

THE PATH TO PUGWASH

As early as the days of the early '30's at Hathaway Brown, my ambition was to find a place in the world of business and industry as soon as my formal education was completed. Not in my remotest imagination, however, did I anticipate that such a career would lead, as it did, to association with world scientists and scholars in conferences in faraway Nova Scotia, to promote better international understanding and the life of the intellect. After

garnering bachelor's and master's degrees in nuclear physics at Smith College, and making brief forays into insurance and investment counseling, in 1937 I became assistant to industrialist-banker Cyrus Eaton and, without knowing it, I was on the path to Pugwash, the name by which the conferences became known when they were initiated in 1955.

The beginning years brought intense indoctrination in business fundamentals of iron ore, steel, coal, lake-shipping, railroads, utilities and other basic fields, including agriculture. By way of contrast and complement to these more philistine but fascinating pursuits was parallel exposure to the literary and academic concerns of Mr. Eaton's broad-ranging interests. There was ample occasion to become acquainted with the philosophers, historians, scientists and other scholars with whom he was constantly meeting and sharing thoughts.

In the "cold war" years following World War II, Mr. Eaton became increasingly preoccupied with the quest for international understanding, disarmament and peace. On his 71st birthday in 1954, he remarked on the urgent need for innovative ways

of thinking in this exciting but perplexing nuclear age, and announced that he was dedicating his old family property in the quiet, seaside town of Pugwash, Nova Scotia, Canada, as a meeting place for thinkers of the world to "relax together, exchange views, sharpen their own thinking and design formulas for us to live by in this brand new world."

The first summer, in 1955, brought together a dozen leaders from such varied fields as biology, history, philosophy, journalism and industry, led by Great Britain's famed Julian Huxley. The world press was quick to call them the "Thinkers," and the appellation was given permanence by a journalistic cartoon picturing a car speeding along a Nova Scotia country road past a pastureful of Shorthorn cows (reflecting Mr. Eaton's international recognition as a prize cattle-breeder) sitting around on rocks in the meditative pose of Rodin's statue, "The Thinker." One of the passengers in the car comments, "We must be pretty close to Pugwash." The rambling old Eaton house that served as conference headquarters quickly took the name "Thinkers Lodge." A nearby, converted lobster factory on the waterfront made a picturesque dining hall, and also doubled as a meeting room at times. As the conferences settled into a workable format, it was my privilege to function as Director of the Pugwash Secretariat, with responsibility for arrangement and conduct of the meetings.

The second year, 1956, saw a Middle East seminar during the Suez crisis, with prominent participants from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Iraq, Israel, the People's Republic of China, the Soviet Union and the United States in attendance. The conferees met as individuals, not as government



The late Cyrus Eaton and Betty Royon, shown reviewing the agenda of the 1959 Pugwash Conference on Biological and Chemical Warfare.

necessarily characterize formal diplomatic exchanges. Also in that summer came the first of a series of intellectual "Life" Conferences, which continued for half a dozen years, in collaboration with the

Commission on Liberal

Education of the association of American Colleges, not only in Pugwash, but also in such widely scattered places as Florida, Tennessee and Colorado. The 1956 Conference brought together 17 college presidents for study and discussion of four or five of the issues, with all shop talk on the administrative and monetary problems of their institutions forbidden. Spouses were welcome but silent; children were not allowed. It was not all work at these or other Pugwash Conferences, since afternoons were mostly kept free for strolling along the shore, boating, swimming, tennis, croquet, golf, dining, thinking, of course, or just in loafing.

Similar Conferences with College Deans were instituted in 1957. Other Pugwash Conferences

"Non-Western Studies" were held in later years in collaboration with the Association of American Colleges.

The most newsworthy of the 1957 gatherings was the first Pugwash International Conference of Nuclear Scientists, which was also the first private, non-governmental, postwar gathering of scientists from East and West. In 1955, physicist Albert Einstein and mathematician-philosopher Bertrand Russell, in company with a small, blue-ribbon group of western scientists whose work had led to the first atom bomb, issued a Manifesto calling on the scientists of the world to unite in warning mankind of the peril of Nuclear weapons. The intent was for the Russell-Einstein Manifesto to be followed by a meeting of scientists from the communist and socialist connections with their western confreres, at a neutral location, to discuss and point out nuclear perils in greater

detail. Difficulties in arranging the Proposed meeting arose first from the death of Einstein,

Russell then responded to in cordial suggestion from Mr. Eaton that Canada be designated as the meeting place. Mr. Eaton and Lord Russell had been friends from the years in the 1920's when Russell was a professor at the University of Chicago. The Eaton offer included financial assistance, in addition to housing and meals. Mr. Eaton's facilities in his native Pugwash were well suited to the purpose, and the convening of the meeting in Canada assured the inclusion of Chinese, Soviet and other communist scientists who

would have been debarred from the United States at that time. Thus, in July, 1957, 22 participants from 10 nations converged on Pugwash, overcame their initial suspicions of one another, freely exchanged ideas and data on nuclear hazards and agreed on a joint statement of their views for publication.

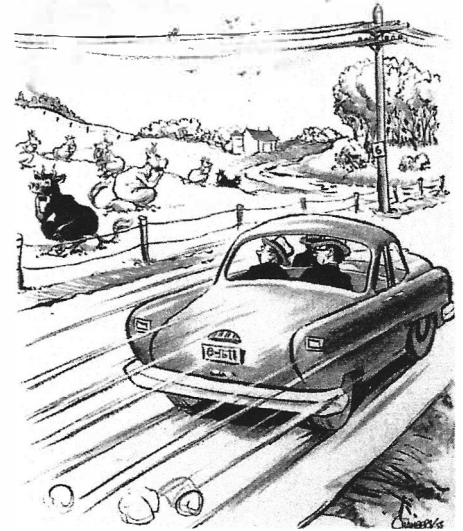
In his autobiography, Bertrand Russell wrote of this meeting, "Most important of all, it was held in an atmosphere of friendliness. Perhaps the unique characteristic of this and subsequent Pugwash Conferences was the fact that members consorted with each other in their spare time as well as during the scheduled meetings, and grew to know each other as human beings rather than merely as

scientists of this or that potentially inimical belief or nation. This most important characteristic was in large part made possible by the astute understanding of Cyrus Eaton of the situation and what we wished to accomplish and by his tactful hospitality."

Cyrus Eaton died in 1979, but the Pugwash Conferences of scientists go on. To date, there have been 32 of them, now officially known as the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs (PCOSWA), plus innumerable regional symposia and workshops. Early on, the Conferences as well as their participants took to traveling. A fulltime, paid Secretariat has been established in London, and the location of the Conferences now alternates between East and West from year to year. A

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permanent Council and Executive Committee meet regularly between plenary meetings, and a fairly frequent Newsletter keeps one and all informed of Pugwash activities around the world. National groups operate at home between conferences in the countries of Pugwash participants. Subjects of discussion have been broadened to include, for example, problems of developing countries. The Fifth Conference, held in Pugwash itself in 1959, turned completely away from nuclear hazards to the fearsome peril of biological and chemical Warfare. At present, some 2,000 scientists from 75 countries constitute the active membership of the Pugwash Movement.

An impressive and fitting 25th Anniversary Commemorative Meeting of PCOSWA was convened in Pugwash this past summer, under the joint sponsorship of the Canadian Pugwash Group and Mrs. Cyrus Eaton (Anne Kinder, HBS '40). Anne was the dedicated partner of her late husband in the quest for better international understanding, and she continues to work energetically to keep the "Spirit of Pugwash" alive.