

In the eleven years since the start of the service, almost every industry in Canada has been called upon and over 32,000 inquiries have been referred to Ottawa for attention. As time went on, the field representatives, because of increased experience, increased local assistance and material supplied from Ottawa, have been able to answer an increasing number of inquiries. At present, about 8,000 inquiries per year are handled by the field staff, provincial research staffs and Ottawa headquarters.

Initially, the Ottawa staff dealt only with inquiries received. Later, when some subjects tended to come up several times, brief reports on them were prepared and mimeographed. These reports saved the time both of the professional and stenographic staff and served to provide a more detailed survey of the problems than could be given in a letter. After trial for several years, these reports became a regular feature of the service and were given reference numbers. While they can be prepared only as time permits, 48 have been prepared to date.

From time to time replies to inquiries have involved the translation of articles appearing in foreign periodicals. Just recently, when a few translations of fair length were made, mimeographed copies were prepared; and, like the T.I.S. reports, have been distributed to interested applicants. These have been well received because few foreign-language journals are subscribed to by Canadian industries.

Still more recently, field representatives and associated research institutions have been supplied with information sheets pertaining to: (a) notes of new equipment; (b) interesting reports or other publications that have been obtained by the Ottawa headquarters; (c) outlines of new processes or methods and (d) summaries of inquiries in various fields of industry that have recently been answered at headquarters. The field men in their calls on industry can produce these sheets and find very often that the material is quite new to the person on whom they are calling and they are requested to provide more specific information.

Apart from such Canadian sources of information as the training and experience of the information officer and the availability of the N.R.C. library, etc., a good deal of additional information is obtained from foreign countries. Initially, this was arranged in part chiefly by an exchange of T.I.S. reports and notes with other organizations. More recently, a much firmer foundation for exchange for non-North American countries has been possible through attendance at meetings of Commonwealth and western European technical information services. At the present time, there have been established channels through which information for more difficult types of inquiries can be obtained from Commonwealth and practically all of the western European countries. In the case of the Commonwealth countries, outside of the United Kingdom, the credit balance will likely be in favour of Canada because of its higher degree of industrialization. Nevertheless, cooperation is gladly given as a means for strengthening Commonwealth ties. For example, all of T.I.S. publications are now going to India and Ceylon, and in the near future Pakistan will be included. From the other nations we receive copies of their reports and publications and place them to the best advantage.

Our European contacts are now in a very strong and satisfactory condition, mainly through our association with the staff of the European Productivity Agency in Paris. To this agency we contribute digests of articles appearing in the Canadian technical press and receive in return severalfold, similar digests from European countries. Some of these digests are brought directly to the attention of specific industries, while others are being made available to Canadian industries through the cooperation of Canadian technical journals.