RESPOND TO PROPOSED U.S. ACTION ON SALMON AND HERRING

International Trade Minister John C. Crosbie and Fisheries and Oceans Minister Tom Siddon today expressed their disappointment at the announcement by the United States Trade Representative (USTR) of a determination of unfair trade practice under Section 301 of the U.S. Trade Act in the West Coast salmon and herring dispute.

This GATT dispute began in 1986 and culminated in a ruling in March 1988 that Canada's export prohibitions on unprocessed Pacific salmon and herring were inconsistent with the GATT. Accordingly the Canadian Government announced at that time that it would dismantle these measures.

"The Government of Canada is moving ahead with implementation of new measures for West Coast salmon and herring within a month," stated Minister Siddon. "We have said from the outset that we would put in place regulations that will maintain Canada's ability to manage and conserve the fisheries. We are committed to removing the present export restrictions on pink and sockeye salmon before the 1989 fishing season concurrent with the enactment of the new measures," Minister Siddon confirmed.

The proposed action outlined by the USTR identifies a number of Canadian fisheries products which could be subject to U.S. retaliatory action after a 30 day review period. Minister Crosbie said, "Such retaliatory action would be totally unjustified. Last March, we announced our intention to remove these restrictions and put in place a GATT-consistent fisheries conservation landing requirement. Simply removing the restrictions would jeopardize Canada's fisheries conservation regime. We have been consulting with the industry and the United States to avoid this and have devised measures that will provide the Americans with equitable access to unprocessed fish while meeting our conservation management objectives."

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"In pursuing its rights under the GATT, we expect the United States to abide by its GATT obligations," emphasized Minister Crosbie. Such obligations require that any retaliation must first be authorized by the GATT Contracting Parties.

Minister Crosbie pointed out that the U.S. is not initiating retaliation against the landing requirement. "It has always been our position that the U.S. should wait and see how the system works after the fishing season is underway. We do have provisions in both the GATT and the FTA to resolve disputes if there should subsequently be disagreements," said Minister Crosbie.

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