

## Northern Ireland

## Sectors Offering Good Prospects

*Following are Northern Ireland's manufacturing industries which provide opportunities for Canadian companies. Sectors targeted for growth have concentrated on the high-tech industries, such as telephone exchange equipment, electrical switchgear, bio-medical engineering, medical technology and packaging, and micro-electronics.*

### Engineering

Northern Ireland's engineering firms, which employed some 29,000 workers in 1994, carry on a wide variety of specialized and general engineering work.

Four of the largest companies involved in the engineering sector are Harland & Wolff Holdings Plc, the Belfast ship-builders, Bombardier's Shorts Brothers Plc and Emerson Electric, a world-class manufacturer of electric engines for heavy industry machinery.

Bombardier's Shorts, the oldest aircraft manufacturer in the world, and largest private-sector employer in Northern Ireland, is a producer of aerospace and defence products with a broadly based program.

### Automotive

Northern Ireland is home to a cluster of world-class automotive component manufacturers.

Ford's Belfast plant supplies its European and North American assembly plants with state-of-the-art cast aluminum fuel rails and throttle bodies. Montupet's recent investment in Northern Ireland will create the largest independent cast aluminum foundry in Europe. Michelin has established its "Green Tyre" plant there and Schrader Automotive Inc. recently expanded to begin production of a remote tire pressure sensor that can be monitored on a digital dashboard display.

### Electronics

The growth in Northern Ireland's electronics industry is a major success story in the

region. The industry employs 6,000 people and is home to some of the world's largest electronics manufacturers.

Among recent arrivals in Ulster are firms like Seagate Technology, Daewoo, McDonald Douglas, and Fujitsu. There also are a surprising number of familiar names: Nortel, which has had successful, major manufacturing and R&D facilities in the Province for a number of years; Computer Talk Technology, of Richmond Hill, Ontario, a small Canadian computer-telephony company, has established a partnership with a firm in Belfast, Computertalk International, to exploit opportunities in Northern Ireland and elsewhere in the U.K.

### Software

Opportunities exist for Canadian firms to establish partnerships with local companies to exploit the growing demand for advanced technology support services. Software and related services is one of the most important of these sectors, with the local market for software estimated at \$150 million and growing.

The Software Industry Federation (SIF) was formed in 1990 to represent Northern Ireland companies with a common interest in the growth and development of the software industry in the Province. The Federation strives to increase awareness outside Northern Ireland of skills, products and services which its members can offer to business partners. The SIF has its own World Wide Web (WWW) site on the Internet, with links

to other useful Internet resources and may be found at: <http://www.unibol.com/SIF/sifhome.htm>.

The Internet in Northern Ireland is very much used by both private sector and government organizations. It is a valuable source of contacts and information about the Province.

### Food Processing

The food processing sector has an annual turnover of \$4.5 billion and employs about 20,000 people. The industry is of crucial importance to the economy of Northern Ireland, where many companies are also major suppliers of own-label products to large European retailers.

Today, the food industry — including such world-renowned brands as Bushmill's and St. Brendan's Irish Cream Liqueur — are focussing on increasing value-added products.

A study, **Agri-Food & Drink Trade and Investment Opportunities in Northern Ireland**, has been commissioned by the Canadian High Commission in London. It will provide a detailed assessment of investment (joint venture and technology transfer) opportunities for Canadian companies and identify niche export market opportunities in Northern Ireland's food processing sector. On completion, the study will be distributed to agri-food companies across Canada. Names may be added to the distribution list by contacting the Canadian High Commission, London, Fax: 171 258 6384.

*Continued on page VII  
Northern Ireland*