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NAMES OF FEATURES BEYOND A SINGLE SOVEREIGNTY

UNDERSEA FEATURES

Presented by the Government of Canada*

Introduction

1. Canada is a country bordered by three oceans: the Atlantic on the east, the Pacific on the west and the Arctic on the north. Recent measurements of the Canadian coast line, including major and medium-sized islands beyond the mainland, produced the astonishing total of 156,000 statute miles.
2. The exploitation of the natural resources of Canada's off-shore waters has been the subject of scientific study for a long period. The search for oil under the sea-bed has accelerated. Protection of the natural environment in the utilization of sea resources has become a matter of urgent concern. In these circumstances, it is natural for Canada to take a keen interest in the identification and designation of undersea natural features.

I. RELATED CANADIAN AGENCIES

3. Hydrographic survey work in Canada under Canadian Government auspices began in 1883. The Canadian Hydrographic Service was established in 1904. This work was primarily directed towards ensuring safe surface navigation of coastal and inland waters, but of necessity embraced some investigation of sea-bottom features.

* Paper prepared by G.F. Delaney, Chief, Toponymy Division, Department of Energy, Mines and Resources; and Executive Secretary of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names.

4. During the past decade, a consolidation of agencies concerned with inland and ocean waters has been made under a Department of the Environment. It includes an Inland Waters Branch and a Marine Sciences Branch. The latter performs hydrographic surveys and oceanographic research.

5. Canada also is a member of the General Bathymetric Chart of the Oceans (GEBCO) organization of the International Hydrographic Bureau, and produces general bathymetric charts of specified areas.

II. CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN UNITED NATIONS WORK ON UNDERSEA FEATURE NAMES

6. Subsequent to the United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names at Geneva in 1967, Canada has had a representative on the Group of Experts on the Standardization of Geographical Names. A representative has participated in the meetings of the Group of Experts at United Nations headquarters in 1970 and 1971. He is a member of the Working Group concerned with undersea feature names, and presented papers to the Group of Experts concerning naming principles, generic terms and the control and dissemination of undersea feature nomenclature.

7. Canadian interest has been increased because of the production of large scale bathymetric charts. Four have been published covering areas along the Atlantic coast. These are the first bathymetric charts issued by Canada aside from the small scale general charts compiled for GEBCO.

III. RECENT CANADIAN ACTIVITY

8. The Canadian Permanent Committee On Geographical Names appointed a sub-committee to deal with undersea feature names in 1967.

9. This sub-committee includes the representative on the Group of Experts in its membership, which is composed of hydrographic, oceanographic and environmental specialists. Thus most of the organizations interested in undersea work have an input in the sub-committee's work. The sub-committee has devoted considerable time to a study of undersea feature generic terms.

10. While this consideration is still incomplete, it is felt that the interim reports of a working group reporting to the sub-committee may be of interest to other countries. These reports will be made available as addendum 1, "International nomenclature of ocean bottom features", and addendum 2, "Glossary of definitions of undersea terms". It should be noted that the sub-committee has not yet accepted the majority of the terms in the glossary.
