

*Science Council of Canada*

The exact ratio cannot be predicted, of course, but will be determined by circumstances and the outlook, the desires, and the imagination of the people of Canada and their willingness to participate adequately in these great enterprises.

At a recent international conference on science and economy, Dr. Alexander King, Director of Scientific Affairs of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development and a long time student of science in public affairs, made the following statement:

With regard to the place of governments in science, I would say that on the whole the main function of the government is to ensure that the necessary skills are provided, that fundamental research is supported sufficiently and that applied research is encouraged at a level of sophistication so that the total comprehension of a country as to technological future prospects is high.

I would place this need to establish and maintain a comprehensive and high level of scientific awareness as a major government responsibility necessary if cultural life is to be rich and dynamic, and equally necessary for the effective use of the world's store of knowledge through industry, agriculture, health, etc., for the well-being of our societies. Its achievement requires from governments an understanding and wise development of the education system, wise legislation and fiscal policy, the building of institutions which are lively and self-critical so that the innovative spirit be fostered in the country as a whole. The understanding and enlightened action of industry is equally important.

In brief, Dr. King was saying that what really matters in the potential for advancement is the totality of knowledge and the level of comprehension in a country. I am certain that all of us would agree with this modern concept.

That we are in the early stages of a period of rapid growth with perhaps two thirds of the ultimate pattern remaining to be established provides in this country an opportunity and an obligation; an opportunity to develop the kind of pattern which will be truly Canadian and which will in the long run best serve the interest of the country, and an obligation now to examine our resources, our needs, our prospects, and to ensure that as far as possible the steps we take are guided by the concepts associated with such a pattern. This is not an easy task. It will require the effort, the consideration and the thoughtful advice of many people in the professions, in government, in the universities and in the community at large if it is to be effectively undertaken. It is the intention and purpose of the Science Council of Canada to serve as a

focus for information and advice, to commission intensive studies, and to develop from these many sources of information and concepts that will be useful to the people of Canada in formulating policies and plans for the future.

In respect of the composition of the council it is the intention that the members of council shall be appointed as individuals, not as representatives, *ex officio* or otherwise, of any organization or group. It is further proposed that members will be drawn from government service, from industry, and from universities and that they will be people who have a knowledge of some aspect of the world of pure or applied science and have a grasp of the relationship between science and national needs.

In many respects the work of the Science Council will be analogous to that of the Economic Council. One of the functions of the latter is to ascertain the areas of our economy in which growth depends mainly on science and technology and to suggest which of these areas are of foremost importance from an economic standpoint. The Economic Council may also be expected to indicate in broad terms the proportion of our financial, physical and human resources that we as a nation might reasonably devote to research and development—they have indeed already pointed out the importance of expanding substantially the support of education in science.

The Science Council will have the purpose of delineating, again in broad terms, the fields of science and technology that may be expected to contribute most to these economic and social objectives and to indicate how their development can best be organized and supported, as well as where and by whom the resources mentioned can be most effectively employed.

In recent years, the National Research Council has been fully concerned with its university support, laboratory and industrial assistance programs, and has not been significantly involved in advising the government on the activities of other departments and agencies. The government has, of course, not lacked advice. Each department and agency offers advice on its own program but, in the nature of things, is concerned principally with its own efforts. I have discussed this problem with my colleagues in the cabinet, with present and former members of the National Research Council, and more recently with ministers responsible for science in other countries. The creation of the Science