three partners in the North American Free Trade Agreement. Canada maintains excellent marine shipping facilities on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts to serve all types of vessels and cargoes; altogether, the country has a total of 15 major international marine and inland ports.

For international investors comparing the bottom-line advantages of different country locations, telecommunications infrastructure and services have become critical and sometimes decisive factors. In this area, Canada offers a telecommunications network and a breadth of services that are second to none in the world. Canadian businesses already enjoy the best access to telecommunications services among the G7 countries. Continuing deregulation of the telecommunications sector is lowering costs dramatically. And major private sector investment in the Information Highway will stretch Canada's lead in infrastructure still further.

Canada has abundant supplies of fossil fuels, hydroelectric power and nuclear energy for manufacturing and processing. It also maintains the distribution infrastructure needed to deliver these energy supplies to all major processing centres. In addition to energy inputs, Canadian food processors have access to the world's largest supply of fresh water, an essential ingredient in most food and beverage manufacturing.

Canada has an abundant supply of packaging materials, complemented by world class packaging and labelling design houses and equipment manufacturers serving food industries. It is one of the top five suppliers of packaging machinery to the United States and a leading supplier of paper, plastic, metal and glass packages and composite packaging materials to the U.S. food and beverage sector.

The long-time importance of the food and beverage sector has fostered the development of other important supplier industries, such as food processing equipment as well as facility design and engineering. In addition, Canadian microelectronics and information technology firms have become world leaders in applying their technologies to food and beverage processing, storage and distribution. Not all leading food and beverage process technologies and equipment are of Canadian origin. However, all of the leading technologies and equipment are readily available to Canadian food and beverage processors.

Canada ranks third among all industrial countries in the performance of capital markets and the quality of its financial services. Canadian banks, which provide both lending and investment banking services, rank among the largest in North America. Trust companies, co-operative financial institutions and insurance companies provide additional financial services. In addition, many leading international banks, investment dealers and insurance companies have offices in Canada. Most financial institutions, many business associations and professional firms (information technology and management, accounting, engineering, legal, communications) can also be helpful to international investors.

Taken together, Canada's industrial infrastructure is one of the most comprehensive in the world. As Figure 13 suggests, the World Competitiveness Report for 1994 ranked Canada first in terms of the availability of business-related resources.