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Trading away our living standards

Paul Craig Roberts

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A belief in free trade is part of being an economist, and a belief in America's competitiveness is part of the economist's commitment to the global economy.

Economists note that no other country has the depth and breadth of our capital markets, political stability, rule of law protecting contracts and property rights, strong currency, and accumulation of scientific and technological knowledge that makes the U.S. the high-tech leader.

All this stability and leadership causes foreigners to send their money here for safe haven and secure investments. The inflow of money keeps the dollar strong, which encourages imports from abroad and a trade deficit year after year after year.

These arguments are reassuring and make sense. Still it comes as something of a shock to discover that the U.S., the world's high-tech leader, has the export profile of a 19th-century Third World colony.

Twenty years ago when I was a U.S. Treasury official, the U.S. trade deficit came mainly from oil imports. Today our trade deficit is driven by imports of energy, consumer goods, and manufactured goods.

A table prepared by MBG Information Services in D.C., from Commerce Department data shows the U.S. trade balance for 85 separate industrial and commodity classifications. The only high-tech goods of which the U.S. is a net exporter are airplanes and airplane parts, military technology and specialized machine tools. In 2000 the U.S. was a net importer even of spacecraft.

What does the high-tech U.S. economy export? Are you ready for this? Hides and skins, metal ores and scrap, pulp and waste paper, tobacco and cigarettes, rice, cotton, coal, meat, wheat, gold, animal feeds, soybeans and corn.

We can't even make our own clothes. Clothing is the third-largest contributor to our trade deficit, after vehicles and crude oil.

Even our agricultural exports are declining as the "green revolution" takes hold abroad and U.S. farming shuts down.

The case for free trade rests on comparative advantage. Each country is supposed to specialize in what it does best. Where does the U.S. have a comparative advantage? Apparently, our comparative advantage lies in a political system that doesn't mind if foreigners buy up our assets.

Very little of the foreign money flowing into the U.S. is for the purpose of building Toyota and BMW plants. Eighty to eighty-five percent of direct investment by foreigners in the U.S. economy goes into mergers and acquisitions. In 2000, 97 percent of direct investment by foreigners went for the purchase of existing U.S. assets.

We are not only losing industrial jobs, we are losing ownership of our companies.

This is bad news for Americans training for engineering and high-tech occupations. The jobs are moving out. Recently, Motorola announced the company was moving more of its manufacturing and research and development jobs to China.

The jobs that remain in the U.S. are being filled with engineers imported from India at half the salary.

As capital and technology are now completely mobile, the only comparative advantage lies in labor costs. Companies are chasing the lowest labor costs. For awhile, the move was to Mexico, but before Mexico could get on its feet, the move shifted to China.

Propagandists call the move to China "free trade" and "globalization." But the Chinese don't see it that way. They say, "You can't sell here unless you produce here." That's blackmail, not free trade.

Few companies are making money in China, but the hype is that with 1.5 billion consumers China is the market of the future. If it doesn't work out that way, equity shares will suffer another pricked bubble.

The U.S. is on its way to becoming a country whose corporations are foreign-owned and

foreign-based. The U.S. will decline as a consumer market as there will be no high-productivity jobs to support consumer demand.

The U.S. is importing a new population that will help it on its way to Third Worldism. Every year millions of poor and uneducated immigrants, both legal and illegal, pour into the U.S. from alien lands that have never been part of the rational scientific culture of the West. Today 20 percent of the U.S. population is foreign-born or children of foreign-born.

This massive influx drives up the demand for income-support programs while driving down the taxable wages in retail and service sector jobs, where Americans are forced to seek employment as higher-paying automotive, electronic, textile and manufacturing jobs leave the country.

The U.S. is still a superpower, but it is a country with very little, if any, control over its future and its destiny, a country whose time is running out.

Paul Craig Roberts is a columnist for The Washington Times and is nationally syndicated.

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Subject: Canada: Immigration, Integration, regional

Canada: Immigration, Integration

Canada had 250,346 immigrants in 2001, up from 227,327 in 2000. In 2001, 61 percent of Canada's immigrants were economic immigrants (including family members), 27 percent were family-class immigrants, and 11 percent were refugees. Of 2001's immigrants, 134,118 people, 54 percent, came from 10 countries, including China with 40,282; followed by India with 27,899; Pakistan, 15,342; Philippines, 12,884; Korea, 9,613; U.S., 5,920; Iran, 5,726; Romania, 5,586; Sri Lanka, 5,517; and Britain, 5,349.

