

Miss Francis: I think a lot of people get rather confused about President Eisenhower's proposal for an atomic energy pool. I wonder if you could perhaps explain it for us.

Mr. Pearson: It is pretty hard to explain in a short answer but I think we ought to be very clear in our minds that the President's proposal for an atomic pool does not directly affect, although it might indirectly affect, the abolition of the use of atomic bombs. It is the internationalization of atomic energy for peaceful purposes but it would not directly and immediately have anything to do with the use of atomic energy for war. That is another problem. Now, when I make that statement I am not attempting to minimize the President's proposal but a lot of people, quite understandably, think that this has a direct and immediate bearing on atomic disarmament - well, it hasn't.

Question: What does it mean exactly? He suggested a building up of a common international pool of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. Does that simply mean that countries like Canada that produce atomic fuel would send a bit of it to some previously agreed Pacific Island, or would they send scientists to show natives of the island what to do with it?

Mr. Pearson: I don't know, of course, what it means in that sense because the details haven't been worked out. But it seems to me that it might mean that under the United Nations or some international agency, there would be set up an Atomic Energy committee which would be international in character, which would direct international research and the development of atomic energy for peaceful purposes. It might even have a reactor to which contributions would be made in material from various countries. It also might help to establish reactors in other countries who have not the scientific or other resources which would make it possible for them to do that sort of thing themselves. In that respect it is a pretty imaginative and far-reaching and, I hope, beneficial proposal.

Mr. Lambert: Do you think that the United States and the West should go ahead with the plan even if Russia does not accept it?

Mr. Pearson: I would think that, if Russia cannot come into this kind of scheme, those of us who can should.

Mr. Lambert: In the hope that they will come into it later on?

Mr. Pearson: And keep the door open. But we shall not allow the Russians to veto the implementation of this proposal by other countries. There is no indication that they are to be allowed to veto it.

Mr. McKeown: Then if this co-operation did work and Russia were to accept it and go along, would the hope be that this would lead us into co-operation on control of atomic weapons as well?

Mr. Pearson: It would be encouraging to have the Russians co-operate in this field. This might make it easier for them to co-operate with us in the other field; the use of atomic energy for war.