

benefits at minimum cost to the public, to industry, and to government at all levels.

Since 1972 over 2,000 volunteers in all sectors of the economy developed plans for metric conversion. These plans have been published by Metric Commission Canada, which was established by the Canadian government as a result of the white paper, to co-ordinate the changeover.

Such widely varied elements of Canadian life as temperature, precipitation, atmospheric pressure, wind speed, road signs, much of the construction and automotive industries, grain sales, wines, textiles, chemical products, the petroleum industry, postal scales and most grocery store items have been converted to metric.

Conversion of in-store weighing of meats, produce and bulk foods to metric was, with minor exceptions, completed by January 1984, although an Ontario court decision in the fall of 1983 had stated that such conversion could only be voluntary.

Measurement units such as miles, pounds and acres have not yet disappeared from the language of Canadians, but conversion of the economy to metric has largely been accomplished. Consequently the Metric Commission began a winding-down operation in mid-1983, to be concluded by March 1985. As of that date a metric office with a small staff in the federal consumer and corporate affairs department will co-ordinate any remaining conversion programs.

**Appliance labelling, energy consumption.** Refrigerators, freezers, washers, dishwashers, clothes dryers and ranges sold in Canada must show an Energuide label. This label indicates the kilowatt hours a month of energy consumption of each model. This energy labelling requirement is regulated under the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.

**Corporations branch** of the consumer and corporate affairs department administers the Canada Business Corporations Act, the Canada Corporations Act, the Canada Co-operatives Association Act and the Boards of Trade Act. The branch has a statutory duty to issue formal documents in connection with corporations created under other federal acts such as the Loan Companies Act, Trust Companies Act, the Canadian and British Insurance Companies Act, and the Railway Act.

All federal business corporations other than those carrying on business as financial intermediaries must be incorporated under the Canada Business Corporations Act. Federal non-profit corporations continue to be incorporated under Part II of the Canada Corporations Act until a proposed new Non-profit Corporations Act is passed by Parliament.

### 17.7 Government aid to business

Government programs are available to help in several stages of developing a business by providing financing, information or technical guidance.

**Start-up stage.** The success of a business operation can be influenced by the initial research and investigation. Agencies such as the Federal Business Development Bank offer training and counselling for new entrepreneurs. Statistics Canada can provide data on potential business localities. The regional industrial expansion department (DRIE) may provide information through its small business secretariat or its business information centres in 10 major cities across Canada. See also Chapter 16, Manufacturing, section 16.4 *Federal assistance to manufacturing*.

**Financing.** One of the most common problems businesses face is obtaining adequate debt and equity financing, whether for start-up or expansion. The main types of financial assistance offered by the federal government are loan guarantees and insurance, loans, grants and tax measures. The Federal Business Development Bank also offers equity financing through its investment banking department. See also Chapter 18, Banking, finance and insurance, sub-section 18.1.5 *Federal Business Development Bank*.

**Marketing.** Product marketing involves identifying, investigating, and developing both domestic and export markets. Whether a new business is being started or an existing product line is being expanded, a thorough marketing plan can better its chances of success. Several sources of information are available from the federal government to assist with market investigation. Export assistance is available through the external affairs department to help finance the sale of products in export markets and to aid in market investigation and product promotion.

**Research and development.** Financial support for industrial research, innovation and product development is offered by the federal government to specific industrial sectors. Up-to-date information is available on new inventions and developments. Various government testing and laboratory facilities provide support services to the business community.

**Expansion.** Some federal programs may be of assistance in modernizing a firm or making major adjustments because of changing market conditions. For example, loan guarantees and other financing support are available for modernization in slow-growth areas. Tax concessions are provided in other instances.

**Developing the work force.** To function efficiently a business needs good workers with the right skills. A wide range of federal services and programs helps employers obtain employees with the skills necessary to meet current and anticipated future needs. This includes assistance for occupational training and support of industry through the development of workers. Various programs stress the retraining of workers displaced by technological change, support for training new workers and the scarcity of high-level