Canada's Immigration Minister Denis Coderre said that the government may need to hike immigration levels beyond 300,000 a year to offset its aging population. He added that they may have to be told where they can settle so that the country can absorb such a big increase in numbers. Coderre plans to offer a new "contract" to temporary skilled workers; if they agree to restrict their mobility rights and settle somewhere other than Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal. They would be granted permanent status in Canada at the end of the three- to five-year contract. Critics of the plan say that it violates the mobility rights guaranteed to all Canadian residents under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

On June 28, 2002, a new point system went into effect, requiring immigrants seeking immigrant visas to score 75 points, up from 70 points. The new system rewards education (five points for a high school diploma and 25 points for a PhD), language (16 points for English or French, and 24 points for both) and experience (15 to 21 points for at least one year of work experience). Applicants get 10 points for being ages 21 to 49; 10 points if they have a confirmed job offer in Canada; and up to 10 points for "adaptability," or at the discretion of the examiner of the application.

Immigration Minister Denis Coderre has proposed that immigrants arriving under the point system could receive extra points if they signed contracts to live in rural areas, what he called a "regional development strategy" that would help smaller communities fill the vacancies for skilled workers, such as nurses and teachers. The immigrants would receive "temporary work permits for three or five years" that could be converted to immigrant visas if they fulfilled the residence requirement.

Canada has five million foreign-born residents, 17 percent of all residents; 2.1 million of the immigrants arrived between 1981 and 1996. Immigration averaged 235,000 a year to Canada between 1991 and 1996, 93,000 a year to Australia, and one million a year to the U.S.

On December 3, 2001, Canada and the US issued a Joint Statement on Border Security that required asylum seekers to apply in Canada or the US, whichever country they reached first. About 15,000 foreigners a year travel through the US, or apply for asylum in the US, and then apply for asylum in Canada.

Integration. V. S. Naipaul, an immigrant from Trinidad who won the 2001 Nobel Prize in Literature, advised his nephew, Neil Bissoondath, to follow him to Canada, but not to make race "the center of your worldview." Bissoondath followed his advice and became a writer. His novels often criticize multiculturalism, portraying immigrants who are less than satisfied with their new home.

He says: "I believe in the ability of the individual to shape one's own life," and criticizes the government's financing of ethnic festivals and community centers. The result, he says, is segregation. Many intellectuals in the Canadian West Indian community have scorned Bissoondath, saying that he has turned his back on his roots and arguing that his call for color-blindness is naïve.

Labor. In May 2002, four Mexican workers who had nonimmigrant visas to work at Maple Leaf Pork in Brandon, Manitoba were arrested just inside the North Dakota border. Maple Leaf processes 9,000 hogs a day, and hired 47 Mexican workers with two year visas for C\$9.65 an hour. As the number of Mexican guest workers in Canada increases, the number slipping away to the US may increase.

Bill Curry, "Coderre says plan to settle new Canadians in small cities is good for everyone," National Post, August 27, 2002. Allan Thompson, "Newcomers to Canada may be told where to live," Toronto Star, August 9, 2002. Clifford Krauss, "The Immigrant Culture, Written in Harsh Light," New York Times, August 3, 2002. "Mexicans flee huge Brandon hog plant: Workers arrested in U.S.," National Post, May 2, 2002. Bissett, James. 2002. Canada's Asylum System: A Threat to American Security.
<http://www.cis.org/articles/2002/back402.html>

Subject: Newcomers to Canada may be told where to live

Newcomers to Canada may be told where to live
Coderre eyes hiking immigrant target to 300,000

By Allan Thompson

The Toronto Star, August 9, 2002

http://www.thestar.com/NASApp/cs/ContentServer?pagename=thestar/Layout/Article_PrintFriendly&c=Article&cid=1026144070695

OTTAWA -- Canada may need to hike immigration levels beyond 300,000 a year to offset its aging population, Immigration Minister Denis Coderre says.

But to meet that figure many immigrants may have to be told where they can settle so Canada can absorb this big boost in their numbers, Coderre said in an interview. New immigrants cannot all come to the traditional magnets of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver, he said, adding that the key to absorbing so many immigrants is finding a way to disperse them more evenly across the country.

"We have to face the notion of dispersion," Coderre said. "Immigration is not just at the ports of entry. It is also about integration."

A key element of Coderre's plan is his controversial proposal to offer a new "contract" to temporary skilled workers who would be allowed into Canada for three- to five-year terms to take up job offers, but only if they agree to settle in a specific location.

As an incentive, temporary workers who agree to restrict their mobility rights and settle somewhere other than Toronto, Vancouver or Montreal would be granted permanent status in Canada at the end of the contract.

Coderre said he wants to set the immigration target at 250,000 or higher next year to take a concrete step toward the government's goal of pegging annual immigration levels of 1 per cent of the population - or 300,000 a year. The government's target for immigration levels this year was between 210,000 and 235,000.

In 2001, Canada actually exceeded its target for the first time in years, with 250,000 newcomers being granted permanent resident status.

Coderre also mused about pushing annual immigration levels beyond 300,000 with the new temporary skilled worker program and also by giving more points to immigrants who have provincial backing and by allowing industry, for the first time, to directly sponsor immigrants.

