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All scientists in Canada are concerned about the shrinking support of the sciences, especially basic sciences, whether they be the physical, biological or medical ones. The past year has brought some increase in grant support of basic science but only to the extent of compensating for last year's inflation, not that of previous years. Our government has seen fit to set up all sorts of committees studying science policy. They have reorganized the grants system that was working quite satisfactorily, and considerable sums of money have been spent on all these committees and re-organizations. The time of many scientists has been occupied with these problems rather than with doing scientific work.

One cannot help asking whether all these funds and all this time could not have been better used if directly applied to compensate for the erosion of

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research support by inflation. One must ask whether there is any evidence that anywhere in the world the pursuit of science policy and reorganization has produced a single discovery or invention in basic or applied science. I cannot refrain from quoting again, as I have on previous occasions, Petronius Arbiter, a Roman official in the time of the Emperor Nero, who said:

"We tend to meet any new situation by reorganizing. And a wonderful method it can be for creating the illusion of progress while producing confusion, inefficiency and demoralization."

Some of our politicians (for example, Mr. Drury, the former Minister of State for Science and Technology) seem to believe that we can leave to other nations the advancement of knowledge and simply use their results. The fallacy of this method I think is obvious to all scientists. The complexity of modern science has the effect that only those who are themselves creatively involved in research can fully appreciate the nature

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of the advances made elsewhere and the possibilities of their applications. In this connection it is perhaps appropriate to point to the development of science and technology in Japan. Since at first the Japanese did not have a proper base in basic and even applied research they simply imitated the western models in various industries. They soon found that a far better level of their technology was possible when they also developed basic research. They have arrived to-day at a level in both basic research and technology which is close to that of the most advanced countries. Even to-day they are funding new institutes in basic research and there is no question that they will reap the benefits in rich measure.

Quite apart from the economic need to support basic science in Canada there is also the need to support science as an intellectual and creative effort of the highest kind. Surely as the second or third richest

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financially difficult times, its obligation towards pursuing the high aims of mankind to try to find what is the nature of man and of the world in which we live, even if it would not gain us material rewards. (In fact of course it always does).

The only pertinent concept of science policy that I have been able to find is the one given in the First Report of the British Council for Scientific Policy:

"Science policy does not direct the advance of scientific knowledge, though it may well be concerned to encourage or to direct the application of the results of scientific advances. The tasks of science policy are of another kind: to maintain the environment necessary for scientific discovery; to ensure the provision of a sufficient share of the total national resources; to ensure that there is balance between fields and that others are not avoidably neglected; to provide opportunities for inter-fertilization between fields, and between the scientific programmes of nations."

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My plea to the government is to follow this advice, and to forget about reorganization, coordination and other expensive diversions, and rather add the money saved to the support of basic science - physical, biological or medical - wherever research workers of high purpose and ability can be found and do so without circumscribing what these researchers should do and without too many bureaucratic rules that take the time of the scientist away from his research. Ten or fifteen years ago the support of basic science was not lavish but it was adequate in Canada. What is needed is a return to that degree of support in real dollars. It is needed for the future of Canada both from the point of view of helping the economy of the country and improving Canada's contribution to human culture.

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