

speed at which space exploration develops should imbue us with a very real sense of urgency lest our efforts be overtaken by events. We hope, therefore, that in the coming year the legal sub-committee will be able to proceed more quickly and we are encouraged in our hopes by the statement in the Outer Space Committee of Ambassador Morozov on September 13 of this year that the USSR is willing "to examine, within the framework of the treaty, not only questions of rescue of astronauts but also the return of astronauts and space vehicles in cases of accident or emergency landing." The Canadian delegation, for its part, will do everything in its power to bring us closer to this goal.

The other difficult issue facing the Legal Sub-Committee concerns liability for damages caused by the launching of objects into outer space. Here again, progress is slow, but some areas of agreement have been staked out, in particular on the definition of damage, in which the Canadian delegation has played an active part. The importance of obtaining agreement on liability becomes immediately apparent when we realize how many objects are launched into outer space every year. Launchings of artificial satellites and inter-planetary probes have become so common-place that they do not create headlines anymore, and it is a tribute to the scientific genius of the space-powers and to their careful preparations that no major accidents have occurred yet. But again it would be unrealistic to expect that accidents can forever be prevented. The number of launchings is bound to increase as ever more states, either unilaterally or through international co-operation, join in the exploration and use of outer space, and sooner or later we must be prepared to deal with the consequences of an accident. Our work must be done thoroughly, but that does not imply that it must also be done slowly. Careful consideration must be given to all aspects of the problem and at the same time the need for international agreements becomes ever more pressing. An early convening next year of the Legal Sub-committee would be desirable to deal with outstanding issues, so that when the Twenty-third Session of the General Assembly considers the work of the Legal Sub-committee some significant progress will have been made.

Little need be said here about the still elusive definition and utilization of outer space. It is by no means easy to define outer space in a form which can be both legally and technically acceptable to all. Perhaps the matter could be reviewed regularly so that when additional data increase the possibility of reaching such a definition, this question could be taken up again.