

# 10

## THE NEED FOR AN OVERALL SCIENCE POLICY

The bulk of the evidence presented to the Committee, including what came from the federal government sector, stressed the need for an overall science policy. For instance, Mr. Jean Boucher, then the director of the Canada Council, stated that a national science policy "must provide a rationale for the apportionment of government funds between ministries and research councils on the one hand, and on the other, between development budgets, research contract budgets and research grant budgets."<sup>1</sup> It was indicated to us by many groups and individuals that without such an overall policy, it would be almost impossible to develop an effective, coherent, and co-ordinated national R&D effort. The Committee's critical review of Canada's past performance and current special position in the international race also substantiates that conclusion.

It would be unfair, however, to assert that this prevailing view is shared by everybody. There are still people who claim that politicians should not mix with science and that science should be left to the scientists. There are others who argue that scientific activities should be viewed merely within the context of particular missions of government departments and agencies. They contend that the government should have a set of specific science policies as integral parts of defence, economic growth, and public welfare policies but they reject the concept of a general science policy—of an overall approach to problems related to science and technology—as meaningless and useless.

These are minority views. Yet the concept of an overall science policy is so fundamental to the approach to be developed in Volume II that the