

(Mr. de la Gorce, France)

It seems to me that our Committee has drawn this lesson for itself and that it has done the best it could in the very short space of time available to it and within the narrow limits set by its working conditions, both external and internal.

The Committee's efforts have to a large extent been concentrated on the important issues of chemical weapons.

The Working Group on Chemical Weapons has achieved praiseworthy results. The French delegation had some doubts at first about the method of contact groups suggested by the Chairman. It is glad to be able to say that its doubts were unjustified, and it wishes to compliment Ambassador Sujka whose innovations in the organization of the work proved entirely successful. The establishment of the nine contact groups permitted a thorough consideration of the various elements of a convention: it served to highlight those aspects on which a consensus was in sight; more particularly, it made it easier to tackle the very many problems remaining to be resolved, including those of the scope of the convention, definitions, declarations of stocks and the initiation and rate of their destruction and the problem of methods of international verification.

In some cases the contact groups adopted "working hypotheses", which might serve as a basis for finding solutions for the outstanding problems. The French delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the co-ordinators of the contact groups; their reports, which are annexed to the report of the Working Group, should prove very useful during our subsequent work.

With respect to radiological weapons, the consultations actively conducted by Ambassador Wegener, the Chairman of the Working Group, have had the merit, it seems, of persuading certain delegations to adopt an attitude which will permit the resumption of negotiations on the principal object of the convention in question: the prohibition of radiological weapons. The working paper presented by the Chairman will undoubtedly constitute a useful basis for this purpose.

As regards the question of the protection of nuclear installations, which several delegations wish to be dealt with at the same time, the proposal put forward by the delegation of Japan will perhaps help those delegations to find a solution in an appropriate framework.

A third Working Group has held meetings during our summer session, in its case for the first time -- the Working Group set up to examine the issues relating to verification which would arise in connection with a nuclear test-ban treaty. On 5 August last, the French delegation explained why it felt unable to participate in that Working Group. Its attitude in that respect, I should like to repeat, in no way means that it underestimates the importance attaching to the elaboration of an effective and non-discriminatory system of international verification.

The other items on our agenda have been discussed by the Committee itself.

Item 2 -- cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament -- rightly occupies the most important place in our report. Once again, however, the report reflects the differing positions of States members rather than any progress in the approach to these fundamental problems. We continue to believe that progress will depend on a correct appreciation of the relative sizes of national nuclear forces and of the hierarchy of responsibilities flowing therefrom, and on respect for the