

through four branches: consumer services, legal metrology, consumer products, and product safety. The corporate affairs bureau administers legislation and regulations pertaining to corporations; its branches are responsible for corporations, bankruptcy and securities. The bureau also administers laws pertaining to patents, copyright, timber marks, industrial design, and trade marks, with a branch responsible for each of these fields. The Bureau of Competition Policy was recently reorganized and now has branches specializing in economics and regulatory affairs, marketing practices, mergers, resources and manufacturing, and services, as well as a new directorate charged with compliance policy and management coordination.

The department maintains regional 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, with the exception of the statutes administered by the corporations branch, are uniformly applied and interpreted in all parts of the country. The field force includes regional consumer consultants, inspectors and specialists in the fields of bankruptcy and marketing practices.

Competition legislation. The Competition Act, which was significantly amended in 1986, was designed to maintain and encourage competition in Canada in order to promote the efficiency and adaptability of the Canadian economy; to expand opportunities for Canadian participation in world markets while recognizing the role of foreign competition in Canada; to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses have an equitable opportunity to participate in the Canadian economy; and to provide consumers with competitive prices and product choices. The director of investigation and research, who is the head of the Bureau of Competition Policy, has responsibility for the administration and enforcement of this Act.

The Competition Act prohibits a number of offences such as agreements to unduly lessen competition, price maintenance, predatory pricing and misleading advertising. The Act also covers a number of reviewable matters, which may or may not, depending on the circumstances, raise competitive concerns, such as tied selling, delivered pricing, abuse of dominant position, mergers and specialization agreements.

In carrying out his/her responsibilities, the director stresses the promotion of continuing voluntary compliance with the Act and relies on a broad range of responses to non-compliant behaviour, ranging from investigative visits to

contested proceedings before the courts or the Competition Tribunal.

The 1986 amendments to the Act gave the director significant new responsibilities in relation to mergers. The notifiable transactions provisions of the Act help the director to carry out these responsibilities by requiring persons who are proposing certain large acquisitions, amalgamations or combinations to notify the director and supply him/her with certain information in advance.

The Act also authorizes the director, in certain circumstances, to make representations and call evidence in respect of competition before regulatory boards, commissions and other tribunals.

Food. Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada is responsible for regulation on behalf of the consumer of the quality, quantity, composition, packaging, labelling and advertising of food products, by the administration of portions of the Food and Drugs Act, the Canada Agricultural Products Standards Act, the Fish Inspection Act and the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act.

Measurement. The legal metrology branch is responsible for minimizing inaccurate measurement and ensuring equity in trade of commodities and services provided on the basis of measurement. The branch administers the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act and the Weights and Measures Act, as well as sharing responsibilities for the quantity provisions of the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, Fertilizers Act, Feeds Act, Seeds Act and the Pest Control Products Act. Measurement control is accomplished by defining units of measure, calibrating and certifying standards to achieve uniformity, inspecting and approving new trade devices for compliance with regulations and verifying approved devices prior to use. Legal metrology also provides marketplace surveillance to identify non-compliance and enforce the provisions of the legislation. Under the Electricity and Gas Inspection Act, the director is empowered to accredit utilities, manufacturers and third parties to carry out meter verification, subject to standards established by the branch and subject to periodic satisfactory audits.

The corporations branch of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada 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.