

*Government Orders*

Affairs and Northern Development established a working group to study the feasibility and advisability of establishing a national polar institute in Canada.

The report of the working group entitled, "Canada and Polar Science" was released publicly in March, 1987. A subsequent Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development commissioned another report, known as "The Shield of Achilles: The report of the Canadian Polar Research Commission Study" and it was completed in May, 1988.

Both these reports confirmed the existence of serious problems respecting polar research in Canada. Both reports identified a need for a more co-ordinated integrated system of research, science, and knowledge.

There is research going on, as I mentioned earlier, but it is being done by a number of very different organizations who are sponsored by a variety of interests for a range of purposes. There is not enough sharing of information between all the players. I must state that during a meeting the minister and I attended yesterday some comments were made that there was not enough co-ordination between departments. One department did not know what the other was doing in terms of research and they were not sharing the information. There was general agreement that there should be some co-ordinated effort to have a working group consisting of several departments so that each department would know what other departments were doing.

Again there is not enough support being given to the polar research community. As a result Canada is well behind other circumpolar nations in research and development.

It is worth quoting some excerpts from the 1988 report of the Canadian Polar Commission Research Commission study:

The great diversity and widespread dispersion of those engaged in research in and about Canada's polar regions has slowed and handicapped the development of a strong and effective Canadian polar research community.

The many problems—are accentuated by the striking lack of knowledge about what is and is not being done in many fields of polar research, by a serious sense of isolation among much of that community, and by the woeful lack of knowledgeable support for polar research among major public and private institutions in Canada. Moreover, many thoughtful observers are increasingly concerned, even alarmed, about Canada's disorganized and sporadic participation in international polar research. The worlds of polar knowledge and

northern public policy are uncomfortably distant from each other in far too many cases. Perhaps most troubling of all is the persistent sense of remoteness and alienation of Northern Canadians from most Canadian polar research and, indeed, from national affairs generally.

I will touch on this aspect of northern alienation in a few moments, but I want to first draw to the attention of this House a recent report of the Science Council of Canada. The Science Council's report entitled, "Harnessing Science and Technology for Cold Regions" was released last December. That report contained some very harsh criticism of the government. The report of the Science Council revealed that more than 30 federal departments and agencies, over 30 Canadian universities, numerous individual firms and industrial organizations, several provincial and territorial governments, as well as native development corporations and private organizations in both northern and southern Canada, are engaged in some aspect of the development and application of knowledge pertaining to the cold climate technologies.

However, the expertise is thinly scattered and there is widespread dissatisfaction within this community regarding the scope and focus of northern science and technology.

The council had strong words concerning the lack of sustained commitment by the government to polar research: "In Canada, there has been a failure to address the changing nature of northern scientific and technological needs. There are no clear national scientific or technological goals: nor is there evidence of national leadership".

The Science Council went on to describe how, in stark contrast to the inadequacies of Canadian national policy, many other nations in the world, including the United States, West Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, France, Japan and Sweden have been increasing their commitment to cold climate technology.

The problems of the circumpolar world require international co-operation. Canada is a signatory to numerous bilateral and multilateral agreements which include co-operation in the polar science and technology and exchanges of information. Clearly the proposed polar commission could serve as a focus to promote polar science co-ordination. Without its own set of priorities, the Science Council of Canada believes Canada is in danger of giving away the shop.