

During the twenty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Sixth Committee gave consideration to the International Law Commission draft articles on special missions. Decisions have now been taken by the Sixth Committee on 29 of 50 articles and the work towards agreement on the remainder will be continued next year. When final agreement is achieved, a Convention on Special Missions will be adopted by the General Assembly and opened for signature in the same way as have the Conventions on Diplomatic and Consular Immunities in the recent past.

In the course of the past year, Canada played an active role in the United Nations on the question of defining aggression. A 35-member Special Committee, including Canada, met in Geneva from June 4 to July 5, 1968, to consider the question. At the twenty-third session of the United Nations General Assembly, it was decided to reconstitute the Special Committee, which will meet again in 1969 to pursue its consideration of the question of defining aggression.

In 1968, Canada also maintained its active participation in the study of principles of international law concerning friendly relations and co-operation among states. The United Nations Special Committee dealing with this subject (which has already reached general agreement on four of seven principles) met in New York September 9 to 30. The main item on the agenda was consideration of the two principles: (1) that states shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity and political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations and (2) of equal rights and self-determination of peoples. Substantial progress was made towards agreement on the first principle, but the Committee was unable to carry out a study in depth on proposals concerning the second, owing to lack of time. At the General Assembly, it was decided that the Special Committee should meet once again before the twenty-fourth session of the Assembly. It is expected that final agreement will be reached on one or both of the two principles set out above which, together with the principle of non-intervention in matters within the domestic jurisdiction of any state in accordance with the Charter, remain to be dealt with by the Committee.

Law of the Sea

During 1968, the international community, within the framework of the United Nations, continued to be concerned with consideration of various aspects of the Law of the Sea and exploitation of the sea's resources. Canada actively participated in the 35-member United Nations Ad Hoc Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Sea-bed and Ocean-Floor beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction, which held three meetings during the year. As a result of the debate, which followed the Ad Hoc Committee's report to the twenty-third General Assembly, it was decided to establish a Permanent Committee of 42 members (including Canada) to succeed the ad hoc group. In addition, three other resolutions were adopted: (1) on pollution of the marine environment; (2) requesting a study by the Secretary-General on the question of establishing "international machinery" for promotion of the exploration and exploitation of the resources of the sea-bed and ocean-floor; (3) in favour of an international decade of oceanographic development.