

Moon and other Celestial Bodies. On October 10, 1967, the Treaty came into force, an event which inspired many delegates to praise the Treaty as an important step in the peaceful development of outer space. Another matter which commanded the interest of the First Committee was the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. This Conference had originally been scheduled for September 1967, but had been postponed to August 1968 by the fifth special session of the General Assembly to allow more time for preparation. Many delegations, including that of Canada, felt that effective participation, especially by the developing nations, was necessary if the Conference was to be a success. The Canadian delegation, therefore, played an active role in the drafting and tabling of a resolution calling attention to the Conference and endorsing its objectives. This resolution was adopted unanimously.

Shortly before the Assembly was due to adjourn, informal discussions had advanced matters to such an extent that an agreement on the rescue and return of astronauts, and the return of their space vehicles, was ready for consideration by the General Assembly. The agreement was taken up in plenary on December 20, and a resolution co-sponsored by Canada and 14 other countries was tabled commending the agreement and calling for its signature and ratification by all states as soon as possible. Subsequently, the resolution was approved unanimously. Both the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union applauded the successful conclusion and approval of this humanitarian agreement by the General Assembly as one of the major achievements of its twenty-second session.

#### **Maltese Proposal on the Sea-Bed and Ocean-Floor**

While some of the Specialized Agencies have been concerned for some time with the study of a number of questions involving the use and the resources of the seas and the United Nations considered some aspects of the matter earlier at the Geneva Conference on the Law of the Sea in 1958, the United Nations has not previously considered the status of the abyssal depths of the oceans, which have great potential significance — economic, political and perhaps military. The ultimate aim of the Maltese proposal is the internationalization and demilitarization of the abyssal depths. It was generally recognized that the Maltese initiative in introducing this item was a timely one, and, indeed, it may well prove to be one of the more important subjects with which the twenty-second session has had to deal.

The proposals advanced primarily by the Maltese delegation and in discussion of the item have far-reaching legal, political and economic implications, which merit careful consideration. A careful approach to so complex a question seemed indicated. Thus, after three weeks of negotiations, a draft resolution was formulated by a working group through the efforts of about 40 participating delegations, including Canada. The resolution adopted in the First Committee and subsequently (unanimously) in plenary, calls for the establishment of an