"We'll have to discuss whether 1 per cent is enough," Coderre said. "If we need a million skilled workers within five years, then we have to do something about it."

But the key to increasing immigration levels will be confronting head on the problem of absorbing so many newcomers in Canada when the vast majority head directly to Toronto, or migrate there from other major centres.

"One of the main problems is concentration," Coderre said.

"We all know that 50 per cent of all the newcomers are coming to Toronto, 15 per cent to Vancouver and 11 per cent to Montreal. And I think after that, some of those are coming to Toronto."

The immediate challenge to the plan is the contention by some critics that it would violate the mobility rights guaranteed to all Canadian residents under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

But Coderre thinks that putting a geographic restriction on a temporary work permit would meet the test of a legal challenge.

Ben Trister, head of the immigration section of the Canadian Bar Association, said Coderre might be right, even though implementing such a plan would be much more complex than the minister makes it sound.

"These are interesting ideas," Trister said.

"His intentions are certainly laudable, but there are a lot of details that would have to be worked out."

Subject: H1-Bs filling shortages or driving down wages?

Emotions Run Hot on H-1Bs

Numbers difficult to track; impact of visas debated

By Brian Sullivan

Computerworld Inc., April 29, 2002

http://www.computerworld.com/cwi/stories/0,1199,NAV47-81_STO70624,00.html

It would be easier to separate sheets of wet tissue paper pounded flat by a hammer than to separate fact from fiction in the H-1B debate.

Employers say foreign workers fill gaps left by a dearth of qualified U.S. residents.

Unemployed IT workers and their allies say there's no labor shortage. They claim that employers are just trying to cut IT costs and drive down wages by hiring foreign workers at lower pay rates.

The truth lies somewhere in between, but clarifying the issue is difficult because emotions run high and statistics are either contradictory or dated. For example, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) stopped tracing H-1B data after the Sept. 11 attacks. Other oft-cited numbers were issued in 1998 or early 2000.

Still, the available data does bear out that H-1B workers are often younger and better educated than their American peers and are seeking permanent resident status. Most H-1B holders in the computer industry are hired to fill systems analyst and programming jobs. Some receive the prevailing wage, while others make less working in job shops. But the numbers are meaningless to many.

"The problem with the whole issue is that it gets into matters of immigration," said Robert D. Austin, assistant professor of IT management at Harvard Business School. "And that turns into us vs. them."

So it's not surprising that the debate often drifts into rhetorical battles, giving rise to such unsubstantiated extremes as the charge that all the H-1B workers in a New Jersey office cheered as across the Hudson River the World Trade Center towers fell.

The following are some of the arguments on each side:

- * Companies have created an indentured servant class out of H-1B visa holders, according to Norman Matloff, a professor at the University of California, Davis.

- * Companies don't hire average IT workers, but rather engineers with

advanced degrees, said Paula Collins, director of government relations for human resources and education at Texas Instruments Inc.

* Companies would rather hire U.S. residents because it costs \$1,000 in fees to hire an H-1B holder, said Margaret Wong, an immigration lawyer in Cleveland.

According to the last INS report regarding which companies hire the most H-1B workers, covering October 1999 to February 2000, Motorola Inc. (618), Oracle Corp. (455) and Cisco Systems Inc. (398) topped the list. Others in the top 25 included Intel Corp., Microsoft Corp. and Sun Microsystems Inc. Most of those companies wouldn't comment.

Cisco said that the INS numbers are out of date, noting that it has backed off its H-1B program and has actually done little hiring of any kind recently. Layoffs caused by the downturn have increased the number of qualified U.S. workers in the marketplace, Cisco said.

"Basically, we have been a user of the program almost exclusively to hire electrical engineers, all of whom or most of whom have master's degrees or Ph.D.s," said a Texas Instruments spokesman. Statistics do show that more foreign nationals receive advanced degrees in engineering, computer engineering and computer science.

In the 2000-01 academic year, foreign nationals took 60.4% of computer engineering master's degrees. They earned 68.9% of computer science and 51.8% of combined computer science and engineering master's, according to Richard Heckel, technical director at Houghton, Mich.-based Engineering Trends Inc. His firm tracks graduate information from U.S. engineering colleges. As for Ph.D.s, foreigners took 66.1% in computer engineering degrees, 54% in computer science and 54.3% in combined computer science/engineering.

But that matters only if you believe the companies; Matloff, a vigorous critic of H-1B visas, says he doesn't. His research shows that only 1% of H-1B holders have Ph.D.s and only 7.5% have master's degrees.

U.S. Labor Dept. Rules for H-1B Visa holders

* A company must compare the prevailing wage for a position to the actual wage it pays other workers in similar positions. It must then pay the H-1B holder the higher of the two.

