

composed primarily of small- and medium-sized operations (90 per cent of all companies employ fewer than 100 persons), a concentration of larger firms through acquisitions or mergers is a strong possibility in the near future. There is a strong trend in this direction in the office furniture sector in which many firms employ twice the number of workers as those firms making household furniture.

The commercial and industrial sector

The construction of multi-purpose building complexes (hotels, office buildings, apartment blocks, shopping centres and convention centres) has given a sizable boost to the Canadian furniture industry. A rise in the number of tourists, creating an increased demand for lodging and recreational facilities, has also produced a market for specially-designed furniture.



Cultured marble looks much like quarried marble but is five times stronger and completely maintenance-free.

In the industrial sector, furniture must be designed to be both pleasing to senior management and suitable to the needs of all the employees. Work space must promote efficiency, but make a positive impression on visitors.

Designers must also create dining-room furniture for restaurants and bedroom furniture for hotels and motels; they must design special furniture for laboratories, classrooms and meeting areas such as auditoriums; for sports centres and airport waiting rooms. Canadian manufacturers have so far managed to meet the demands of both domestic and foreign buyers.

Office furniture

Canadian-made office furniture has also gained international renown for the prac-

Visitors to the Woodworking, Machinery and Furniture Supply Fair being held in Los Angeles from September 22 to 25, will have an opportunity to view wood-working machinery and furniture components from various Canadian manufacturers. Further information may be obtained from the Commercial Division, Canadian Consulate General, 510 West Sixth Street, Los Angeles, CA 90014.

tical design and efficiency of its products. Office furniture is flexible and allows users to adjust rapidly to changes, such as the expansion or reduction of a department. Alterations to the furniture may be made at a minimum cost and without affecting the normal operations of an office.

Furniture for the home

Household furniture manufactured in Canada compares favourably with that of other countries and is much in demand on domestic and foreign markets.

Several factors affect the Canadian household furniture market: incomes, new home sales and household moves. Similar factors affect exports to the United States and abroad.

In Canada, people between the ages of 20 and 39 are the principal buyers of household furniture, representing about 30 per cent of the furniture sales market. The situation will probably continue until 1985, when the age bracket will change.



This dining room cabinet is finished in golden ash.

In Canada, as throughout the world, the furniture industry uses primarily traditional methods. Although automation and new techniques have been incorporated as much as possible, many operations, such as sanding, painting, gluing and assembling, must be done by hand.

Wood and plywood substitutes — particle board and plastic coatings (vinyl and melamine) — are used increasingly, since they are easily handled and lend themselves to automation. Moreover, the recent discovery of water-based coatings for finishing reduces or eliminates



This modern, fully upholstered loveseat is enhanced by oak trim.

environmental problems. Computers are used more and more in the production process, and conditions today necessitate the purchase of automated equipment in manufacturing firms.

Exports

Canadian furniture sells well on foreign markets. In 1982, the value of exports reached almost \$300 million, approximately 13 per cent of Canada's total production. Since 1978, the value of exports has more than doubled — from \$120 million that year to \$300 million in 1982. Export values for office furniture have increased from \$88 million in 1979 to \$119 million in 1980, \$147 million in 1981 and \$165 million in 1982.

In view of favourable forecasts for the American market, the expected value of the Canadian dollar and a reduction in American customs tariffs, exports should continue to increase by 10 per cent annually.