

mainly to rural people. However, with the gradual consolidation of units into larger centres and the appearance of new co-operatives in the cities, more and more urban people have taken to co-operative purchasing.

The direct-charge co-operative, an alternative form of co-operative purchasing that has sprung up in recent years, is largely urban-based. In this system, the co-operative charges for goods at or near cost and the members pay a service charge on a regular basis (usually weekly) to cover the expenses of the organization. Direct-charge co-operatives have spread over Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces and a somewhat similar system, known as "Cooprix", is operating in Quebec. The Western provinces, which already possessed numerous co-operative supermarkets, have been slower to adopt the direct-charge system.

As in the private business world, there is much variety in the size and types of product handled by marketing and purchasing co-operatives in Canada. Some co-operatives handle only one kind of product, such as certain farm supplies or consumer goods, while others offer a broad line of goods. Some are involved in both marketing and purchasing. While many are small, others are large, and all intermediate sizes exist. Some co-operatives, though large, operate out of a single loca-

tion, while others have one or more branches. Some of the latter may serve an entire region or province, and some serve two or more provinces. However, the general tendency over the past two decades has been away from the small co-operative serving a limited area towards the larger regional unit.

There has also been a tendency towards the merging of the local or retail units with wholesale organizations. The most striking example is United Co-operatives of Ontario, which embarked on a program of amalgamation with local co-operatives in 1964 and now serves more than 30 branches that were formerly individual locals, as well as another 50 locals that have not as yet amalgamated with the wholesale.

A few marketing and purchasing co-operatives operate on an inter-provincial basis. United Grain Growers Limited has elevators throughout Western Canada and terminals on the Great Lakes and in Vancouver. Canadian Co-operative Wheat Producers Limited represents the three provincial wheat-pools, which, through its agency, consider programs and policies common to themselves and to the many thousands of grain-producers in the Prairie Provinces. Can Grain Ltd, jointly owned by the three pools, co-ordinates their exporting activities. The Saskatchewan and Manitoba pools have amalgamated their oilseed op-