* A company must post notice of its intent to hire H-1B visa holders and inform other employees and anyone who negotiates salaries for them. If there is no one who negotiates for all employees, then the company must post two notices in places visible to all workers for at least 10 days.

* Companies that violate these rules are subject to fines.

Subject: Proposed changes to Visitor Visas in US

How changes in rules would affect visitor visas

By Pankaj Paul

The San Jose Mercury News, May 1, 2002

<http://www.bayarea.com/mld/mercurynews/news/local/3173192.htm>

In an attempt to deter terrorism, the INS is proposing major changes to its policies for visitor visas.

The changes come in a new post-Sept. 11 climate, with the Immigration and Naturalization Service under fire after it was discovered that at least one of the terrorists entered the United States on a student visa, and two others had their visa status changed, with the INS paperwork arriving more than a year later, after both were killed in the terrorist attacks.

Here is a look at what the INS is proposing:

- * Eliminate the minimum six-month admission period for B-2 non-immigrant visitors, and instead base the admission period on the amount of time needed to accomplish the purpose of the trip (in many cases 30 days).
- * Reduce the maximum initial admission period for all B non-immigrant visitors from one year to six months.

- * Limit the conditions for which an extension of stay in B non-immigrant visitor status can be granted and reduce the maximum length of that extension.

The current policy admits most visitors for six months. Under the new policy, visitors on B-1 and B-2 visas would be admitted to the United States for shorter time periods, which would be determined by an INS inspector at the port of entry. Most visitors will probably be admitted for 30 days, which would be reflected on the "Arrival-Departure" or I-94 form.

An extension can be granted only under certain conditions, including humanitarian and religious reasons, or if they fall under the "L" visa -- temporary transfers from companies -- or if they are personal or domestic workers for U.S. citizens.

Visitors already in the United States will not be subject to the new rules unless they apply for an extension of stay after the date that the regulations become final, should the new rules be adopted.

Some visitors change their status after they are in the United States. For example, someone here on a tourist visa who decides to go to school would then have to convert to a student visa. The proposed rule will not bar

visitors from changing their status, but it will require that visitors notify the INS upon entry that they intend to enroll in an educational institution.

This rule will not apply to those already in the United States on B non-immigrant visitor status. And the proposal does not bar individuals admitted under other non-immigrant visa categories from changing status.

Subject: Trading away our living standards

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By Paul Craig Roberts

The Washington Times, February 14, 2002

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This massive influx drives up the demand for income-support programs while driving down the taxable wages in retail and service sector jobs, where Americans are forced to seek employment as higher-paying automotive, electronic, textile and manufacturing jobs leave the country.

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<http://www.washtimes.com/commentary/20020214-31481960.htm>

Subject: NZ FACES COMPETITION FOR SKILLED MIGRANTS, DEPT SAYS

2. NZ FACES COMPETITION FOR SKILLED MIGRANTS, DEPT SAYS

NEW ZEALAND PRESS ASSOCIATION

August 30, 2002

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Wellington, Aug 29 - New Zealand faces new competition for skilled immigrants and needs to actively market itself as a destination, the Immigration Department says in briefing papers for the Government.

It says the ageing workforce in most developed countries is driving the competition.

"It is essential that New Zealand actively markets itself as a migrant destination. This also raises the question of whether we should actively target specific migrant groups or individuals," the papers say.

The department also refers to "the current low level of English language prerequisite" for immigrants in the general skills, investor and entrepreneur category.

"New Zealand's current language standard is set at an inadequate level for a skilled migrant. A decision needs to be made in the short to medium term on whether to temporarily increase the skills stream's English prerequisite," the papers say.

"Poor language skills adversely affect the settlement outcomes of all migrants, not just the skilled. For example, the social isolation of older migrants with poor English impedes their integration into New Zealand society."

Immigration Minister Lianne Dalziel said work was under way to address those issues, and noted that the briefing papers said immigration had an important but secondary role to play in building the skilled and knowledgeable workforce the country needed.

"The briefing highlights the fact that we are enjoying historically high and positive net migration and flows of people for residence and temporary entry," she said.

"Our current level of net migration gain is driven by more Kiwis coming home, fewer Kiwis leaving and increased immigration.

"It is the combination of the three that gives New Zealand the first period of positive net migration we have experienced in years."

Subject: Proposed New Zealand Immigration Increase and Rule Changes

Business applauds deeper talent pool from immigration
Highly skilled migrants driving taxis are a thing of the past

By Kevin Taylor

The New Zealand Herald, October 16, 2001

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/businessstorydisplay.cfm?storyID=222745&thesubsection=general&thesecondsubsection=&thetickercode=>

Business groups are applauding a plan to let up to 150,000 immigrants into New Zealand over the next three years - and its focus on getting more skilled people.

