

states launching and recovering astronauts and space objects with the sovereign rights of states on whose territory search and rescue operations may be conducted. But its overriding concern is for the safety and prompt return of the "envoy of mankind" - the astronaut.

The next task for the Outer Space Legal Sub-Committee is to draft an agreement on liability for damage caused by objects launched into outer space. Given the dramatic increase in the number and size of space objects launched each year, it is inevitable that accidents will one day occur in which damage will be caused on earth. International lawyers are seeking to prepare for this much in the same manner as they did when aeroplanes were first introduced.

Canada is now taking a leading part in the United Nations study of the technical feasibility and related implications of one of the newest developments in space technology - direct broadcasting from satellites, beaming television programmes from one country straight into the homes of another. Satellites are of great interest to Canada, as it is our intention to establish our own domestic satellite communications system. So we collaborated with Sweden in encouraging the establishment of a special United Nations working group to study the subject and in presenting to this group a joint paper. The Swedish-Canadian paper discussed such legal problems as equitable access to the communications and other systems, preventing libel and slander, and protecting copyrights. These are matters on which there are few, if any, existing international legal rules. There will be a great need for the protection of public and private interests, and hence for more international agreements, as this field of technology opens up. These are only some of the legal consequences of this tremendous development which will have profound and far-reaching social and political effects.

The law of outer space is developing very quickly, in an orderly and deliberate manner, despite deep ideological divergences. Development of this kind illustrates the way international law evolves by the gradual codification of rules which are perceived by states to be in their common interests. It also shows the value of the United Nations as a multilateral forum for the codification of international law.

The United Nations is now turning to the development of a new legal regime for the sea-bed and ocean-floor in areas beyond the limits of national jurisdiction.

Man has long used the sea for transport and he has always taken from the sea an important part of his food supply. These traditional uses of the sea have inevitably given rise to conflict - and to the law of the sea. In the development of that law, two conceptions have contended: first, the conception of the closed sea under the jurisdiction and control of particular states; second, the conception of the open sea accessible to all nations on an equal basis. From the eighteenth century on, coastal states recognized they could extend their sovereignty over only a narrow belt of the waters round their shores. This "territorial sea" was widely accepted as being three miles in breadth.

Today there is lively and growing interest in the sea and its resources. New types of claim to national jurisdiction are evoking new responses. The law of the sea has entered a period of rapid evolution, rich in promise but also in difficulty.