

Trade Guilds for Research and the Proposed National Research Institute for Canada*

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THE cardinal aim of the Council is to aid the industries of the Dominion to develop and make headway in the keen competition which is now facing them. The most effective way to do this is to get them to apply the most advanced scientific methods to their production and scientific research to the problems which they encounter in their efforts to increase their output, to improve its character or to cheapen manufacture. This entails considerable expense which few of the firms individually can meet. It may be easy for a firm with a turn-over of several millions to provide annually fifty thousand dollars and upwards for research, but when the value of the output is much less, for example—a few hundred thousands of dollars, to set aside annually a sum for research that would give results of value would be beyond its power. It would require an adequately equipped laboratory involving a considerable initial outlay, and the expenditure for salaries would be large. The vast majority of the Canadian industrial firms are in this class, and it would, consequently, be futile to expect each of them to institute research laboratories with a staff adequately trained to deal with their problems. How their needs in this line should be met was carefully considered by the Council, and a solution proposed which was first advanced by the British Research Council.

In Great Britain the same problem presented itself and with greater urgency, for the ability of the nation to carry its present gigantic burden of debt depends on its industries successfully meeting a world-wide competition. It was finally decided to encourage the formation of Trade Associations for Research in the firms in each line of industry, each of which would annually contribute, on an agreed basis, to a common fund to be expended for research on the problems in that industry. In cases where the total amounts thus available were insufficient, it was supplemented by grants from a fund of £1,000,000 under the control of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Already about thirty-four lines of industry have formed Trade Associations for Research, and a majority of these are already functioning. It is believed these Trade Associations will result in revolutionizing methods in the various lines in which they have been formed and will enable British industry eventually to maintain a foremost place for its products in the markets of the world.

This system of Trade Associations, with modifications arrived at after careful consideration of Canadian industrial needs and conditions, has been adopted by the

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