

A Special Committee of Parliament was appointed to study a recommendation for the establishment of national laboratories and endorsed the proposal but financial difficulties intervened. However, public opinion made it possible to have the Research Council Act passed by Parliament in 1924. Temporary laboratories were secured and research on the utilization of magnesian limestones for refractories was carried out so successfully that a wartime industry, established during World War I, was re-established on a large scale. As a result, in 1929-30 the Government provided funds for new laboratories.

The National Research Building on Sussex Street, Ottawa, was opened in 1932 and in 1939 construction was begun of the aerodynamics building on a 130-acre site adjacent to the Ottawa Air Station. Later several other buildings were erected on this site, including separate laboratories for research on engines, gas and oil, hydraulics, structures, and wood-working and metal-working shops. Since then these facilities have been enlarged and extended and new buildings have been provided for engineering, low-temperature studies and high-speed aerodynamics. In 1951-52, construction was proceeding on applied chemistry laboratories, a thermodynamics building, offices and laboratories for the Division of Building Research, and an extensive laboratory building for the Division of Radio and Electrical Engineering.

The Atomic Energy Project at Chalk River, Ont., also was administered by the National Research Council from Feb. 1, 1947, to Mar. 31, 1952. On Apr. 1, 1952, operation of the atomic energy project was assumed by a new Crown company, Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, and proceeded as previously under policies laid down by the Atomic Energy Control Board. The President of the new Company is C. J. Mackenzie, C.M.G., F.R.S.

A Prairie Regional Laboratory, constructed on the campus of the University of Saskatchewan, was opened in June 1948, and a Maritime Regional Laboratory is under construction on Dalhousie University campus at Halifax, N.S.

The National Research Council consists of the President, two Vice-Presidents (Scientific), one Vice-President (Administration) and sixteen other members, each of the latter group being appointed for a term of three years and chosen to represent industry, labour or research in one of the basic natural sciences. Many of the members are drawn from the science departments of Canadian universities.

In addition to its basic research functions, the Council operates an Information Service with a field staff of technical officers who assist the smaller industries across Canada in bringing their operating problems to the attention of the Council. With the extensive library facilities available to the Council, it is usually possible to provide the required information at very short notice.

The Council aids industry in two other important ways. A free and constant flow of personnel and information is maintained between the Council laboratories and industrial laboratories, the aim being to have Canadian industry use the Council's laboratories just as the units of a large company use their own laboratories as sources of scientific information and assistance. The Council also undertakes for any firm, under contract, research problems that cannot be solved by private consulting and testing laboratories, and also obtains assistance, in return, from many companies. The Council has long-standing and intimate contacts of this co-operative kind with many Canadian industries in many fields, most notably in refractories, oils, metals, chemicals and transport.