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16th Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs

Sopot, 11 - 16 September, 1966

OPENING CEREMONY

Address by the Deputy Prime Minister,

Mr. E. Szyr

In the second half of our century science has penetrated into all fields of human life. The scientific society has become more and more numerous than ever before in history and has been advancing at a so far unprecedented rate. The part of the national income assigned to scientific research - from basic investigations to development works - has also been rapidly growing. Science has become an instrument, and in future may even become a main instrument, in the development of the productive forces, upon which, after all, the satisfaction of the growing needs of human society depends as well as the elimination of the present tragic disparity in access of the various stratas of society and of different nations to the benefits of material and spiritual culture is concerned.

But once the fruits of human mind have come into existence, they are not only used for the sake of mankind; they may also bring disaster upon it. No one realizes better than scientists those possibilities of contemporary science which may bring to the world fulfilment of its possibilities, or annihilation. This is where their great responsibility arises. The awareness of such a responsibility has lain at the root of your movement - the Pugwash Movement, the activities of which we in Poland are watching with the utmost interest and to which we are giving our full support.

What is required, after all, is social and political responsibility of men of science in the contemporary world - that is, a service to science always and everywhere being a service to man, to the cause of peace and freedom.

We in Poland have chosen this road. Our scientists devote their efforts to peaceful work. Poland in the interwar period was a country economically backward, poor and scarcely vegetating. The national income per head was one of the lowest in the world. In the 20-year interwar period the industrial and agricultural production of Poland made no progress. Within the 20-year postwar period Poland, devastated entirely by war and occupation, with her Capital razed to the ground, has not only rebuilt her economy, but also increased her industrial production 9 times compared to the year 1937.