

Non-Proliferation Treaty

The other major achievement in this field during the past year was the entry into force on March 5 of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Canada, as is well known, was among the first to sign and ratify that Treaty, the culmination of more than five years of negotiations.

The Treaty represents a recognition by its parties of the importance of bringing into being a régime to ensure that no additional powers develop nuclear weapons capability and thus add greater weight to the nuclear Sword of Damocles that already hangs over our world. I should like to make clear at this stage, however, that, important as the entry into force of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty undoubtedly is, the problem of nuclear proliferation will remain in existence until the Treaty is acceded to by all powers with the technological capacity to produce nuclear weapons.

I think we should agree with Samuel Johnson that "example is more efficacious than precept". No better example could be set by the super-powers at this time than an increased effort to ban all nuclear testing. For, unless the Treaty becomes all-embracing, the objectives which it is designed to meet will remain in part unfulfilled. For this reason, the adherence of China, as well as of France, to the disarmament negotiations generally, and to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the Partial Test-Ban Treaties in particular, is, in our view, essential in the long run.

The two encouraging achievements to which I have just referred are obviously related to the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban and highlight its importance. If any further emphasis were required of the importance of halting testing, it was provided, as Secretary-General U Thant pointed out at the close of the commemorative session, in the fact that the opening of that commemorative session was marked by major nuclear-weapons tests by three of the world's nuclear powers. The Partial Test Ban of 1963 represented the best possible compromise step at that time towards the total prohibition of testing, but the partial test ban has not served to curtail the nuclear-arms race. In this regard, the United Nations General Assembly at its last session adopted Resolutions 2604 A and B (XXIV), each of which underlined, in its own way, the urgent need for the cessation of nuclear and thermonuclear tests.

We recognize that progress towards a complete ban on testing depends, in the first instance, on an improvement in international relations and in the international atmosphere, more especially among the nuclear powers. But, pending the evolution of a political climate in which a decision can be made to ban further testing, we have urged that the most constructive approach within the Committee on Disarmament and elsewhere would be to study ways to narrow the existing difference of opinion on the means of providing effective assurance that all countries would comply with any comprehensive test ban.

As a negotiating body, the Committee on Disarmament has an obligation, when faced with important differences of views on questions such as verification,