

documentation are very straight forward and can be completed by anyone. However, I realise that many people feel more comfortable if they know that a professional has completed their forms. But when it comes to the interview, applicants will have to stand on their own and they will have to be able to defend their proposals to our satisfaction'.

Entrepreneurs who are granted permanent residence in Canada are expected to focus their business activities there. In some cases they may continue to be active in their on-going interests elsewhere. It will not be required that they cease all foreign business activities or liquidate all foreign assets prior to admission to Canada; however, liquid assets must be sufficient to finance the Canadian project and to cover personal living expenses until the business generates revenues. Applicants whose money is inaccessible due to currency export restrictions cannot comply with business immigrant requirements.

#### **Federal-Provincial Shared Responsibility**

Canada has a federal system of government under which business immigration is a shared responsibility between the federal and provincial governments.

The federal government's role is to ensure that prospective business immigrants meet the selection criteria for admission to Canada. However, the provinces have responsibility in assessing what constitutes 'significant economic benefits' in their area. The majority of provinces have targeted the manufacturing and tourism industries as their main priorities. Accordingly, the program tends to favour the entrepreneur who wishes to establish a manufacturing venture as opposed to the person who seeks to start-up a restaurant in a large city. While the federal government has the final word on whether to grant a visa, many cases are referred either formally or informally to provincial governments for their input.

The provinces have increasingly taken a larger role as promoters of the business immigration program to their area. They also offer detailed and comprehensive counselling on investment and business opportunities.

#### **Follow-Up**

Since the purpose of the program is to attract skilled business and risk capital to Canada, there is follow-up to ensure that the contract under which the visa was given is honoured by the beneficiary of the visa.

Most entrepreneurs are given conditional immigrant visas for up to two years; investors and self-employed applicants are generally issued unconditional immigrant visas. Conditions may be cancelled as soon as a business is established or purchased.

Entrepreneurs are required to report within twelve months of landing to a local Canada Immigration Centre which monitors the progress made towards fulfilling the terms and conditions set out on the immigrant visa. In addition,



entrepreneurs are also encouraged to contact responsible provincial ministries for business assistance and counselling and also for monitoring purposes.

#### **Future Developments**

The business immigration programme will not be abolished because of the recent downturn in the economy. The Immigration Plan for 1991-1995 states that business immigrants will continue to be accepted to promote growth in the Canadian economy.

Mrs Cavanagh-Wood sees high interest rates and resulting difficulties in selling property as a key problem for British applicants. 'Applicants who are keen to travel may have their plans thwarted by an inability to liquidate their house and thereby acquire the necessary capital needed to re-establish in Canada. We have had more than one case of a very good applicant who has had to let their visa lapse for precisely this reason.'

#### **Final Words**

Mrs Cavanagh-Wood advises prospective business applicants to be realistic and honest. 'Before you make the move to Canada you should take a long, cold hard look at the business that you are now in and at your own personal and financial potential for success in Canada.' This is because the move to Canada is not just a business move but also a personal upheaval. She says 'people fail to realise that these are two separate but very intertwined issues. Both need to be addressed before migration should be considered.'