

Continental Shelf Act 1964 of 15 April 1964

An Act to make provision as to the exploration and exploitation of the continental shelf; to enable effect to be given to certain provisions of the Convention on the High Seas done in Geneva on 29th April 1958; and on matters connected with those purposes.

1. Exploration and exploitation of continental shelf

(1) Any rights exercisable by the United Kingdom outside territorial waters with respect to the sea-bed and subsoil and their natural resources, except so far as they are exercisable in relation to coal, are hereby vested in Her Majesty.

(2) In relation to any coal with respect to which those rights are exercisable the Coal Industry Nationalisation Act 1946 shall apply as it applies in relation to coal in Great Britain, but with the modification that the National Coal Board shall not engage in any operations for the purpose of working or getting the coal without the consent of the Minister of Power, which may be given on such terms and subject to such conditions as he thinks fit.

(3) In relation to any petroleum with respect to which those rights are exercisable sections 2 and 6 of the Petroleum (Production) Act 1934 (which relate to the granting of licences to search and bore for, and get, petroleum) shall apply as they apply in relation to petroleum in Great Britain and section 3 of that Act (which enables persons holding licences under that Act to acquire ancillary rights) and section 5 of that Act (which makes provision as to receipts and expenditure under that Act) shall have effect as if this subsection were part of that Act.

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(7) Her Majesty may from time to time by Order in Council designate any area as an area within which the rights mentioned in subsection (1) of this section are exercisable, and any area so designated is in this Act referred to as a designated area.

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2. Protection of installations in designated areas

(1) The Minister of Power may for the purpose of protecting any installation in a designated area by order made by statutory instrument prohibit ships, subject to any exceptions provided by the order, from entering without his consent such part of that area as may be specified in the order.

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3. Application of criminal and civil law

(1) Any act or omission which -

(a) takes place on, under or above an installation in a designated area or any waters within five hundred metres of such an installation; and

(b) would, if taking place in any part of the United Kingdom, constitute an offence under the law in force in that part,

shall be treated for the purposes of that law as taking place in that part.

(2) Her Majesty may by Order in Council make provision for the determination, in accordance with the law in force in such part of the United Kingdom as may be specified in the Order, of questions arising out of acts or omissions taking place in a designated area, in connection with the exploration of the sea-bed or subsoil or the exploitation of their natural resources, and for conferring jurisdiction with respect to such questions on courts in any part of the United Kingdom so specified.

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4. Safety of navigation

(1) Part II of the Coast Protection Act 1949 (which requires the consent of the Minister of Transport to the carrying out of certain works on the seashore if obstruction of danger to navigation is likely to result) except section 34(1)(b) (which restricts the deposit of materials) shall apply in relation to any part of the sea-bed in a designated area as it applies in relation to the sea-shore; and section 46 of that Act (local inquiries) shall extend to any matter arising under this section.

5. Discharge of oil

(1) If any oil to which section 1 of the Oil in Navigable Waters Act 1955 applies or any mixture containing not less than one hundred parts of such oil in a million parts of the mixture is discharged or escapes into any part of the sea -

(a) from a pipe-line; or

(b) (otherwise than from a ship) as the result of any operations for the exploration of the sea-bed and subsoil or the exploitation of their natural resources in a designated area,

the owner of the pipe-line or, as the case may be, the person carrying on the operations shall be guilty of an offence unless he proves, in the case of a discharge from a place in his occupation, that it was due to the act of a person who was there without his permission (express or implied) or, in the case of an escape, that he took all reasonable care to prevent it and that as soon as practicable after it was discovered all reasonable steps were taken for stopping or reducing it.

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8. Submarine cables and pipe-lines

(1) Section 3 (punishment for damaging cables) of the Submarine Telegraph Act 1885 and Article IV and paragraph 1 of Article VII (liability to pay compensation for damage to cables and for loss of gear sacrificed to avoid such damage) of the Convention set out in the schedule to that Act (which by virtue of section 2 thereof has the force of law) shall apply in relation to all submarine cables under the high seas (and not only to those to which that Convention applies) and to pipe-lines under the high seas; and the said section 3 shall be construed as referring to telephonic as well as telegraphic communication, and, in relation to high-voltage power cables and to pipe-lines, as if the words from "in such manner" to the end of subsection (1) were omitted.

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9. Use and supply of natural gas

(1) The following provisions of this section shall have effect with respect to the use and supply of any natural gas gotten in pursuance of a licence under the Petroleum (Production) Act 1934 as applied by section 1(3) of this Act, and section 52 of the Gas Act 1948 shall not apply to any such gas.

(2) The holder of the licence shall not without the consent of the Minister of Power use the gas in Great Britain and no person shall without that consent supply the gas to any other person at premises in Great Britain.

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11. Prosecution of offences, etc.

(1) Proceedings for any offence under this Act (including an offence under another Act as applied by or under this Act and anything that is an offence by virtue of section 3(1) of this Act) may be taken, and the offence may for all incidental purposes be treated as having been committed, in any place in the United Kingdom.

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13. Short title

This Act may be cited as the Continental Shelf Act 1964.