

perhaps unavoidable, in our policy of vaunting our welcome to genuine refugees who manage to reach Canada while doing our level best through control measures overseas to prevent irregulars (who necessarily include most refugee claimants) from getting here.

The potential domestic result in particular, as described above, is of such significance that **early priority should be given to equitable measures to reform the operations of the IRB so that asylum claim decisions are still seen to be fair but without the present excess of cases accepted on dubious grounds.** Much rides on this. Not that reform is a simple task: criticism of any steps will be inevitable from the dedicated Canadian NGOs who work so hard on behalf of refugees, but there must be more general understanding that the present system poses risks for continued toleration within Canadian society. Well-organised opposition to reform will also be inevitable from the huge body of immigration consultants and lawyers who live from the system, many honestly, but some as exploiters of their clients. As said much earlier in this document, world migration is now in a sense an enormous, diverse business.

Other things can be done. The IRB's efforts to **speed up the decision period merit government support. The rate and inevitability of removals of rejected claimants should be increased,** as the IRB has advocated; in some cases this may mean tougher talk to countries which refuse to take their nationals back, perhaps through a concerted international approach. In parallel with IRB reforms, the government should reverse its decision, announced in January, to **postpone granting permanent residence—and thus the right to sponsor relatives—for an exaggerated period of five years for accepted asylum claimants who arrived without documentation (mostly Somalis and Afghans).** The purpose is described as to "discern the background and character of applicants for permanent residence" and prevent abuse of the system by "those who may choose to conceal their identity". An adequate IRB hearing should already have determined their bona fides (difficult if not impossible without identifying who they are); otherwise, why accept them? And even if their background and character are deficient, they will probably still be staying in Canada.

On the international front, we should **persevere with our long-standing attempts to secure a Memorandum of Agreement with the USA (see page 49), but not count much on it,** if and when concluded, to reduce the flow of claimants from there, because of the small numbers allowed under the draft agreement and the unlikelihood that the USA (unenthusiastic as it seems to be about any agreement) would want a much higher level in future years. Only dissipation of the worldwide impression that our claim system is a "soft touch" will reduce the flow. For reasons already explained, in the next few years we should **not count at all on an "asylum shopping" agreement with the EU parallel to their Dublin Convention.** The Canada-EU Action Plan provides vaguely that the parties should "work towards the development of appropriate multilateral and bilateral co-operation for the management of migration and asylum movements"; it is unclear how to do so. Nevertheless we should carry on with steps to broaden cooperation with the EU.