

DANGERS OF THE ATOMIC ARMS RACE

SECOND PUGWASH CONFERENCE

DURING March 31–April 11 an international conference of scientists was held at Lac Beauport, Quebec, to discuss the dangers resulting from the present atomic arms race, and means of diminishing them.

The conference was made possible by the generous hospitality and assistance of Mr. and Mrs. Cyrus Eaton, and it originated in the following way. In 1955, a public statement was issued by Earl Russell, Albert Einstein, and nine other scientists, directing attention to the dangers which had arisen as a result of the development of weapons of mass destruction, and calling for a meeting of scientists which would make a true and independent assessment of the hazards. A meeting for this purpose was held in Pugwash, Nova Scotia, in July 1957 which was attended by twenty-two scientists. That meeting published a statement concerning the dangers arising from test-explosions of nuclear weapons and the consequences which would arise from their use in warfare; the problems of control of nuclear weapons; and the responsibilities of scientists.

The meeting at Pugwash set up a Continuing Committee, of which Earl Russell was the chairman, and Prof. C. F. Powell, Prof. J. Rotblat, Prof. E. Rabinowitch and Academician D. F. Skobel'tzyn were members. The Committee was instructed to call further meetings, should they appear desirable.

Since the meeting in Pugwash, there has been a further intensification of the arms race. At a meeting of the Continuing Committee in London in December last, it was decided to call the present Conference. All the scientists invited warmly supported the objectives of the meeting, although some were unable to attend.

In calling the present Conference, the aim was to provide an opportunity for private discussion, in which there could be a frank and friendly exchange of views on the many difficult issues which stand in the way of a general settlement among the Powers and the establishment of a lasting peace.

Most of the discussions of the Conference were grouped under three main headings: the dangers of the present situation; means of diminishing the immediate dangers; and means of relaxing tension. The topics discussed included: dangers of wars arising from technological accidents or as a result of conflicts between small nations; the biological hazards consequent on fall-out; the problems arising from the possibility of the acquisition of nuclear weapons by additional nations; problems posed by the development of long-range rockets; problems of bases on foreign territory; problems of large conventional forces; the political and technological aspects of a ban on tests; the problems of general political and military stabilization; short- and long-term policies aimed at establishing peace; the co-operation between nations in joint projects of a constructive nature; exchange of students and

scientists; and measures for promoting international trust.

The Conference showed that in spite of different approaches to particular problems, there was a common agreement on the nature and magnitude of the grave dangers of our present situation, and a common desire to contribute to their removal by bringing about lasting peace through political settlements, and ultimately through far-reaching disarmament. The friendly atmosphere of the meeting, and a sense of common purpose, contributed greatly to the usefulness of the discussion.

Even in a short conference, it was found possible to make a serious appraisal of some of the decisive problems of our times. In a period of technological and scientific advance of unprecedented speed, it is believed that scientists have a special responsibility and a special competence to promote informed opinion. With this aim in mind, the materials of this Conference will be made available to interested governments. It is not intended, however, at this time to publish the details of the discussions and conclusions. Rather, each of those present will seek to present the results of the Conference to scientists and others who may be interested.

The Conference recognizes the need to hold further meetings, some of which may differ from the present one in the number of participants and in general type. It favours the plan presented by the Continuing Committee to hold another conference in September, probably in Austria, which will be more broadly representative and with a larger number of participants. In addition to discussing the findings of the present Conference, the next meeting will deal with the long-term problem, "Peace in the Atomic Age".

The following were present at the recent meeting:

Prof. M. L. Oliphant, Australia;
Prof. Cyrias Ouellet, Canada;
Sir Robert Watson-Watt, Canada;
Prof. Chou Pei Yuan, People's Republic of China;
Prof. Bernard Gregory, France;
Prof. C. F. von Weizsäcker, Germany;
Sir Charles Darwin, Great Britain;
Prof. C. F. Powell, Great Britain;
Prof. J. Rotblat, Great Britain;
Prof. C. H. Waddington, Great Britain;
Prof. A. M. Kuzin, Soviet Union;
Academician D. F. Skobel'tzyn, Soviet Union;
Academician A. V. Topchiev, Soviet Union;
Academician A. P. Vinogradov, Soviet Union;
Prof. John Edsall, United States;
Prof. Morton Grodzins, United States;
Mr. William A. Higinbotham, United States;
Col. Richard S. Leghorn, United States;
Prof. Linus Pauling, United States;
Prof. Eugene Rabinowitch, United States;
Prof. Leo Szilard, United States;
Prof. Jerome B. Wiesner, United States.