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IN-SHORE GROUND FISH ASSISTANCE
PROGRAMME CONTINUES UNTIL OCTOBER 1, 1978

In-shore fishermen in the Atlantic groundfish industry will continue to receive Special Assistance Payments until October 1, 1978, with no application of countervailing duties by the U.S., Secretary of State for External Affairs Don Jamieson and Fisheries Minister Roméo LeBlanc announced today. Because of improvements in resources, market returns and prices to fishermen, all Special Assistance Payments for the groundfish fishery will then come to an end.

Referring to the phasing out of special assistance payments, Mr. LeBlanc said "During the last four years, the fishing industry has gone through its worst crisis to the best prospects ever. The value of Canadian fishery products in 1977 reached the highest level ever. We have successfully set new directions for the industry, and the road is leading upwards."

The Temporary Assistance Program for the Canadian fishing industry gave most of its aid to the Atlantic groundfish industry, the biggest employer in all Canadian fisheries. Firms which four years ago faced bankruptcy, by last year had recovered enough to require no assistance payments. The across-the-board conditional grants program for processors officially ended

March 31, 1978.

Fishermen catching groundfish (except fresh fish for export) have been receiving deficiency payments of two cents per pound for first quality fish. Now, large trawlers over 90 feet will receive no more payments for any trip begun after March 31, 1978.

Payments also stop entirely for all groundfish vessels in British Columbia, where incomes for groundfish fishermen are higher than average. For the remaining groundfish fishermen in Canada, the two cent payments continue until October 1st, 1978.

When the Special Assistance Program began in 1974, the Canadian fishing industry faced the worst crisis it has known. In the Atlantic groundfish industry, unusually high costs (stemming partly from the energy crisis of 1973), scarce fish, and poor markets had produced heavy losses and forced producers toward bankruptcy. Other sectors of the fishing industry also faced grave problems.

To prevent collapse of communities and wide-spread dislocation, the federal government authorized emergency aid to the groundfish and other sectors of the fishing industry. After a thorough inquiry into the Canadian fishing industry, the government approved in 1975 a new and activist fisheries policy, outlined in the public document "Policy for Canada's Commercial Fisheries". The aim was to build a stronger, more stable industry and provide better, more responsive management, with the needs of society and especially of fishermen uppermost.

Foremost among actions undertaken was the achievement of the 200-mile limit. The number of foreign vessels fishing here shrank from more than 1,500 in 1974 to about 500 in 1977. Foreign ships now pay to fish only according to Canadian rules, for fish the Canadian industry doesn't use.

Other key actions under the new fisheries policy include application of strict licence control to almost every major fishery, because limiting the entry into the fisheries is the best way to conserve fish stocks and to raise the fishermen's income.

"Processors and fishing enterprises should continue submitting costs and earnings data in order that my Department can continue to monitor the economic performance for the best management of Canada's fishery," Mr. LeBlanc said.

"With good judgment over the next few years, we can build a better fishery than this country has ever known," Mr. LeBlanc said.