

The field operations service supervises the department's operations across Canada, staffing regional and district offices in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montreal and Halifax, and district and local offices in other cities. These offices ensure that laws and regulations administered by the department are uniformly applied and interpreted in all parts of the country. The field force includes consumer consultants and information officers, complaints officers, inspectors and specialists in the fields of bankruptcy and marketing practices such as misleading advertising.

Anti-combines legislation. Canadian anti-combines legislation seeks to eliminate restrictive trade practices in order to stimulate maximum production, distribution and employment through open competition. Legislative measures, including some formerly included in the Criminal Code, were amended in 1960 and consolidated into the Combines Investigation Act (RSC 1970, c.C-23). An act to amend this act was passed in December 1975 (SC 1974-75-76, c.76) and for the most part came into effect January 1, 1976, the remainder on July 1 of the same year.

In general terms, the Combines Investigation Act makes illegal the operation of combines that prevent, or lessen unduly, competition in production, manufacture, purchase, barter, sale, storage, rental, transportation or supply of a product of trade or commerce, or in the price of insurance.

Under the act it is illegal to participate in a merger or a monopoly that has operated, or is likely to operate to the detriment of the public, whether consumers, producers or others. Other sections of the act forbid misleading or deceptive advertising, either as to normal price or as to presumably factual statements describing goods or property offered for sale. The act also provides against double ticketing, pyramid selling, referral selling, bait and switch selling, and certain types of promotional contests. Resale price maintenance, price discrimination and "predatory price cutting" are also prohibited.

The assistant deputy minister for the bureau of competition policy, who is also the director of investigation and research, is responsible for investigating combines and other restrictive practices. The Restrictive Trade Practices Commission is responsible for appraising the evidence submitted to it by the director and the parties under investigation, and for making a report to the consumer and corporate affairs minister. When there are reasonable grounds for believing that a forbidden practice is engaged in, the director may obtain from the commission authorization to examine witnesses, search premises, or require written returns. After examining all the information available, if the director believes that it proves the existence of a forbidden practice, he submits a statement of the evidence to the commission and to the parties believed to be responsible for the practice. The commission then sets a time and place for a hearing at which both sides are represented. The commission prepares and submits a report to the minister; such reports are required to be published within 30 days. At the completion of an inquiry, the director may submit the evidence directly to the attorney general for prosecution without going to the commission.

The director may bring before the Restrictive Trade Practices Commission a broad range of business matters for review under civil procedures. The commission is empowered to issue appropriate remedial orders where serious anti-competitive effects are found.

Patents. Patents for inventions are issued under the provisions of the Patent Act (RSC 1970, c.P-4) and patent regulations have been proclaimed to carry into effect the objectives of the act. Applications for patents for inventions and requests for information about such patents should be addressed to the Commissioner of Patents, Bureau of Intellectual Property, Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada.

On November 16, 1976, the patent office issued its one millionth patent. A bronze medallion was struck by the Royal Canadian Mint to commemorate the event.

By March 31, 1977, the complete office file of 1,007,800 issued patents was classified and organized into 339 main classes of technology which were further subdivided into 32,121 subclasses. These classes are constantly reviewed, and revised or extended as new technologies emerge and new combinations of known technologies are developed. During 1976-77 and the previous year, 20 classes consisting of 2,194