

(Mr. Jessel, France)

Another question of the first magnitude is that of outer space. Our session succeeded, not without difficulty, in reaching agreement initially on a mandate, subsequently on a Chairman and finally, by virtue of the skill shown by the latter, on a programme of work. The Committee was consequently able to tackle the substantive questions and to engage, during a few brief weeks, in exchanges of views and the start of a dialogue. We have ourselves expressed or reiterated our wishes and proposals in this connection. We have also drawn up a fairly long list of questions: we hope to receive replies to them when the discussion is able to resume, and it should resume as soon as possible. We know, and I have pointed out in the past, how important are the current bilateral negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States in this respect and we have also expressed our concern to avoid anything that might prejudice them. However, it is quite obvious that, apart from their bilateral aspects, the problems of outer space also comprise multilateral aspects; that is, after all, why we all agreed that the Conference on Disarmament should take up the question. But who could claim that, after a few weeks, the Conference has completed the topic, that it has exhausted the subject-matter falling within its competence? We cannot imagine that anyone, for any reason whatsoever, would oppose the continuation at the next session, of the work begun in the Ad Hoc Committee. Neither Governments nor public opinion would understand that and we are full of hope that the work begun in such a promising, albeit difficult, manner during this session will be continued next year. That is also what Ambassador Alfarargi, Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee, said in the statement he has just made.