

FOR PRESS:



P. M. No. 72/1968

CONTROL OF ILLEGAL FISHING

The Prime Minister, Mr. John Gorton, this evening replied to the telegram he had received from the Premier of Queensland, Mr. Pizzey, in regard to contravention of fisheries laws.

Here is the text of the Prime Minister's telegram to Mr. Pizzey:-

"In reply to your telegram received this morning, the Commonwealth has had under examination ways in which illegal fishing operations might be controlled and Australia's marine resources protected. Recently extra patrol boats have become available to the R. A. N. and these will allow the coverage and frequency of sea patrols to be considerably increased within Australia's 12-mile exclusive fishing zone. The R. A. A. F. also will participate regularly in patrolling activities particularly over northern fishing grounds. It is anticipated that amendments to Commonwealth legislation will shortly be proposed in order to give the necessary legal powers to control the taking of all sedentary species, including clams, from the Continental Shelf, including the Reef. As to the incident reported in your telegram, this has been brought to the attention of the Chinese Embassy who have been made aware that further such acts would render the vessels concerned liable to arrest and legal proceedings. The Embassy said that the Chinese Government fully appreciated the need to avoid breaches of the Australian Fisheries Act. The Embassy would do everything possible to ensure that Chinese vessels respected the 12-mile limit and the Chinese Government was being informed immediately about the recent incidents. The help received from the Queensland authorities in reporting the activities of foreign fishing vessels is much appreciated and it is hoped that the present valuable co-operation between Commonwealth and State in this field will continue. I am writing to you separately on this matter."

---

CANBERRA  
23 July 1968