

Canada was one of the first nations to initiate a technical information service catering to the processing industries. Since its start, similar services have been started in nearly all European countries, the Commonwealth and one or two South American countries. In the last year, Denmark and Finland joined the number of European countries having such services.

The increasing tempo of scientific and technological change is apparent in the estimated 60 million pages of books and publications being produced annually. It is imperative that some means be available whereby this tremendous mass of material could be followed, digested and selected to aid national industry. The production man does not have the time, or the facilities, to do this work.

A new profession of information officer is coming into being in all countries. The preferred training for such a man is an engineering or scientific education plus special training in the gathering of information and industrial experience to enable its evaluation.

Larger companies are aware of the benefits of such information, but the only satisfactory means for reaching the small industries is by the use of a field staff which makes personal calls on them. This conclusion is based not only on Canadian technical information services experience, but also on the operations of similar services in the Commonwealth and Europe.

In Canada, constant thought is being given to means for improving both the placement and the value of this assistance. Repeat requests from the same industry and an increasing number of letters of appreciation indicate both the need for the service and its value to Canadian industry.

### 3. *Scientific Liaison Offices*

Shortly after the outbreak of the last war it became apparent that efficient exchange of classified scientific information between Canada, Great Britain and the United States could be achieved only by setting up appropriate machinery. The National Research Council set up liaison offices in Ottawa, London and Washington, through which information in the form of publications, letters and other documents moved freely under suitable conditions of control. Through these offices also arrangements for visits to laboratories and industrial plants were made and procurement of scientific devices was expedited.

At the end of the war it was found convenient to continue the system, to speed the flow of technical information from the laboratories and industries of other nations and to keep up contacts that had already been established for exchange of scientific information. The London and Washington offices became part of British Commonwealth Scientific Offices, in which each Commonwealth country was represented. These offices co-operate in the common tasks but operate as autonomous units.

The proportion of classified material handled by these offices has decreased, but the liaison offices have undertaken new tasks, some of which stem from Commonwealth Scientific Conferences held in 1946 and 1952. Among the projects undertaken as a result of these conferences was the establishment of an index of translations available within the Commonwealth, with the object of making better use of translation services by making known to scientists the titles and locations of translations already available. The Canadian section of this index was enlarged to include titles from United States sources, commercial as well as governmental, and at present it contains approximately 30,000 titles.

The Commonwealth conferences also promoted conferences in which specialists from Commonwealth countries could meet to plan efficient utilization of the research talent available. A number of these have been held, and the liaison offices in London and Ottawa have had an active part in the arrangements. As an example of the work done by these conferences, there are now