

SCIENCE DIMENSION

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BRISTOW GUY BALLARD (1902-1975)

A distinguished Canadian and former President of the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) and Canadian Patents and Development Limited (CPDL), died in Ottawa on 22 September.

Dr. Ballard was born at Fort Stewart, Ontario. Following graduation from Queen's University in 1924 with a B.Sc. degree in Electrical Engineering, he joined Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company at East Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. During the next five years, he worked on the design and control of locomotive motors, a subject in which he maintained an interest through his entire career.

In a sense, the National Research Council and Dr. Ballard grew up together. Since early 1930, when he joined NRC as an electrical engineer, the progressive advancement of the National Research Council was closely paralleled by Dr. Ballard's own career. He spent the 10 pre-war years building up the Electrical Engineering Section of the Division of Physics. During this period, in addition to acting as consultant in all electrical engineering matters, he developed varied equipment for a high voltage laboratory.

Following the outbreak of World War II, Dr. Ballard's engineering staff expanded rapidly and under his leadership made a significant contribution to the development of mine sweepers which were used to detect and destroy enemy magnetic mines on both the east and west coasts as well as on the high seas. For this achievement, Dr. Ballard was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 1946. Other wartime investigations were concerned with engineering and control problems arising in equipment on ships and tanks and in the detection of aircraft by means of radar.

After the war, Dr. Ballard became the first Director of the newly-formed Radio and Electrical Engineering Division. In 1954, he became a Vice-President with special responsibility for research in the engineering divisions. In 1963, he was named President of the National Research Council, a post he held for the next four years until his retirement.

As the chief executive officer of NRC, Dr. Ballard played a prominent role in the promotion of research and engineering in Canada. This was particularly evident in the increasingly successful efforts to stimulate research activities in university engineering departments. He also implemented and expanded a program of Industrial Research Assistance to encourage industrial firms to take over new designs and developments at the earliest possible stages and to establish their own research laboratories. This lifelong interest in innovation also involved him in an active role as member of the Board of Directors of Canadian Patents and Development Limited (an NRC subsidiary), from 1963-1970, and as its President from 1967-1970.

Dr. Ballard maintained close contact with professional engineering activities both in Canada and abroad. He was an Honorary Member and Past President of the Engineering Institute of Canada, a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, and an Honorary Member of the Instrument Society of America. He was a member of the Board of Directors and Past President of the Canadian Standards Association and played a very active part in the development of a Canadian standards program.

His achievements in providing responsive leadership to the National Research Council, industry, universities, and his community, were widely recognized by numerous honorary degrees from universities and honors distinctions from professional societies and associations in Canada and abroad.