

grants entered Canada. More recently, the number of immigrants arriving each year has averaged around 200,000.

More than 70 percent of today's immigrants come from Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa. Hong Kong alone has accounted for more than 11 percent of all immigrants in the 1990s. The proportion of immigrants in the population varies dramatically across the country, from 24 percent in Ontario and 23 percent in British Columbia, to between 1 and 4 percent in the Atlantic provinces. Most newcomers to Canada settle in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

### ***A Highly Urbanized Country***

Canada is overwhelmingly and increasingly an urban nation. More than half of Canadians now live in the nine largest metropolitan census areas, with almost one third in Toronto (4 million), Montreal (more than 3 million) and Vancouver (just under 2 million). Other major urban centres include Ottawa-Hull (900,000), Edmonton (800,000), Calgary (740,000), Winnipeg (650,000) and Halifax (320,000).

## **CANADIAN INCOMES**

Canadians enjoy healthy incomes and are among the world's most demanding and discriminating consumers. Average family income is about \$54,000. Most families obtain the bulk of their income through employment. However, the share of investment income has risen steadily and now comprises about 12 percent of personal income.

Increasingly, the typical Canadian family tends to have more than a single income-earner, as more and more working-age women have chosen to enter the labour market. Three quarters of Canadian women in the 25 to 54 year-old age group now participate in the labour market, a sharp increase from 50 percent in 1975.

Personal income per capita varies somewhat among the provinces, although government transfer payments and the income tax system have served to reduce regional income differentials. In 1993, Ontario had the highest per capita income at \$23,757, followed by British Columbia (\$23,164), Alberta (\$22,679) and Quebec (\$20,809).

Personal income growth in Canada was dampened somewhat by the recession of the early 1990s as well as the small increase in wage settlements over the past few years. Annual growth in personal incomes has been in the range of 2 to 3 percent in the first half of the 1990s.

The propensity of Canadian households to save has varied over time. Savings now represent a little over 9 percent of disposable income. This figure is expected to climb in the future as more Canadian homeowners pay off their mortgages, and as an ageing population increases its saving to prepare for retirement.

## **SPENDING PATTERNS**

Canadians spend some \$450 billion each year on consumer goods and services. They have been spending relatively less on food and more on both durable goods such as furniture, appliances and consumer electronic products, and services such as travel, other leisure activities, restaurants and hotels. Services are the biggest and the fastest-growing component of personal spending.