

Treasury Board. There were no obvious fields of decision-making responsibility for it to step into. Whatever it did was likely to transgress the boundaries of other departments and agencies. Its proper course was to try to provide a new and needed advisory and coordinating capacity to assist the central agencies, to establish bonds of confidence with departments and to take initiatives in areas that seemed to require it.

31. Mistakes were made in developing this role. At the outset, MOSST had perhaps too high a public profile and tended to make public pronouncements on matters that concerned other departments and agencies. There was also a temptation to take on everything at once and not concentrate the limited resources of the Ministry on a few important tasks. The Ministry also had difficulty in finding the right organizational structure to carry out its role most effectively.

32. It is now clear that a small central agency cannot monitor and comment on every aspect of day-to-day science activity in government. The sheer volume of material passing through the Cabinet Committee system alone, a great deal of which has scientific and technological aspects on which MOSST could have some comment, would totally swamp the organization.

33. The Ministry is now taking an entirely new approach to its principal role, based on a highly selective choice of policy issues and projects. A flexible organization is being created to operate mainly on a task force basis. This matrix approach is not of course a new idea. It has been employed with success in both the public and private sectors. It permits a small group of policy analysts and scientists, or others appropriate to the problem under study, to be organized as a team for a specific task and to be reassigned to handle other problems as they arise.

34. In order that those outside the Ministry shall have some means of identifying who to approach in broad areas of concern,