

dangers would also multiply the minor "routine" spills of production, transfer, and shipping.

The openness of Antarctic science will suffer as well if commercial ventures, with their traditional secrecy, come to the continent. A new era in polar science may have already begun; two ministries within the Japanese government are reported to be at odds over the release of findings from the continental shelf surveys.

Under the banner of ASOC (Antarctic and Southern Oceans Coalition), conservationists have lobbied delegates at the Wellington meetings to express their concern for Antarctica's environmental integrity. The continent has no other constituency. Even its committee of scientists appeared to be inadequately represented at these most important of Treaty discussions.

With an absence of scientific consultation, and no calls at all from the Treaty delegates for the baseline research any oil exploitation would require, the promises of protection for Antarctica sound rather hollow. The urging of permanent wilderness status for the continent by ASOC was, of course, unheeded, as was its more pragmatic suggestion that the regime incorporate a 15-year moratorium on minerals activity to enable the necessary baseline studies to be made.

Not encouraging

As expected, environmental considerations have been quickly overshadowed in the regime proceedings by economic and political objectives and by the accommodations which result. Like the Southern Ocean Marine Resources management regime before it, the minerals regime will be judged by the degree of encouragement given to scientific

THE ANTARCTIC TREATY

THE TREATY was quite a landmark on its inception. It established Antarctica as a free port for international science, demilitarised the continent, and declared it the world's first nuclear-free zone. With the admission of Poland and West Germany, the Treaty now has 14 members.

Many other countries have acceded to the Treaty, but this ratification gains them no say in Antarctic affairs. Consultative membership is confined to those with a substantial scientific presence in Antarctica. Many Third World countries have opposed the Treaty as an elitist club.

Treaty meetings are held every 2 years, with special sessions for exploitation conventions. Proceedings are conducted in strict seclusion; the Press and the public are excluded. Decision making is by consensus, a factor which has reinforced co-operation but also led to a slow response on some issues. The Treaty will be open for renegotiation in 1991.

Claimant states, non-claimant states, and acceding nations are:

| Claimant states | Non-claimant states | Acceding nations |
|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Argentina | Belgium | Brazil |
| Australia | West Germany | Bulgaria |
| Chile | Japan | Czechoslovakia |
| France | Poland | Denmark |
| New Zealand | South Africa | East Germany |
| Norway | USA | Italy |
| United Kingdom | USSR | Netherlands |
| | | Papua New Guinea |
| | | Peru |
| | | Rumania |
| | | Spain |
| | | Uruguay |

research and by its openness to scientific advice. With the Marine Resources regime the signs have not been encouraging. Catch quotas for krill, for example, have yet to be set.

The Treaty nations are seeking an urgent solution, which favours a loosely framed regime and allows possibly much of it to be written in after the signatures are dry. As in the Marine Resources regime, a management authority will almost certainly be set up to govern any Antarctic minerals ventures, and it is

here that the credibility gap will yawn its widest.

Experience from the Arctic raises grave doubts that the severe environmental codes that are obviously vital if Antarctic operations eventuate would be properly followed or fully enforced. The Canadian Government has already found the activities of its nationals in Arctic drilling hard to regulate.

Effective supervision of heavy-weight oil companies involved in Antarctic exploitation would require the