Immigration Minister Lianne Dalziel announced the Government's new immigration programme last month, and changes came into force at the beginning of this month.

The changes not only boost immigration, but rejig the system to let business plug the economy's skill gaps more easily.

And Ms Dalziel says the days of migrant doctors and scientists driving taxis are gone.

The difficulties businesses face in getting skilled labour are reported in Institute of Economic Research quarterly business opinion surveys.

The June quarter showed only a slight drop in the difficulty firms are having finding skilled labour, with a net 42 per cent reporting problems compared with 44 per cent in the March quarter.

The Immigration Service started an "excuse list" a year ago identifying skill shortages in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin.

The lists cover many specialised jobs in health, education, manufacturing, trades, services, agriculture and tourism.

It means businesses seeking to employ someone from overseas do not have to prove that a labour market shortage exists in that job, saving employers time and money.

The Government has also set up resettlement pilot schemes around the country to help migrants settle and find work.

Now it is working on a "talent visa" system, also announced last month.

Details are still being decided, and Ms Dalziel expects it to go to the cabinet for approval next month.

The policy is part of a wider review of ways to attract talented people to work and live in New Zealand, and will let employers assure skilled foreigners they can get permanent residency.

Ms Dalziel said the latest changes were the Government's response to calls to attract more skilled and business migrants.

The new immigration programme raises the number of residence approvals from 38,000 to 45,000, with a tolerance of plus or minus 10 per cent. This means approvals could reach nearly 50,000 a year. In the year to June, residency approvals reached 44,598 anyway.

The 10 residence categories were replaced on October 1 by three new approval streams, with the emphasis being on the skilled/business stream.

That stream will cover 60 per cent of all approvals, while family-sponsored approvals will be 32 per cent and international/humanitarian 8 per cent.

The Business Roundtable, Business New Zealand and the Employers and Manufacturers Association (Northern) are positive about the Government's direction.

Business NZ chief executive Simon Carlaw said skill shortages were rife.

"We are talking from very basic jobs all the way to not enough post-doctoral graduates in electrical engineering - and everybody in between."

Shortages were particularly hitting manufacturers, the largest part of the economy. Farmers were screaming out for labour and the dairy and tourism industries were also short.

Mr Carlaw said until now the immigration process had been unable to deliver people with the skills needed in a reasonable time.

"Immigration policy has not married well with the needs of business."

Association chief executive Alasdair Thompson also welcomed the changes, although he was seeking information to compare policies here with other countries.

"We believe it's going to better target the sort of people who can contribute to New Zealand's economic growth - younger, qualified and with good numeracy and literacy skills," he said. "We think the refocusing will deliver that. We need people who can come and add to the country's economic output."

Mr Thompson said New Zealand could handle even more than 50,000 immigrants a year.

"We could raise that by another 15,000 and cope."

Business Roundtable acting chairman Murray Horn also welcomed the Government's direction and the talent visa plan, but said rules were needed if a business was sponsoring a migrant and things went wrong.

Dr Horn said immigration could not be viewed in isolation from other domestic policies, such as tax and employment law.

"The sort of person who is attracted to come to New Zealand will be attracted in part by the domestic policy environment."

But National immigration and population spokeswoman Marie Hasler - who believes the country should aim to increase its population to at least five million - is critical.

"I mean, what's talent? Who is going to decide who is talent? Is it the NZIS? Is there going to be input from business?" she asked.

National launches its immigration policy this year and Ms Hasler is studying ideas to get bosses to employ immigrants for trial periods - but without the hassles of the Employment Relations Act.

She said the act made it harder to dismiss staff.

Ms Dalziel said when she became minister some immigrants in work could not get residency and some with residency could not find a job.

To deal with the last issue the resettlement schemes were launched early this year - including one with the Auckland Chamber of Commerce which established a Government-financed website (www.newkiwis.co.nz) to match employers and migrant skills.

There was also a problem with people coming here to work to meet skill shortages, but no matter how hard they tried they could not meet residency criteria.

"The talent visa will allow you to qualify for residency as long as you have ongoing employment," she said.

At present an employer has to get immigration approval to employ a foreigner with a specific skill, unless that person is on the excuse list.

Under the talent visa, bosses can shoulder-tap those with the skills they want and not only offer them a job but assure them of permanent residency.

The only requirements will be police and health checks.

But the public perception of immigration in the past decade lingers - highly skilled migrants lured here in the 1990s ending up driving taxis.

Ms Dalziel said she was outraged that National took until 1995 to fix the rules creating the problem, but problems lingered for two more years because of the time-lag in applications.

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professional consultants to domestic firms.

Local governments should keep trying to improve services for fledgling high-tech ventures and businesses set up by returned students.

The programme emphasizes that governments should fully trust returned students, give them enough responsibility to demonstrate their skills, and promote well-trained professionals to the administrative ranks.

