

tion has made some notable strides in the larger urban centres, especially with its "Cooprix" stores. Starting in 1976, this wholesaler has participated in a rationalization program for the consumer co-operative system involving the creation of branch systems for stores in specific regions.

Co-op Atlantic, formerly Maritime Co-operative Services, celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1976. From a humble start, this co-operative has grown into a prominent institution in the economy of the Atlantic Provinces. But it has always adhered to its co-operative principles and pursued its mission of bettering the economic well-being of the people of the region, of whom some 60,000 are members. Co-op Atlantic is most heavily involved in purchasing but it started as a livestock-marketer and still acts as the selling agency for the hog-marketing boards in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Both consumer goods and farm supplies, as well as management assistance, are provided to member locals. In the housing field, the wholesale has established a subsidiary, Atlantic Peoples Housing, in an attempt to ease the cost burden for home-owners. Several projects in the Moncton and Salisbury areas are now in various stages of development. Another project operated on a non-profit ba-

sis is People's Park Tower, a 272-unit apartment complex for fixed-income adults.

Pêcheurs Unis du Québec and United Maritime Fishermen Co-op are central marketing agents for Quebec and Atlantic-area fishing co-operatives. Both provide processing facilities to their members and sell in the export market. Pêcheurs Unis also builds fishing vessels and UMF wholesales supplies to members.

Fed Up Co-operative Wholesaler Association is a new, and relatively small, organization dealing in groceries. It is located in Vancouver and supplies about 55 member local co-operatives in British Columbia. This business is distinguished by a strong emphasis on the member-operator idea. All members of each local participate in operations on a rotating basis and, in the same way, the locals take turns running the wholesale.

Financial structure

Assets of the co-operatives have kept pace with the tremendous increase in business volume. Over the ten-year period 1966-1976, assets of the marketing and purchasing co-operatives have nearly tripled, growing from \$777 to \$2,225 million. Similarly, wholesale co-operative assets expanded from \$176 million to \$541 million. Much of the financing for this huge expansion came from debt rather than from the equity contributions of members. Some of this debt