

The major topic discussed at the United Nations this year was the question of disarmament. To a world living in the shadow of nuclear weapons, this is a grim and vital issue.

But it is not a new problem. Canadian representatives with those of other nations have been trying to find an acceptable solution to it for eleven years. During the past year we assisted in the preparation of proposals for a first stage of disarmament - proposals which would contribute not only to our own security and that of our allies but also to the security of the Soviet Union and its associates. The General Assembly endorsed the basic principles of those proposals but the Soviet Union rejected them, even as a basis for discussion, and called them valueless. The Soviet Union has even refused to continue negotiations in the Disarmament Commission of the United Nations, although the Assembly reconstructed the Commission to meet the Soviet point of view. So the Soviet Union, once again, bears the responsibility for having frustrated the painstaking efforts of almost every other country to come to grips with a problem affecting our very lives.

Although the Assembly's hopes for progress in disarmament thus went by the board, something has been done, on the other hand, in easing the tensions that had been building up in the Middle East.

There was evident at the recent session of the Assembly a notable, if tentative, spirit of compromise on Middle Eastern questions which, if encouraged, might lead us at long last towards more peaceful relations. Included among the factors that have helped to ease tension and preserve peace in that area is the presence of the United Nations Emergency Force under the command of a Canadian, Lieutenant General E.L.M. Burns.

Canadian troops make up one-fifth of that Force of 6,000 and we are proud of the work all have done in arresting a movement that might have resulted in war. The value of such a force in such a situation has been fully demonstrated. Its example may well lead us to provide for a United Nations emergency force which could be swiftly recruited and deployed when similar needs arise on other fronts.

Colombo Plan

Turning now to our programmes of assistance to less developed countries, there is no single task Canada has undertaken in the international field which deserves more support than, and promises such beneficial results as, the Colombo Plan. This form of co-operation, which is designed to assist our friends in South and South-East Asia, to raise their standards of living is an investment in friendship, peace and security. Canada's budget of Colombo Plan aid amounts to