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Immigration changes a ruse, says Peters

By Audrey Young

The New Zealand Herald, June 13, 2002

<http://www.nzherald.co.nz/storydisplay.cfm?storyID=2046340>

Changes to immigration rules to reduce the number of residency applicants are no more than a smoke-and-mirrors exercise, says New Zealand First leader Winston Peters, who is making the immigration "mess" a key election target.

The Government announced changes to the rules in the midst of Tuesday's flurry over the early election - an attempt to bury embarrassing news, says Mr Peters.

The passmark in the general skills category has been raised from 25 to 28 points, effective from next Tuesday. At the same time, three extra points will be awarded to applicants with relevant job offers, from five points to eight.

Passmarks will be reviewed monthly and five days' notice of any change will be given, instead of quarterly with 20 days' notice.

Immigration Minister Lianne Dalziel said the month's notice given for the last change in passmark had produced a rush of applications, creating a backlog for the Immigration Service to deal with.

The number of applicants sitting in the system had increased sharply in the past 12 months.

"Without measures to reduce the inflow of applications, the level will continue to rise, creating queues which are frustrating for applicants and inefficient for the New Zealand Immigration Service."

Ms Dalziel anticipated 53,000 approvals for residency this financial year, up from 45,000 last year.

Mr Peters said the changes to the passmark were being touted as a tightening-up of the rules.

"This is no more than smoke and mirrors. Any immigrant who claims to have a job offer has his or her points increased, which will more than make up for the three-point change."

1. Comment & Analysis: Analysis: Down the brain drain

Too many graduates are chasing too few high-skill jobs. Is the government's plan to increase the number of university places sensible?

SIMON PARKER

GUARDIAN

August 14, 2002

JOURNAL CODE: FGDN LANGUAGE: English RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT
WORD COUNT: 865

Remember the one about the three students? The science graduate asks, "why does it work?" The engineer asks, "how does it work?" And the student with a 2:1 in English literature asks, "Do you want fries with that?"

That joke is wearing thinner than ever. New research suggests that England might reach a point where its universities and colleges will be pumping out more highly skilled workers than the country's economy knows what to do with, leading to under-employment and economic exclusion for some.

Findings from Local Futures, an independent thinktank, show that the proportion of the workforce with degrees and other high-level qualifications is growing far faster than the number of jobs being created in the so-called "knowledge economy". Expanding this group of graduate-intensive industries, including cultural, business and financial services, education and science-based businesses, is one of the holy grails of government policy.

Ministers want to see more people going to university and coming out with qualifications that suit the demands of the knowledge economy. By 2010 Margaret Hodge, the higher education minister, wants 50% of under-30s to take a degree - seven times the proportion in the 1960s.

But the Local Futures research questions whether we need so many graduates. The thinktank analysed the skills profiles of the nine English regions and found that even in Greater London, the hub of these much-hyped, knowledge-driven industries, the number of high-skilled jobs is failing to keep pace with rising qualifications.

Between 1994-2000, a period of healthier economic growth, the proportion of workers in the capital who had a degree or equivalent rose by over 22%. The number of jobs in the most graduate-intensive industries - those whose workforce contains at least 40% high-skilled workers - rose at little more than a fifth of that rate. The number of jobs in sectors that employ an "above average" number of graduates (25%-40%), including nurses, actually fell by

more than 10%.

The mismatch is repeated around the country. As a whole, the British graduate labour pool grew by 23% between 94-00, while knowledge intensive industries raised their share of national employment from 48% to 50%, an increase of less than 5%.

In the north-east, an area with a relatively poorly developed knowledge economy, the proportion of the workforce with graduate-level qualifications rose by 17.5% between 94-00. In the same period, the number of jobs in the most graduate-intensive industries rose by only 1.6%.

Mike Collier, the chief executive of the area's regional development agency, admits: "It's been a persistent issue in the region. For many years we've created more graduates than can be absorbed in our own economy."

The brain drain from the regions to London and its surrounding counties has accelerated. This is happening to the extent that the government wants to build at least 43,000 houses in the south-east every year until 2016.

This migration contributes to London's well-publicised house price inflation and pushes key public sector workers, who often have intermediate skills levels, out of the market.

But London faces more serious social problems than that. The capital's workforce has become polarised between the skills haves and have-nots. In 2000, when roughly a third of the capital's resident workforce had degree-level qualifications, another third struggled to secure a C grade GCSE pass.

Fortunately, the long-term trends show that skills poverty is decreasing, but this still leaves a huge group being excluded from the affluent and expensive London being created by their well-educated counterparts.

Mark Hepworth, the director of Local Futures, highlights a "Dickensian" gap between the relatively highly skilled white workers of south London, with an employment rate of around 80%, and the poorly skilled Pakistanis and Bangladeshis of the East End, who have an employment rate of under half that figure.

