

(Mr. Beesley, Canada)

think that those who see matters differently should be prepared to table their own proposals on possible alternative approaches, updated proposals from earlier ones if necessary, so that the process of real negotiation may move forward. The first step obviously is to address the issues, and this does now seem to be occurring; but the second, I would hope, would be the tabling of relevant proposals or counter-proposals, bearing in mind the present state of negotiations.

On a separate and seemingly procedural matter, Ambassador Turbanski, as directed in the report of last year's ad hoc committee on chemical weapons, has already held consultations on the subject of the extension of work into the autumn and even possibly the early part of 1986. My delegation is prepared to agree to increase the time devoted to this subject during the year, as we have been urged to do in United Nations General Assembly resolution 39/65C. In spite of the obvious difficulties, and they are really considerable for many delegations, we would be prepared to carry on work on the convention anytime between the regular sessions of the Conference on Disarmament. Indeed how can we do less when reports continue to appear of the actual use of chemical weapons? I am going to personalize for a moment again, to say that I know something about the effects of chemical weapons because my own father suffered from them in the First World War: so many of us come to this Conference with personal convictions as well as national positions. It seems to me that the renewed use of these dreadful weapons long after we all believed they had been outlawed adds ever-increasing urgency to our work.

I have emphasized in the past our concerns about the danger of proliferation of chemical weapons, and have pointed out that this proliferation would inevitably exacerbate regional tensions and lead to new dimensions in regional arms competition. This proliferation is now fact and no longer mere theory.

Any war produces horrible results, but the use of chemical weapons greatly heightens the human suffering entailed. It represents a totally unacceptable escalation of any conflict. It is moreover, as I have just pointed out, a violation of international law in the form of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. For this reason, Canada, in agreement with many other countries, has imposed controls on the export of certain chemicals which could be useful in the production of highly toxic chemical warfare agents. We recognize that this is far from adequate in closing off the many routes to production of all of the known chemical warfare agents. That overriding goal can only be achieved through a verifiable ban on all chemical weapons.

It is important, of course, to bear in mind that work on a prohibition of use in this forum and in the context of a future chemical weapons convention does not in any way detract from the status or obligations of the 1925 Geneva Protocol. Last year when I acted in a personal capacity as friend of the Chairman, Rolf Ekéus, on the prohibition of use issue, this was a point often made to me by other delegations privately as well as during the informal discussions at which I presided. At the same time, it is essential to preserve the full force and effect of the Geneva Protocol by precise formulations which take into account the legitimate apprehensions of delegations about the possible loopholes created by imprecise language.

If I may, I would like to draw attention to one other aspect of the informal discussions which I have just mentioned. As we are all aware, the 1985 report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Chemical Weapons (CD/416) provides an outline of various