They'll Do It Every Time

By Jimmy Hatlo

Trawlers Fight Extension of Off-Shore Limits in Open Sea

By PETER KNOX
United Press International

London —(UPI)— The oceans of the world are shrinking fast for fishermen.

The "keep-out" sign is going up against trawlermen in many areas as nation after nation imposes new off-shore limits to protect its own fishing industry. Just this month one such situation became so serious there was talk of armed conflict between France and Brazil.

The old law of the sea barred foreign fishermen from coming within three miles of another nation's shores.

This limit was based on the range of 18th century shore batteries and, in the eyes of many maritime countries, now is as outdated as the old guns themselves.

They argue that large foreign trawlers using scientific gear and detection devices must be kept at a distance or their coastal waters will soon be outfished.

Seek New Limits

At various international conferences attempts have been made to get agreement on new limits of six or 12 miles, but all have been unsuccessful.

In the vanguard of the fight against extension have been such countries as Britain with large fishing fleets but relatively small coast lines. Britain, for example, can catch in its home waters only about 10 to 15 per cent of the fish it needs for local consumption.

At the last law of the sea conference in Geneva in 1960 the United States and Canada put forward a compromise proposal that missed becoming law by only one vote.

It provided for a territorial limit of six miles with a further six-mile zone in which coastal states would normally have exclusive fishing rights. To compensate nations that had traditionally fished in the waters of another state the proposal provided for a 10-year "phase-out" period during which they could carry on fishing in the 6-12 mile zone.

The proposal was actually approved by 54 votes to 28 but the majority of 26 was just short of the required two-thirds needed to make it law.

The failure of this and earlier conferences meant that the legal limit of three miles remained the internationally recognized line.

This was too much for some countries, especially those which depend heavily on their fishing industries as a main source of income.

Iceland led the revolt by unilaterally imposing a 12-mile limit.

Britain, which has traditionally fished in Icelandic waters, fought a rearguard action, escorting trawlers into the dispute zone for a time, but in the end it recognized Iceland's claims.

Follow Iceland

Norway and Russia followed Iceland in imposing 12-mile limits, and now Denmark has done the same around Greenland. It is under presure also to do it around the Faroes.

This means that in northern waters which provide much of the world's best fish the 12-mile range is becoming the normal rule for fishermen.

Britain, which has stuck to the three-mile limit itself to justify its claims elsewhere, may soon be going into the 12-mile business itself. Fishermen here are putting pressure on the government to impose it.

The Times of London predicted recently that it will not be long before 12 miles is the accepted limit everywhere.

The question that bothers trawlermen who fish foreign grounds is whether the limit will stop there.

Authoritative diplomatic sources say there is little sign of any enthusiasm for another law of the sea conference. Not this year at least. It may take an actual shooting war somewhere over fishing rights to prompt the next one.

Dean McCulloch to Speak at Meeting

Dean W. F. McCulloch of the school of forestry, Oregon State university, will speak and present slides on Quebec, Canada, at the meeting of the Siskiyou chapter of American Foresters Saturday, April 6, at the Rogue Valley Country club.

Other special guests at the meeting will be Professor and Mrs. Okazoki of Kyoto university, Japan. Professor Okazoki is a visiting professor at Oregon State.

Wives and friends of the members are invited to the social hour, which will be held at 6:30 p.m. and to the dinner at 7:30 p.m. to be followed by the lecture.

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