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Welcoming Address by Lord Russell

I have been asked to say a few words of welcome to the scientists who are meeting in Canada to discuss privately the profound difficulties and dangers of the present situation -- dangers which have arisen out of the development of weapons of mass destruction and the accelerating arms race. Your present meeting originated from that held in July last in Pugwash, and has been made possible thanks to the generosity of your host, Mr. Cyrus Eaton.

The Continuing Committee set up at Pugwash, of which I was appointed chairman (the other members being Professors Powell, Rotblat, Rabinowitch and Skobelczyn), was instructed to arrange for further meetings should they appear desirable. When the Committee met in London in December last, the available evidence pointed to the conclusion that among the scientists of many countries there is a widespread sense of the grave urgency of our present situation, and a desire to contribute to diminishing the dangers. The Committee agreed that to give effect to this desire, two meetings should be called: a small meeting to deal with the immediate problem of how to avoid the present crisis, and a larger meeting to discuss the long-term problem of how to live peacefully in the atomic age. The urgency of the present political situation resulted in a decision to call the first meeting at the earliest time possible.

The purpose of the present meeting is different from that of the Pugwash meeting in a number of important aspects. At the Pugwash meeting the principal aim was to make an independent and objective assessment of the dangers arising from nuclear weapons, the importance of which has been stressed in the original statement issued by the late Albert Einstein, several other

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scientists, and myself. Now the nature and extent of the hazards, both from a full scale war and from test explosions, if not yet precisely estimated, are more generally understood. The main purpose now before us is to contribute to diminishing the present dangers and to promoting international settlement.

With this aim in view, it seemed desirable to organize a private meeting, with more time for discussion than was available at Pugwash, and to proceed with the intention of issuing no public statement at the conclusion of the Conference other than a description of the subjects which had been discussed, unless the deliberations led to findings which the participants deem necessary to publish. It was hoped in this way to create conditions for a frank and informal exchange of views between persons well informed on many of the critical issues who are without the cares and responsibilities of political office, yet are in position to advise governments and help in molding public opinion.

In issuing invitations to the meeting, we proceeded on the basis of the expressed intention of the original Russell-Einstein letter, of calling together men of science representative of a wide range of opinions on political and other issues. The immediate response was very gratifying, and made it clear that the intention of the meeting was widely approved. Without exception all those invited expressed their support and sympathy with the aims of the meeting. It was to be expected that a number of those invited would be too heavily engaged to be able to spare the time to attend, particularly when asked at such short notice, but it was exceedingly gratifying to the Continuing Committee that such a widely representative group of scientists has come together.

Once again, the present meeting has been made possible thanks

to the great generosity of Mr. Cyrus Eaton, who has not only contributed substantially towards the traveling expenses of many of the participants, but has provided at short notice the premises at Manoir Saint-Castin with all the facilities for formal and informal discussion. Those of you who were at Pugwash know of Mr. Eaton's warm yet unobtrusive hospitality, of his keenness to promote international understanding, which follows from such meetings. His public activities since the Pugwash meeting have shown how much he has at heart the aims for which the present meeting was called. I wish to pay tribute to his generosity, kindness, and public spiritedness.

I very much regret that the state of my health makes it impossible for me to be present at this meeting, and I should like to take this opportunity of thanking you for making the time to attend. I venture to say that, precious as your time is, you could hardly use it to better effect than to contribute to the resolution of some of the problems which you are to discuss, for upon them depends the future existence of mankind. I believe that the resolution of our present dilemma will be achieved only if we succeed in bringing to bear on common problems an important part of the best creative intelligence of mankind, and that only thus shall we avoid a threatening catastrophe. I hope that your Conference will be a valuable contribution to that end.

Russell

London, March, 1958