

before the Senate Committee, he denied that there was such a thing as economic policy and then said:

In exactly the same sense, I wonder if it is meaningful to think of something called an overall science policy. There is a tremendous variety of objectives and instruments that come under that umbrella. You have objectives relating to defence, to economic growth, to science per se, to education. There is a vast variety of instruments: spending, taxes, patent protection, regulatory policy. Many of these objectives are relatively independent of each other. Many of the instruments can be used relatively independently. What you mean by a science policy, as contrasted with other policies, is very unclear. . . . Put in another way, for most decisions involving science it is neither necessary nor helpful to have an overall science policy. . . . Defining such an entity leads one to compare cancer research with a new accelerator, rather than cancer research with hospitals. The latter seems much more fruitful for sensible policy making.⁸

Dr. Claude Isbister, then deputy minister of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, expressed similar views before the Committee:

With respect to the public sector, it is important to note that when government appoints a department or agency to do something, it must also approve its right (indeed its obligation) to do the research necessary for it to achieve its mission. The department or agency has the responsibility of allocating its funds in various ways, among them being support for research. To deny a department or agency its power to control its funds is to deny the department or agency its ability to discharge its function.

The decisions of the department or agency as to the allocation of funds in support of research will depend on the department's or agency's estimate of the possibilities for productive research in its area of responsibility, and on the availability of appropriately trained scientists and engineers. Clearly the department or agency is, or should be, in the best position to make these estimates, and so to make the best of the available resources.⁹

Dr. W. G. Schneider, the president of NRC, expressed much the same idea in a recent speech:

Now that science and technology have become central forces in our society, we are witnessing a wide concern and a major pre-occupation with so-called science policy. Actually, the term itself is a misconception, and the current quest for a unique or global science policy reflects a basic lack of understanding of science itself. On the one hand we are talking about the application of scientific knowledge and the techniques of science toward achieving predetermined economic or social objectives. In this sense science is but a means to an end, and in some instances not necessarily the most important or the sole means. Thus the policies associated with the deployment of scientific resources cannot be divorced from policies related to the original