

## TIS provides help On a do-it-yourself basis

"No one at NRC can tell me anything about spices; it's been my business for over 50 years."

"And, as a matter of fact," says Lloyd Covert of the Technical Information Service (TIS) of the National Research Council of Canada, "I had to agree with the man. If we had an enquiry on the blending of spices or the formulation of an unusual seasoning material that we couldn't handle from the literature, we probably would consult someone like him. But, I pointed out, he might have problems in other areas of his operation."

A visit to the spice company's plant revealed that spices were being packaged by hand with workers using hand scoops to add or remove spices in order to obtain the correct weight.

"I didn't know the volume of his business or his operating costs," says Mr. Covert, Head of the Technical Enquiries Section of TIS, "but I suggested he might be interested in semi-automatic packaging equipment. Then, I enquired if he had encountered problems in labelling bottles or packages. Finally, I asked if the firm's air exhaust and dust collecting system was functioning satisfactorily."

"The interesting part of it was that everything I mentioned was something that was bothering him and all of these problems were interfering with his operations as a processor," Mr. Covert says. "We were able to help him in all these areas."

Gerard Kirouac, recently appointed Chief of the Technical Information Service, recalls a plastic products manufacturer who wrote TIS seeking assistance in developing a fresh fish container for fish processors. The dripping and lingering fish odor from ice-packed wooden fish boxes made freight cars unsuitable for the transportation of other goods, resulting in increased costs.

The plastic company had worked on a promising container but needed additional information on fish preservation and container-sealing techniques to complete the project. TIS provided up-to-date information which in this case showed the need for a different approach.

"Using systems design or a total approach concept, the TIS industrial engineer demonstrated other solutions that could be envisaged," Mr. Kirouac says. "After a brief cost analysis, we suggested injection moulded polyethylene boxes

