

Thank you Senator Dallaire.

Good evening, Honourable Peter MacKay, Senators Dallaire and Roche, Honourable Marian Hobbs, Mayor Tadatoshi Akiba, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

It's my privilege to welcome everyone here tonight on behalf of all Nova Scotians. Earlier this evening, on the lawn of the Thinkers' Lodge, we celebrated the passing of a very special torch.

It was my great honour to accept Sir Joseph Rotblat's Nobel Peace Medallion from his friend Sandy Butcher and present it to Senator Romeo Dallaire.

I know Senator Dallaire, as patron of the Pugwash Peace Exchange, will give the medallion the place of esteem it deserves...a place where it can light the path toward a peaceful world - just as Sir Rotblat intended.

The ceremony was a home-coming of sorts for the medallion.

Sir Joseph Rotblat received the Nobel Peace Medallion for his part in the very first Pugwash Conference on Science and World Affairs in 1957. That seminal gathering of scientific minds was given shelter here, in Pugwash, thanks to Cyrus Eaton.

Mr. Eaton grew up on a farm, not far from here, surrounded by the natural beauty of this town. Growing up in Pugwash instilled values in Mr. Eaton that he carried with him his entire life, even as he followed his fortune to the United States. Never did he lose his appreciation for the peaceful pursuits of hard-working people whose chief desire in life was to provide for the people they love in a home they could call their own.

Cyrus Eaton returned to Pugwash in 1929 as a wealthy industrialist, just after fires and flood destroyed virtually all of the downtown. But he didn't turn away from those scars. He dedicated himself to restoring the beauty he remembered as a boy.

Mr. Eaton built a seawall that would protect Pugwash from future floods. He landscaped the local park, straightened roads and paved sidewalks. He did all of this with the view that Pugwash could be a beacon to people weary of the conflict in the world around them. Pugwash could revitalize them with breathtaking sunsets over the ocean and remind them that we are all part of a beautiful - yet fragile - web of life.

In Cyrus Eaton's lifetime, two world wars had raged. The threat of nuclear attack invaded the hearts and minds of people everywhere. Children were practicing "duck and cover" drills under their school desks.

It was in that context that Mr. Eaton read the Russell-Einstein Manifesto. That document, written by Albert Einstein and Bertrand Russell in 1955, called on scientists to be accountable for the use of their discoveries and inventions.

Their words inspired Cyrus Eaton.

When he learned the world's scientists needed a place where they could meet and freely discuss the manifesto and the threat of nuclear weapons, Cyrus Eaton stepped forward.

He knew the perfect place for those discussions.

A place that had known hardship and survived. A place that, though scarred by forces of nature, was restored. A place where these scientists would be surrounded by the natural wonders of the world they were striving to protect.

Cyrus Eaton offered his home and complete funding for the entire project.

On July 6th, 1957, twenty-two internationally renowned scientists came to the village of Pugwash. The Pugwash movement was born - conferences continue to this day.

Nova Scotia takes great pride in the role one of its citizens played in promoting peace in this world. Fifty years later, Pugwash remains a peaceful corner of a still dangerous world. Conflicts continue to flare around the globe. Random acts of violence still claim innocent victims.

The pursuit of peace has never been more important.

Weapons of mass destruction are still among us - still a threat. And there is another imminent threat on the horizon - the effects of climate change. In order to turn this planet's ecological destiny around, the world's citizens must work together.

The work of the Pugwash Peace Exchange to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons will help by freeing the world of a deadly distraction. As these threats disappear, efforts to preserve our eco-system can move forward more effectively.

Remembering Cyrus Eaton and his contribution to the Pugwash Conferences reminds us that our individual actions can have a profound and lasting impact.

As individuals - whether we're from Pugwash, Hiroshima, or Siberia - the daily choices we make impact others and the planet.

I'd like to thank the Pugwash Peace Exchange for keeping these important issues at the forefront of the world's conscience.

I'd especially like to thank them for celebrating Nova Scotia's historic role in these efforts.

I know it will inspire future generations to continue in the tradition of Cyrus Eaton to strive to make the world a healthier, more peaceful place - for ourselves; for our children.

Thank you.