

The proposed administrative arrangement to house COSTPRO under the umbrella of a major trade association exists for other groups. The Canadian Export Association already has such a relationship in effect with the Canadian Shippers' Council. As well, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association provides similar arrangements for a number of specialized industry sector associations.

"Since its inception in 1972," said Mr. Lumley, "COSTPRO has done much to simplify trade procedures and in the process save millions of dollars for both industry and government. In particular, small and medium size businesses have benefitted by the activities of COSTPRO because it has helped them demystify export documentation and save up to 50% of their preparation costs."

"Now that COSTPRO has proven its effectiveness and become a valued ally of Canadian exporters, I think it is time for the federal government to end its involvement in the administration of COSTPRO and return it to the private sector where it belongs."

Established in 1972 as a focus for public and private sector cooperation in removing the impediments of information and procedural requirements in trade and transport, COSTPRO showed that document preparation costs Canadians millions of dollars every year; unnecessary delays were occurring on 10 to 15 per cent of all shipments; and reduction of one day total transaction time could produce savings of \$10 million per annum on invested capital. To help alleviate these problems, in January 1975 the government agreed to provide and to administer a secretariat and research funds for COSTPRO. Later that year, COSTPRO became a not-for-profit corporation of federal and provincial governments, associations and private companies, with a voluntary board of directors and executive committee.

Since that time, COSTPRO's achievements have included: a standardized "one-write" export documentation system which saves companies up to 50 per cent in document preparation costs; trade message protocols for electronic data exchange; user performance specifications for computer/communications devices; and communications network specifications. Through collaboration with potential users, COSTPRO also researched and developed the hardware and software technology for a low-cost computer/communications device to enable the automated creation, filling, communication, and printing of trade forms and data. Users have indicated savings of 30 per cent in addition to those savings received from implementing COSTPRO's standardized forms.