

CANADIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Text of statement to be made by the Canadian Representative, Mr. L.H. Legault, in the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of the Seabed and the Ocean Floor Beyond the Limits of National Jurisdiction
on Friday, March 6, 1970.

Very nearly three years have passed since an initiative of the delegation of Malta added to the agenda of the United Nations a proposal calling for the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the seabed and ocean floor beyond the limits of national jurisdiction, and the use of their resources in the interests of mankind. That proposal has since been studied in both the Ad Hoc Committee and the Standing Committee established for this purpose; it has been extensively debated in three sessions of the General Assembly; and one of its most important aspects has been the subject of exhaustive negotiations in the ENDC (later the CCD). In the course of these studies and these debates and negotiations, the political, legal, economic and military questions raised by the seabed proposal have been searchingly explored and a number of very useful documents have been produced. The Canadian delegation, agreeing as it does with our Chairman's recommendation in this regard, does not propose today to review all that has gone on before, nor to restate the positions it has adopted on various questions. Rather, we intend to touch on certain points of a largely political nature which hopefully may be of value in promoting a constructive approach to the work of the two sub-committees which are to begin their sessions next week.

The Canadian delegation believes that the Seabed Committee has in fact reached a substantial measure of agreement on certain fundamental principles as a result of the deliberations which have taken place in this and other bodies since 1967. Unfortunately, however, the Committee has not been able to concretize that measure of agreement. It has, so to speak, been unable or unwilling to agree that it does agree. It has not succeeded in formulating a declaration of principles reflecting the very real progress made; even though in our view such a declaration is basic to the mandate with which the Committee has been charged.

The Canadian delegation believes that perhaps the most useful task which might be undertaken during the present session of the Seabed Committee would be to identify and then to attempt to overcome the difficulties which have inhibited the Committee from giving form and