No. 58/48   THE NEW DIMENSION OF SPACE

Statement on outer space by Mr. C.S.A. Ritchie,
Canadian Permanent Representative to the United
Nations, in the First Committee of the thirteenth
session of the General Assembly, on November 18,
1958

. Other speakers in this debate have rightly pointed
out that the projection of human enquiry and endeavour into
outer space creates tremendous new potentialities which are
capable of application either for the advancement or for the
destruction of mankind. We have no natural reason to assume
that man's activities in this new dimension of· space will be
any more kind to his fellow man than they have been in our
earth-bound experience in the past, unless concerted efforts
are made to guide them into constructive channels. It is,
therefore, vitally important that we should develop soon a
positive international programme of co-operation and research
in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Such uses are no longer a matter of theory alone.
Their initial stage is already a hard fact and raises problems
which can only be satisfactorily solved by international
action and agreement. Experience has already shown that
information of great value can be obtained from earth satelli-
tes. We confidently anticipate that the value of this inform-
ation will be enhanced as instruments are sent farther into
space. Every effort should be made for the free exchange
and distribution of the scientific information that results.

Space exploration, whether manned or unmanned, will
be capable of important civil as well as military applications.
It will raise a host of significant problems, to which previous
speakers have in part referred. It will take place in a
region where national sovereignty is at least doubtful but
which might be claimed or dominated by those nations which
can gain a technical lead. The development of space vehicles
requires enormous financial and technical resources and a