

Working to Stop the Arms Race

THE Conference of the Committee on Disarmament (CCD) held two sessions in Geneva in 1970, from February 17 to April 30 and from June 16 to September 3, during which attention was directed mainly to negotiations on a seabed arms-control treaty and supplementary measures to ban chemical and biological weapons of warfare. On a Canadian initiative, the Committee also gave consideration to the existing and potential international capability for seismological monitoring of an underground nuclear-test ban. Aspects of general and complete disarmament were discussed and the Geneva Committee reported to the twenty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on its efforts to prepare a program of action for the Disarmament Decade that had been proclaimed by the twenty-fourth General Assembly for the 1970s.

Non-Proliferation Treaty

The Disarmament Decade opened auspiciously on March 5, 1970, when the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) came into force through its ratification by 43 states. Canada had been one of the first "near-nuclear" nations to sign the treaty — on July 23, 1968 — and to ratify it — on January 8, 1969. The entry into force of this treaty was considered to be a major achievement in the field of arms control and disarmament; to date it has been signed by 99 nations and ratified by 63. Unfortunately, two nuclear powers, France and China, have not acceded and a number of "near-nuclear" nations have not yet signed or ratified. Negotiations intended to implement the safeguards provisions of Article III of the NPT were initiated in the International Atomic Energy Agency. The Strategic Arms Limitations Talks (SALT) between the United States and the Soviet Union continued during 1970 in pursuit of the undertaking in Article VI of this treaty, which commits the nuclear powers party to it "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament . . ."

Seabed Arms-Control Treaty

The principal achievement of the Geneva Committee during 1970 was the successful negotiation and the commendation of the draft Treaty on the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons on the Seabed and Ocean-Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof (Seabed Arms-Control Treaty). The joint draft treaty tabled by the co-chairmen of the CCD, the United States and the Soviet Union, on October 30, 1969, had been subjected to much criticism at the 1969 General Assembly, many members expressing regret that the scope of the prohibitions was limited to nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. The draft treaty's definition of the 12-mile zone that would be exempted from the prohibitions was also criticized, particularly in relation to its references to the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone. However, the inadequacy of the verifi-