

Except for the four permanent officers, Council members are appointed for a term of not more than three years and serve without salary. Most of the Council members are drawn from the senior scientific staff of universities; others represent labour and industry. The Council carries direct and final authority on grants and scholarships and is responsible for broad policy in operating the NRC laboratories.

National Research Laboratories

In 1916, the National Research Council of Canada was founded to link science with industry. It began by setting up programmes of scholarships for graduate students and research grants to university professors, and established a network of associate committees.

By 1917, when these activities were running smoothly, the Council became convinced that it was impossible to fulfil its obligations to industry unless it was also provided with its own laboratory facilities. Nine years later, in 1925, the Council began laboratory work of its own, but on a small scale.

From work initiated in NRC's first laboratory a viable magnesite industry emerged, which is still going strong some 40 years later.

Large-scale research began in 1932 when a central laboratory was opened on Sussex Drive in Ottawa. This laboratory housed four divisions, which at that time were called Physics and Engineering, Biology and Agriculture, Chemistry, and Research Information.

During the depression years, a nucleus of highly-trained specialists in all the main fields of science was built up. When the time came, these men became leaders in directing Canada's war research. The wartime demands were enormous and a tenfold expansion had to be, and was, achieved.

War Record

When war broke, the Council had one laboratory in operation. During the war, 21 other laboratories were established from Halifax to Vancouver. By 1940, NRC was engaged in almost every field of war research, and peacetime operations had been reduced to a minimum. There were scores of major achievements: in medicine, in aeronautical engineering, in the chemistry of supplies and substitutes, in biological warfare, in tropicalization of equipment for use in jungles, in protective clothing, in nutrition, in packaging and transportation of foods, in atomic energy -- to say nothing of innumerable devices such as predictors, gun-sights, chronographs, sound-ranging, anti-mine and anti-submarine equipment and radar.

Just as the Canadian Corps during the First World War established the significance of Canada in military affairs, so Canadian scientists during the Second World War won for Canada a recognized place in the field of science.