

On October 12, 1984, the World Court in the Hague handed down its decision on the long-standing dispute between Canada and the U.S. on the ownership and fishing rights in the Georges Bank/ Gulf of Maine area. The Court decided in a 4-1 judgement that approximately 5/6 of the territory would belong to the U.S. while the remaining 1/6 went to Canada, who had asked for at least a third of the area.

The impact on the Canadian fishing industry and the oil and gas explorations will be noticeable. Several permits for exploratory wells have been issued for areas that are now outside Canadian jurisdiction; and the scallop fishery in Nova Scotia could be severely affected as the higher percentage of stocks lie in what is now U.S. territory.

Some sources feel that the N.S. scallop fleet could be cut by about one third with the loss of approximately 400 jobs at sea. And because scallop fisherman make so much more money than other fisherman the effects will be felt down the line from boatbuilders to merchants.

Meanwhile, the U.S. fishermen could pressure Washington for tighter trade restrictions on Canadian fish coming into the States-as "retaliation" for the loss of the Georges Banks scallop beds, Maine lobster beds and New England haddock spawning grounds to N.S. The U.S. fishermen are already upset by what they feel is unfair gov't. subsidization of the Canadian fishing industry.

Needless to say there will much more discussion between the two countries while they try to resolve their disappointments.

(Sources- Globe and Mail, newscasts etc.)

