# SCIENCE DIMENSION

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## 1916 - 197
# 60 years of scienc

In early December 1916, 11 men representing the scientific, technical and industrial interests of Canada met in Ottawa for the first time. On June 6 of that year, a Sub-Committee of the Privy Council had formed the Honorary Committee for Scientific and Industrial Research, the earliest ancestor in the genealogy of the National Research Council of Canada.

Today, 60 years later, NRC continues to play a major role in Canada's scientific development. The modern-day Council functions as a national science laboratory, a patron of Canadian scientific research and a vital link between the scientific interests of government, industry and universities in Canada.

Laboratory activities are now concentrated into ten major research divisions spanning various aspects of the life sciences, physical sciences and engineering. The newest of these, the Herzberg Institute of Astrophysics, has been named in honor of Dr. Gerhard Herzberg, distinguished NRC scientist and Canada's first Nobel Prize winner in the natural sciences. Other scientific and technical facilities, which are unique or too specialized for individual Canadian industries or scientific organizations to support on their own, are maintained all across Canada.

In its research programs, NRC acts in response to Canada's changing needs and scientific priorities. Current applied research is focussed on selected areas related to long-term problems of national concern — energy, food, building and construction, and transportation. The Council also provides research support towards social objectives — public safety and security, protection of property, health and environmental quality. A significant part of present-day laboratory work centers on basic or exploratory research aimed at the creation and application of new knowledge. The results of such fundamental studies ultimately fulfill some practical need in society.

NRC's extensive research facilities complement its role as custodian of Canada's primary physical standards which include measurements of such quantities as length, mass, heat, electricity and time. Because of this involvement, the Council acts for Canada in international agreements concerning weights and measures.

In addition to its "in-house" research activity, the Council is closely allied with Canadian industry through cooperative programs of research and development and through programs of direct financial assistance. Similarly, an extensive program of grants and scholarships is the main source of direct aid to scientific research in the universities.

While maintaining this direct interface with Canada's scientific community, NRC is also the focus of a nation-wide distribution network for scientific and technical information.

Dr. W.G. Schneider, President of NRC, emphasizes the importance of science to Canada's future and foresees a consolidation of NRC's pivotal research role in the years ahead. "In the future," he states "NRC activities will be centered largely around its laboratory programs, with more emphasis on effective ways of using the demonstrated capacity of the Council for our national development. NRC's role must remain clearly defined within the overall Canadian and international scientific effort." □