

it was just cancelled. I think it was this year or last year. I was in touch with that program many years ago and I know that it would have been better to stop the whole thing many years ago, because first of all interest in the problem had grown less or almost disappeared and the reasons for solving it had changed so much that if you really wanted an answer you should have started all over again. Nobody really wanted the answer, but they kept working at it on a small scale over the years and I am sure that had a bad effect on the morale of the whole group that were working there, quite apart from the expenditure.

The Chairman: You seem to attach a great importance to these committees. I was told some time ago, by a member of the National Research Council, that the work of the board would be reduced only by about 10 per cent if the Council had no labs. In other words, apparently most of the work of the board is devoted to external assistance. They have very little to say about the program within the Council itself. Did you not think that this might be the case also for these kind of audit committees or in different departments?

Dr. Solandt: As far as I know what you say is perfectly true, but this is just the policy of operation of the National Research Council. I have never been on the Council. I speak only from hearsay.

It has been the case that the Council itself has been concerned very largely with the problems of support of research in the universities and the operation of the laboratories has been a very minor part of the activity of the Council. This does not necessarily need to be so. There is no reason why the Council could not take a very active interest in the operation of the labs and I am pretty sure if you question Dr. Schneider about it you will find that his intention is that they should take a more active part and just for the kind of reason I am outlining. One of the functions of the Council proper, which is made up of non-government people, could be to supervise this technical audit that we are talking about.

Senator Grosart: You suggested these auditors might together form an advisory council to the ministry. How do you see this operating? How big a council would this be? If you have auditors in all departments...

Dr. Solandt: Sorry, I would not like to see this too tightly organized as a continuing

operation. I think it is far better that you change your "auditors" quite regularly, because if you do not they soon become dedicated to the things they have approved in previous years and you get back into the same rut you were in before. Any advisor that advises that you follow any particular course of action then becomes committed to that and he is very keen to see that it succeeds. He becomes blind to its defects. I think you want to change your advisors very frequently in order to keep getting an objective new look at the problems.

Senator Grosart: It seems to me that one of our real problems in drawing up our report will be to attempt to try to draw a picture of the kind of mechanism which will be required at the cabinet policy-making level for its science policy. Therefore, we are interested in getting a concept of this advisory council. How big a council would it be?

Dr. Solandt: I am sorry—I have not suggested...

Senator Grosart: Perhaps I could read the paragraph to which I refer. It is in Report No. 4, page 26, paragraph (3) and it says:

...In dealing with departments of government the "auditors" could form an Advisory Committee to the Minister, while for the non-departmental agency they could form either a board or Council...

Dr. Solandt: Yes. I would think that those committees—I think I misunderstood you—I had thought you misunderstood the form—that only one would deal with the whole Government structure.

Senator Grosart: This is the way I read it.

The Chairman: No.

Dr. Solandt: No, I think our idea was that that would be in dealing with a department of Government. You are quite right, the report is ambiguous here.

Senator Grosart: My confusion is in the use of the word "minister". I take it now that you are referring to a departmental minister?

Dr. Solandt: That is right.

Senator Grosart: I was thinking in terms of the minister with responsibility for science policy.

Dr. Solandt: You are quite right, it could be read that way as well. In fact, I am not