Older workers could also be excluded. Across Great Britain, those aged between 45-64 are employed in significantly fewer knowledge-intensive industries than those aged 25-44. This at a time when a looming pensions crisis means the elderly might have to compete with their younger counterparts long after traditional retirement age.

Does the government's target of 50% make any sense in economic terms? Many think not. In a recent report, the Institute of Directors described the plans as "ludicrous". They want to turn the clock back to the 1970s, with 15-20% of people going to university and many of the others going into "tough vocational apprenticeships".

The IoD's Ruth Lea said: "The current obsession with sending as many young people as possible into higher education undermines vocational training by making it appear a second best. This helps no one, least of all the many students who study inappropriate higher education courses."

These trends are already changing the kind of jobs graduates go in to. Only a certain number of people will ever become lawyers, civil servants and investment bankers, so as more graduates enter the market, the benefits

associated with a degree will be progressively diluted. This is reflected in the fact that professions that once recruited at A-level, like the police and accountancy firms, now take people from university instead.

Adds Mark Hepworth: "Aren't we devaluing degrees? What do we do about underemployment?"

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Subject: Is immigration in Britain out of control?

Britain is losing Britain

Is immigration in Britain out of control? Our correspondent, an immigrant's son, says it is - causing social tension, cultural clashes and economic strain

By Anthony Browne

The Times (of London), August 7, 2002

...
About a quarter of a million people are coming to Britain from the Third World each year: a city the size of Cambridge every six months, an unprecedented and sustained wave of immigration to one of the world's most densely crowded islands, utterly transforming the society in which we live against the wishes of the majority of the population, damaging quality of life and social cohesion, exacerbating the housing crisis and congestion, and with questionable economic benefits.

...
The unprecedented wave of immigration from the poor world to Britain is leading to huge and rapidly growing communities from almost every Third World country. There are a million Indians, almost 700,000 Pakistanis, 260,000 Bangladeshis, up to a million Nigerians, over 100,000 Iraqis. And numbers are increasing rapidly - in the past five years, while the white population grew by 1 per cent, the Bangladeshi community grew by 30 per cent, the black African population by 37 per cent and the Pakistani community by 13 per cent.

...
Don't be fooled by the immigration celebrationists telling you that this is just history as normal. It isn't. Earlier waves of immigration, from the Huguenots to the Jews after the Second World War, to East African Asians in the 1970s, were one-off events that had an ending. The populations who came and did well for themselves were genuinely being forced out of whence they came. We were right to welcome them.

But what is happening now is the result of sustained migration pressure the likes of which the world has never seen before. For the first time, the world has huge disparities of wealth, widespread knowledge in the poor world of how the rich world lives and how to get there through TV and global telecommunications, and cheap, quick worldwide transport. It is easier for them to get here, and far more difficult to make them leave: the revolution in "human rights" means that as soon as anyone gets past passport control they are pretty much guaranteed to stay. More than 47,000 illegal immigrants were detected in 2000, but just 6,000 were sent home.

...
<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,7-376133,00.html>

Liverpool can solve our immigration problems

By Jeremy Clarkson

The Times of London (U.K.), August 11, 2002

...

However, when there are reports that over the next 10 years up to 2m immigrants will be settling in Britain, even the most organic liberal is going to choke on his brown rice breakfast cereal.

...

Obviously, The Guardian was quick to repudiate the figures, saying that you can't simply take the annual migration figure of 200,000 and multiply it by 10 to arrive at 2m, because it's impossible to say what will happen in the future.

Well, how come the eco lobby, which The Guardian champions, is forever using exactly the same formula to work how many cars will be on the road in 10 years' time? More worryingly, we are told that the 2m prophecy was drawn up by Migration Watch UK, which "appears to be little more than a website" - what? Like Friends of the Earth - and that anyway its annual figures are all wrong. According to the Home Office, the actual figure is about 135,000 a year.

...

Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that it really is 1.35m. That is still a huge number. I know Britain was the country that pioneered the art of getting two dozen Scouts into a Mini but this is something else: 1.35m. We're going to need a city the size of Liverpool to house them all.

...

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/newspaper/0,,3-380029,00.html>

Subject: Immigration to Indonesia

Skilled workers to flood Indonesia
The Jakarta Post, September 6, 2000

JAKARTA, Indonesia (JP) -- A manpower expert warned Indonesians on Tuesday to emotionally prepare for throngs of skilled foreign workers once the Asian Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) takes effect in 2003.

"Since we are fighting a fierce competition in a free trade era, many foreign workers will throng and fill in jobs here.

"We cannot get angry with them because we do not have enough skilled people to fill all the positions," Payaman Simanjuntak, a senior adviser at the Manpower Ministry, said.

Payaman was addressing a national seminar on Indonesia's human resources quality and education toward the implementation of AFTA, held by private Kertanegara University.

