

Associate Committees

Over the years the Council has formed groups of specialists as needed, to study the use of certain resources and to investigate other problems science might help to solve. Today, some 42 associate committees, as these groups are called, are co-ordinating research effort and technical knowledge in as many fields (see Appendix B). National in scope, the committees combine the interests of industrialists, government experts, and university scientists. They have precise objectives and are disbanded as soon as their tasks are accomplished. Typical areas of interest at present are: aerodynamics, automatic control, crystallography, engines research, forest fire protection, national building code, oceanography, radiation biology, space research.

Scientific Liaison

During the Second World War, NRC found it necessary to establish scientific liaison officers in London and Washington working through a Scientific Liaison Office in Ottawa to create an expeditious and secure channel for the exchange of information on classified research and to organize the exchange of visits by scientists.

After the war, with the advent of the Defence Research Board, the liaison officers were no longer concerned with classified research and were able to devote their attention to non-defence research. In the post-war years, as national and international activity greatly expanded in the field of science, it became desirable to accredit the scientific liaison officers as scientific attaches to enable them to work in those areas where science and foreign relations intermingled.

The present science attaches thus perform a dual function. On the one hand, as liaison officers they function as a direct link between the National Research Council and the scientific community of the country to which they are accredited. On the other hand, as attaches they function as an inter-governmental link to facilitate the development of national policy and action in the international field of science.

In addition to the scientific attaches in London and Washington, a similar post has been created in the Canadian Embassy in Paris. The Paris attache is also accredited to the Canadian delegations to NATO and OECD and assists these delegations in their scientific and technological activities.