

repeated the arguments that the controls are one-sided, an infringement on national sovereignty, a guard over those who least need guarding, and unlikely anyway to prevent a determined nation from building an atomic bomb. The Russians, echoing the mood of Mr. Khrushchev at the United Nations, suggested that the whole control idea is another plot of the American monopolists who want inspections and safeguards so that they can steal the information developed by researchers in underdeveloped countries.

The conference, in general, was turned into a miniature of the debate at the United Nations. The Soviet bloc introduced resolutions on disarmament and the test ban. As in the past, the United States took the position that these are extraneous issues. We argued that, meritorious as the Soviet bloc resolutions might or might not be, to accept them would merely subvert the purpose of the IAEA, which is not likely to accomplish much if the Russians are allowed to turn the organization into a propaganda forum by talking about and passing resolutions on subjects which are beyond the scope of the agency.

There was more political bickering over the question of admitting Communist China to membership. The American position, in effect that Communist China should not be admitted until after it has been admitted to the U.N., was upheld, but by a smaller margin than last year.

Accomplishments of the IAEA

Sterling Cole, the former chairman of the Joint Congressional Atomic Energy Committee who has headed the IAEA since its organization, pronounced the agency's activities "modestly successful" in its first three years. He mentioned the agency's sponsorship of fellowships, international scientific conferences, and its work on international health and safety standards. He spoke of the usefulness of agency survey teams in helping underdeveloped countries work out realistic plans for using atomic energy, a part of the agency's activities for which the United States has special reason to be grateful. For the high hopes of what could be accomplished through atomic energy programs that were implicit in Eisenhower's 1953 atoms-for-peace speech, and which continued in U.S. pronouncements for two more years, have been sadly deflated. It has

been convenient that an international agency has taken the responsibility for scaling down the dreamlike expectations of atomic wonders. Otherwise this awkward task would have had to be undertaken by representatives of the American government, which contributed so enthusiastically to raising the now deflated hopes.

As things are, the realization that cheap atomic power is probably still quite a few years off has not reacted against the United States, for the over-optimism was general, and the United States is not being blamed for sharing in it and thus being led in the early years to suggest that underdeveloped nations could expect much more from the atoms-for-peace program than it has turned out to be capable of delivering. Despite the drastic reappraisal of what could be expected of atomic energy in the near future, the atoms-for-peace plan seems to be a plus for the United States, for the proposal made a fine impression on the rest of the world, even if, so far, it has never come to much.

There is a general feeling that Sterling Cole was justified in calling the IAEA, the organization developed to implement the atoms-for-peace proposal, modestly successful. It has been a useful organization, despite the tendency of its general meetings to become bogged down in futile political debate. Despite the strong reaction to the overblown hopes of the earlier '50's ("These people don't need a reactor. What they need is a plow!") there is still room for a good deal of work, particularly in the less spectacular area involving the use of radioisotopes, where, in contrast to nuclear power, the feeling is that more useful work could be done than is being done for the underdeveloped countries.

The American budget for atoms-for-peace, despite the wide publicity given the plan, is very small, although still much larger than that of any other country. It includes something over \$5 million a year for our contribution (32 percent) to the assessed budget of IAEA. But in the area of specifically American work, the lone item in this year's mutual security appropriation called for only \$3.4 million, less than 0.1 percent of our total foreign-aid appropriations. This modest figure was cut by 60 percent, to only \$1.5 million, by the House Appropriations Committee, and the State Department made no

strong effort to have the money restored by the Senate. The budget has thus dwindled to a point where it can only go up in future years, unless the program is simply dropped, something which does not seem likely.

Patent Medicines: A Modest Drive Is Underway to Educate the Public

Last week the American Medical Association began work on an effort to educate the public on how much money it is wasting on worthless nonprescription medicines. The Food and Drug Administration and consumer organizations have been involved in similar educational efforts, but the public has not seemed much interested, although the value of worthless nonprescription drugs sold is usually estimated in terms of hundreds of millions of dollars per year. The AMA estimates the average spending per family at over \$200 a year on proprietary medicines, most of them harmless, but a waste of money. The point of the AMA's drive is to suggest that there are better ways to attack the problem of high medical costs than to get the federal government involved in paying for medical care.

The grosser abuses of the patent medicine business were largely eliminated years ago through government regulations. The principal issue today is the problem of what Food and Drug officials refer to as "mere economic fraud." The FDA says it does not have the budget and staff to worry about cases of mere fraud, where no real danger to health is involved. It contented itself with occasional speeches by its officials and with a few pamphlets and press releases, none of which receive anything like the circulation of the proprietary drug advertising they are intended to counteract.

The Federal Trade Commission, on the other hand, does get involved in cases of fraud, but its powers are limited. (It required nearly 20 years of litigation for the FTC to get the makers of Carter's Pills, an ordinary laxative, to stop claiming that the pills would produce wonderful effects by stimulating the flow of liver bile.) In effect, the FTC has the power to stop advertising that is clearly untrue. It cannot do anything much about advertising which, while it may be literally true, is plainly intended to mislead the public. —H.M.