



CANADA

REFERENCE PAPERS

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

No. 61
(Revised April 1965)

THE NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL OF CANADA

"... the function of any central organization must be to stimulate and encourage this work in others, to fill the gaps, to conduct generalized researches not apt to the functions of narrower institutions, to create organizations and institutions where these are lacking."

Viscount Hailsham, 1963

In Canada, a great deal of research is conducted by government departments in such clearly defined areas as agriculture, fisheries, mining and defence. Many of the remaining areas of science and technology fall within the scope of the National Research Council, particularly those that aid the secondary industries.

When, in 1916, during the First World War, the Government of Canada established the National Research Council, the purpose was clear -- to strengthen science as an aid to industrial development. From the beginning, the NRC has pursued this objective in two ways: by encouraging and supporting basic science, mainly in the universities, and, as conditions permitted, by strengthening technology as an aid to secondary industries.

Responsibilities

The duties of the Council are outlined in the Research Council Act. Broadly stated, the Council has charge of "all matters affecting scientific and industrial research in Canada that may be assigned to it by the Privy Council Committee on Scientific and Industrial Research" (to which it reports).

The Act also designates a number of specific responsibilities: for discovering processes and methods that may promote the expansion of existing industries or the development of new ones; for maintaining and improving primary standards for Canada and certifying scientific and technical apparatus and instruments used in the government service