

Engineers in high demand

Canada needs 50 per cent more post-graduate engineers if it is to meet industry's demand for them by 1985, projects the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC).

NSERC president G.M. McNabb told delegates to a recent petroleum research conference in Calgary that the engineering sector will require 3,100 new people each year, but only about 2,100 qualified engineers are available.

NSERC, a Crown corporation created to administer scholarship programs, bases its figures on a five-year plan commissioned by the federal government.

Mr. McNabb said the council assumed several economic factors before formulating the plan, including a 2.2 per cent growth rate in gross national product, increased industry involvement in research and development and a 7 per cent attrition rate.

According to the study, the major problem is a shortage of manpower, and even if other criteria are met, the target will not be achieved by 1985.

In the past, shortages of engineers and other technical personnel have been met by recruiting people from other countries, notably the United States, but immigration policies have been tightened since then.

In addition, competition for qualified people is increasing world-wide as higher prices for oil and gas spur record industry activity levels.

The council has increased its scholarship budget to \$30 million this year (compared with \$12 million in 1979) and increased the amount of individual grants in efforts to attract more graduate students.

"Our job is to provide basic assistance, and it is the industry's job to supplement that assistance in specific areas," said Mr. McNabb.

The council levies no restrictions on the number of scholarships its applicants may hold.

According to John Feick, a vice-president of Nova Corporation of Calgary, companies are faced with increasingly stringent recruiting problems as a result of the shortage.

He estimated that about 30 per cent of industry vacancies are filled within three months, and about 55 per cent are filled in nine months.

Canadian yogurt company savours popularity abroad

An age-old technique for preserving milk is the cornerstone of a Montreal firm's export strategy.

"We export our yogurt bacterial cultures and yogurt by-products to the United States, Australia, France, England and Africa," says J.N. Perreault, vice-president, international marketing for Rougier Inc.

Rougier Inc., a holding company, controls a diversified pharmaceutical complex, comprising Les Laboratoires Nadeau Ltée, Desbergers Ltée and a yogurt manufacturer, Institut Rosell Inc.

Institut Rosell, purchased by Rougier in 1977, began in 1934 as a laboratory to aid Quebec dairy farmers. "Yogurt is the oldest milk preservation technique known to man," Mr. Perreault states. "The lactic bacteria cultures added to the milk coagulate and acidify it, and destroy putrefaction bacteria." Milk acidified in this way will last from five to six weeks.

"We started exporting our yogurt and lactic bacteria cultures to the United States after the Second World War," Mr. Perreault adds. "It was an unknown product there. We were among the first to introduce this product into that market." Rosell developed a new strain of bacteria, which gave its product a different taste to that of its European competitors. "Our yogurt is smoother, and less tart than the European."

In the early 1970s, Rosell management decided to seek markets outside North America. "We chose France as a test

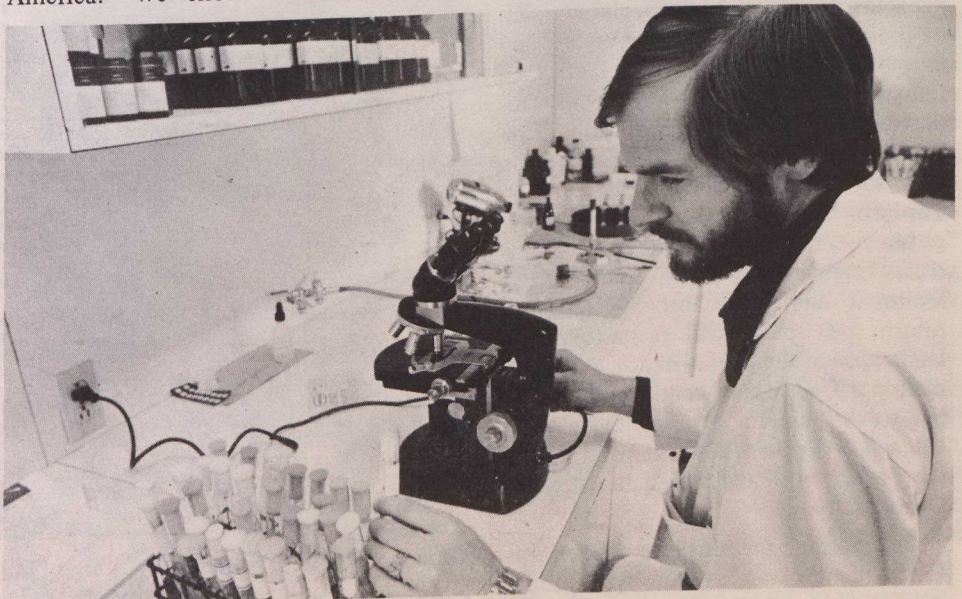
market, and the reception was beyond our expectations." Successful market penetration in Australia and England paved the way for more ambitious plans. "We have sold cultures to South Africa and are in negotiations with authorities in Zaire and Gabon. We soon will be showing our products to an international trade fair in Algiers."

Rosell research programs have developed new yogurt-based products that have received wide acceptance in Canada and the United States. "We have yogurt-based hand and face creams and shampoos," Mr. Perreault adds. The bacteria cultures in these products work on the skin and scalp to kill unwanted bacteria, giving a cleaner, better complexion.

Rougier's pharmaceutical division has been exporting pain-killers, antibiotics, syrups and tonics to Western Africa and the Caribbean for a number of years. Sales in recent years have been dwindling.

Success in yogurt and lactic bacteria-based exports has prompted renewed efforts for these products. The company is pursuing a two-phase program: expanding its share of the two main export markets — Western Africa and the Caribbean — and growth into the Far East.

Mr. Perreault feels the future is bright for his company. "At present, exports account for over 50 per cent of our yogurt product sales, but only 2 per cent of our pharmaceutical sales. I feel we can increase that total to over 10 per cent in the next two years," he says.



A Rougier Inc. employee checks laboratory samples.