



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

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PROMULGATION OF FISHERIES CLOSING-LINES

A Statement Tabled in the House of Commons by the Honourable Jack Davis, Minister of Fisheries and Forestry, December 18, 1970.

With the adoption of the amendments to the Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act earlier this year, Parliament laid the foundation for the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing-zones comprising certain areas of the sea adjacent to the coast of Canada. As explained to the House on April 17, these provisions were enabling only and the creation of the new zones required executive action by way of an Order-in-Council. The required action is now being taken to draw "fisheries closing-lines" across the entrances to the Gulf of St. Lawrence, the Bay of Fundy, Queen Charlotte Sound and Dixon Entrance-Hecate Strait. A Government notice to this effect will be published in the *Canada Gazette* on December 26. The fisheries closing-lines will then be brought into force immediately upon the expiration of the mandatory 60-day waiting period imposed by the amended Territorial Sea and Fishing Zones Act.

There are special geographic and legal factors pertaining to the areas affected by the Government's action, and Canada has historic and other claims to these areas. The establishment of exclusive fishing-zones in the bodies of water under reference, as has been made clear on previous occasions, can in no way be construed as an abandonment of those claims by Canada. It is also well known that the new fishing-zones we are creating are of vital importance to Canadian fishing interests. The Gulf of St. Lawrence alone has had landings of up to 550 million pounds valued at some \$31 million, the Bay of Fundy's landings of 300 million pounds are worth \$12 million, while the Pacific coast area contained within Dixon Entrance and Queen Charlotte Sound has landings of 180 million pounds, worth \$37 million a year.

These are, of course, important considerations, but the Government objectives in introducing this imaginative concept of fisheries closing-lines go beyond the securing of immediate economic benefits, as was outlined by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in his statement to the House of April 17. On that occasion, he pointed out that:

"Now that the world is becoming aware that living resources are not infinitely renewable and that they can, indeed, be exhausted or depleted by over-

exploitation or wiped out by means of pollution of the sea, it is vitally necessary to apply to the exploitation of these resources some of the techniques which have been developed for offshore mineral resources. The action now being taken by Canada is a step in this direction, a step toward a more logical and systematic approach to the management of living marine resources.

"Exclusive rights to harvest may be necessary, but they are not an end in themselves. The end we have in mind is conservation and rational management, and for this purpose we require jurisdiction. That jurisdiction, however, does not rule out the possibility of sharing fisheries-exploitation with other countries; it does, however, allow us to set rules for that exploitation, to impose licensing requirements if necessary and thus to share the financial burden of conservation as well as the financial rewards of exploitation."

The fisheries closing-lines being promulgated by the Government represent a very important step forward in the conservation and protection of Canada's coastal fisheries. It must be recognized, however, that there is also a need for international as well as national action if we are to preserve the marine environment and its living resources for future generations. For this reason, the Government has been consulting with other interested countries for more than two years with respect to the convening of a Law of the Sea conference which would deal effectively with these problems.

The possibility of convening such a conference has been under discussion in the current session of the United Nations General Assembly, and the Assembly has now resolved that a conference should be held in 1973. It is Canada's hope that there will emerge from that conference a rational system of fisheries conservation, management and exploitation in the common interest of all countries, including a clear recognition of the special rights and responsibilities of coastal states with respect to the living resources of the sea, and particularly the protection of the Atlantic and Pacific salmon stocks, which are being maintained at considerable cost by the efforts of coastal states such as Canada and the U.S.A.

In addition, it is Canada's view that the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment to be convened in Stockholm in June of 1972 will offer an important, and, indeed, crucial opportunity for the international community to adopt a bold and constructive approach to the preservation of the marine environment. The living resources of the sea are the greatest wealth of the sea, and it is those resources, of course, which are most directly threatened by marine pollution. The Stockholm conference, we hope, will include among its achievements the laying of a foundation for a global attack on marine pollution, including the work on this problem which we hope will be undertaken at the proposed conference on the Law of the Sea.

Having established the new fishing-zones, the Government intends to conclude negotiations for the phasing-out of the fishing activities of certain countries which have traditionally fished in the areas concerned -- namely, Britain, Denmark, France, Italy, Norway, Portugal and Spain. Canada has recently entered into an agreement on reciprocal fishing privileges with the U.S.A. and the activities of United States fishermen in the areas concerned will not be affected by the promulgation of our fisheries closing-lines. There

are, as well, other treaty arrangements with the United States, and also France, off Canada's east coast, and similarly the rights accruing under these treaties will be respected.

There may be differences of view as to whether or not a phasing-out period should be granted for countries which have carried on traditional fishing practices in areas over which a coastal state has established fisheries jurisdiction, as we are now doing in Canada's special bodies of water. There can, however, be no such differences of view with respect to areas which have become part of Canada's 12-mile territorial sea.

The extension of Canada's territorial sea to 12 miles and the establishment of exclusive Canadian fishing-zones in the special bodies of water will permit us to conclude expeditiously the negotiations begun in 1964 following the passage of the Territorial Seas and Fishing Zones Act.

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