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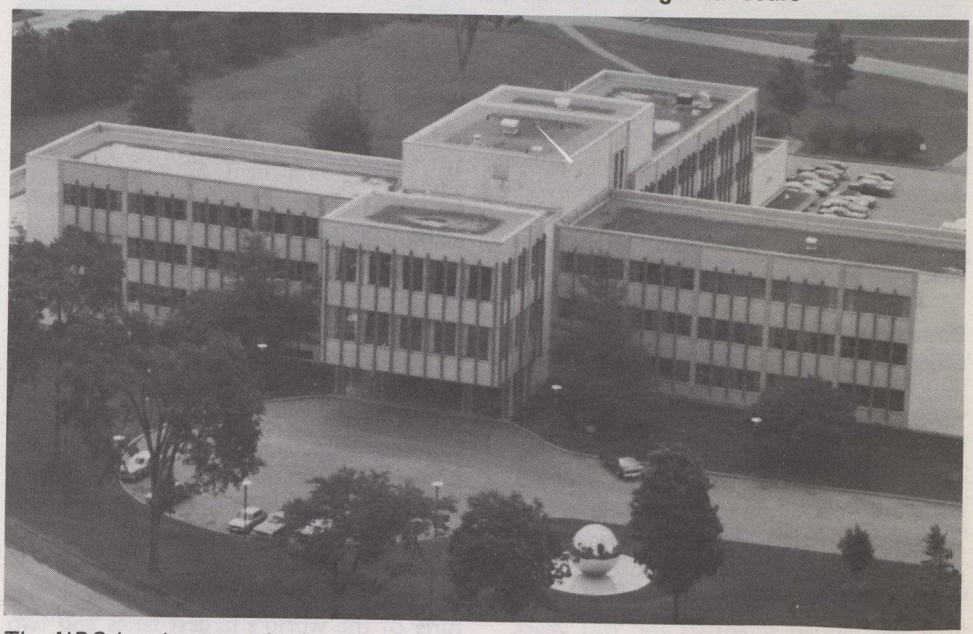
## Canada's National Research Council: research on a global scale



*The NRC headquarters in Ottawa. The large stainless steel sphere in front of the main building symbolizes the scientific activities of NRC and its influence across the world.*

When production of tapioca, an important food staple in Africa, India and South America, began to decline because of a plant disease, international authorities asked the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) for help.

Not only did NRC find a way of producing healthy plants from the infected stock, it also perfected a freezing technique that reduced costs of maintaining healthy reproductive stock. It then passed along the information on how to use these techniques to the countries involved.

The NRC has been filling such a role ever since it was created by the Canadian government in 1916. It was originally set up to carry out research in the field of science and engineering, in order to stimulate Canada's economic and social development. However, other countries often benefit from its work, either directly (when a request for assistance has been made) or indirectly, in the course of its routine work.

The NRC plays an important role in the general development of technology in Canada. Over 2 000 scientists and engineers are specialized in a wide range of disciplines. In addition to carrying out many theoretical and applied research projects of their own, they also stimulate research and development activities in universities, industry and in government organizations.

Financed by the government but administered independently by its own board of directors, the NRC co-operates with the various sectors in different ways. Federal government departments which do not have laboratories or which have special research needs will often turn to the NRC for help.

In many cases, the NRC undertakes projects requiring scientific and technical facilities that are too costly or too specialized for industry to afford.

They will then provide financial aid or specialized research assistance to promising companies in the private sector to help them to solve difficult technical problems. They might also carry out work on some advanced technological project, the potential of which is not immediately apparent, until a company

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