

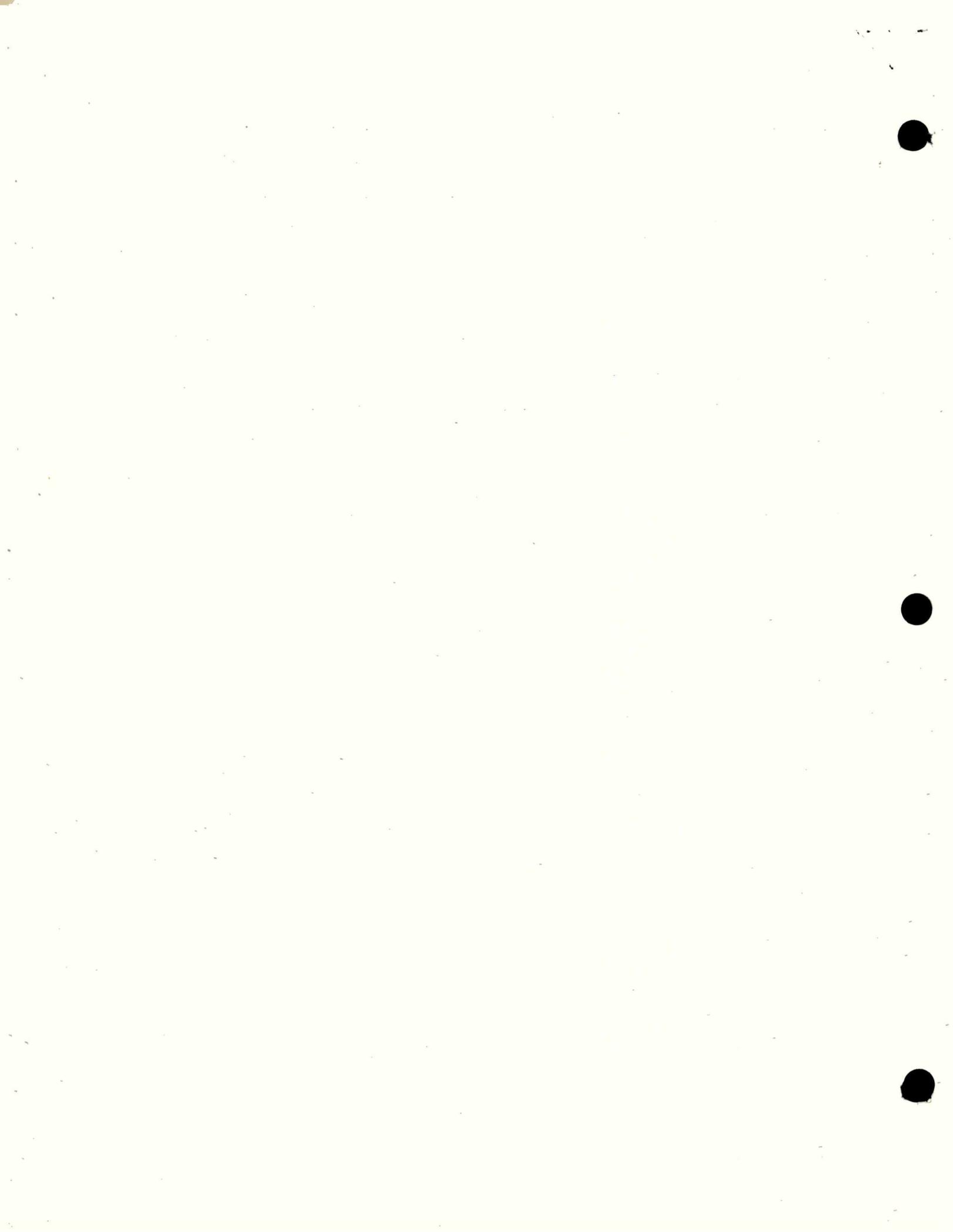
XXII UNGA - FIRST COMMITTEE - AGENDA ITEM 92
MALTESE PROPOSAL ON SEABED

Draft Statement to be made in First Committee on Friday,
December 8, by General E.L.M. Burns

Mr. Chairman,

Canada made clear its general views respecting this item when we first spoke on it in this Committee earlier in this session. I should now like however to speak briefly to the draft resolution presently before us. In doing so I should first of all like to join all those members of this Committee who have already expressed, to Chairman Fahmy and to the other members of the small drafting group who laboured so hard and well on our behalf, our sincere thanks and our appreciation and admiration for what they were able to accomplish. Within the Chairman's larger working group, when there were still a considerable number of working papers then before it, Canada outlined to that Group the sort of considerations which we hoped it might be possible to embody in a draft resolution. At that time working paper number 4, which had been tabled by Brazil, was the one which we most favoured because it approximated most closely to what we ourselves would have preferred.

Because it was clear that the range of interests and view points which would have to be reconciled within the working group was extremely broad, and thus that only a most carefully considered compromise draft would be likely to secure general support, it was, of course, not our expectation that the eventual draft that might be agreed upon would in fact be exactly the sort of resolution which Canada, any more than any other particular state, would have really preferred. Draft resolution L.410 of December 6 which is now before us is, nevertheless, in our view,



worthy both of our support and that of this Committee. It is in our view not only a most successful compromise but also a genuinely useful resolution which will actively carry forward the consideration of this item in the United Nations context. It is for this reason that we are glad to be among the co-sponsors.

Mr. Chairman, certain matters relating to this item still remain to be clarified. And chief among them is, of course, the question of the size and the composition of the Ad Hoc Committee which is to be established under the provisions of operative paragraph one. Clearly the subject matter with which this Committee will have to deal is of such interest that the membership should be sufficiently broad-based to reflect the interests both of the various geographical and of the various political groupings within the United Nations. In addition, however, it should in our view also reflect the fact that such activities as may be carried out on the seabed by member states, whether exploratory or by way of exploitation, will necessarily reflect a very high degree of technological capability. Canada, as a nation which has one of the longest coast lines and largest continental shelf^{VES}, and which has in addition an already long-established interest in oceanography, is therefore vitally interested in the work which the Committee will perform. We believe that we would be able to make a genuinely useful contribution towards the fulfilment of its tasks. We are therefore desirous of being able to serve on it.

