

weight. Manufacturers of other products have been persuaded to mark merchandise by unit cost (so much per ounce or milliliter) rather than by container. (The Government plans to put all Canada on the metric system [milliliters and such] by the early eighties, and C&CA has published a twenty-four-page booklet which, in its own phrase, "gives a brief account of the reasoning behind the government's decision." Once into metrics, it is assumed, the housewife will be able to compare rival prices with astonishing ease.)

• A probable ban on ads aimed directly at young TV viewers and their parents. (This does not involve C&CA directly though they enthusiastically support it.) Laurent Picard, President of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, announced recently that advertising will be removed from all programs aimed at children twelve or younger by September, 1974, if the CBC gets an extra \$2.5 million from the government to make up the loss of revenue. The House of Commons has legislation before it which would make the ban possible.

Canada's intensive recognition of consumer needs began in 1966 when the Government Organization Act put a wide variety of agencies under the old Department of the Registrar General. In 1967 the Registrar was given further responsibility for filling gaps in consumer protection and in December of that year Parliament renamed his agency — the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In 1968 the Department acquired the Standards Branch of the Department of Trade and Commerce and further responsibilities in inspecting food and fish. Today

it has jurisdiction in consumer affairs, corporations and corporate securities, combines, mergers, monopolies, restraint of trade, bankruptcy and insolvency and patents, copyrights and trademarks. The extraordinary scope of the new department presents many challenges, opportunities and pitfalls. It has sponsored significant legislation: the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act, the Textile Labelling Act, and the Hazardous Products Act, for example. It has issued regulations governing such things as matches: "matches that have weak stems or splints, drop glowing particles, or explode" are prohibited; and the striker strip has been ordered on the back of the match book.

The most ambitious piece of legislation has been in process for some two years. The Competition Act, intended as a complete revision of the Combines Investigation Act, was introduced in 1971. Its purpose then (and now) is to establish a new before-the-fact control over mergers and monopolies. Under the old legislation a company actually restraining trade illegally could be prosecuted under the criminal code. Under the planned legislation the Government would require that all planned mergers (which might result in restraints of trade) be passed on by a civil tribunal ahead of time. After the original draft of the Act was introduced, briefs were invited and received from almost 300 industrial, labor and consumer organizations. The original draft has now been considerably amended and a new version is expected to be submitted to the House of Commons during the coming session.