Payaman's opinion was shared by labor activist Muchtar Pakpahan who addressed the same seminar.

"However, massive employment of foreign workers here would certainly add to the number of unemployed Indonesians," Muchtar said.

Indonesian people's unreadiness for AFTA was initially revealed by education expert, Winarno Surakhmad.

"We are fighting a losing battle here. Do not talk about our readiness to face AFTA. We're already far behind our Asian comrades," Winarno, former rector of Jakarta Teachers Training Institute (IKIP Jakarta), said.

He blamed the poor skills and inadequate knowledge of Indonesians on the country's corrupted education system, inferior teachers and outdated curriculum.

"For dozens of years, the curriculum from elementary through university has not matched with the requirements of the jobs.

"Thousands of university graduates ended up jobless," he said, adding that teacher quality is also declining.

Payaman said those entering IKIP to become teachers were mostly students who were rejected at other schools.

"And once they become teachers or lecturers, they are underpaid and are

busy moonlighting to earn a living," he said.

The seminar also featured chief of sea exploration training and education Soen'an H. Poernomo and businessmen Benny Sutrisno and Setiawan Djodi.

Most of the speakers pointed at poor English and computer illiteracy among Indonesian students and prospective employees as a major shortcoming in facing the globalization era.

"We are only two years and three months away from AFTA and it's impossible for us to catch up," Benny Sutrisno, president director of textile firm PT APAC Centertex Corp. Tbk, said.

Meanwhile, Payaman blamed Indonesians' poor skills on their minimum education period of only 6.5 years.

"In other Asian countries, the period reaches at least 10 to 12 years," he said.

The Indonesian human resources quality index ranks 105 out of 174 countries in the world, Payaman said.

"We are also facing a problem of massive unemployment with about 36 million jobless people out of some 200 million population, including new graduates and people losing jobs due to the economic crisis," he added.

Indications of the declining education and human resources quality was also shown by the fact that top local universities were among the lowest ranking in Asia.

Asiaweek in its June 30 report on Asia's best universities or multi-disciplined schools showed that only three local universities made the list of 77 schools, with the University of Indonesia (UI) ranked 61, Yogyakarta-based Gadjah Mada University (UGM) at 68 and Semarang-based Diponegoro University at 73.

Kertanegara University rector Harry Ganda Asi revealed even a more pitiful fact.

"This year we tried to make the school more relevant by opening a class for textiles but only one student registered; and none has applied for the maritime class. This shows that the people here are not used to specialization," Harry said, adding that his university has conducted job training and signed contracts with 15 established companies to channel students to them.

Seamen

Regarding the sluggish effort to cope with manpower readiness, sea expert Soen'an H. Poernomo cited the fact that most of the 60,000 seamen in the country have not obtained the Standard of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW) and STCW-F (STCW for Fishing Vessel Personnel).

"Most of our seamen have only traditional skills. They will face unemployment as the International Maritime Organization instituted such requirements," Poernomo said.

Meanwhile, Muchtar Pakpahan hammered at the poor performance of the ministries of manpower and education, as well as labor unions for the past four decades of sloth.

"They did nothing for more than 40 years. We had no choice but to accept the situation. Now people have to improve themselves if they want to compete with market demands.

"It is up to President Abdurrahman and Vice President Megawati to lead the way. It seems that our future is not a pretty picture," he said.

Crisis looms on age and migrant influx

Fanny Fung and Cannix Yau

STANDARD

August 17, 2002

JOURNAL CODE: WHKS LANGUAGE: English RECORD TYPE: FULLTEXT

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Hong Kong risks facing a crisis in the next 30 years as its population ages and growth comes mostly from an influx of mainlanders who may lack education and skills.

The government forecasts that 93 per cent of the territory's population growth in the next 30 years will be from migrant arrivals, with 82 per cent coming from the mainland under the 150-a-day quota for one-way permit holders. At the end of last year about 160,000 mainlanders were waiting to come to Hong Kong.

The number of others eligible who have yet to file applications is unknown.

The situation will be aggravated by Hong Kong recording the world's lowest birth rate and an ageing population. Government estimates show that, by 2031, one in four people in Hong Kong will be over 65.

Chief Secretary for Administration Donald Tsang, who has been given the task of drawing up the government's population policy by the end of the year, would not respond yesterday when asked if the situation was "alarming".

"I am not going to give it a description. I am presenting to you the facts and figures," Tsang told a media briefing. He has been spending the past few weeks gauging views from a cross-section of people, with most telling him "something has to be done". Issues Tsang will address include: How to deal with an ageing population; Whether the daily quota of 150 one-way permits should be adjusted; How to tackle the growing number of foreign domestic helpers; Whether rules on the import of skilled workers should be relaxed; and How to retain local talent and attract back students from overseas.

The issue of changing the one-way permit quota is the most controversial.

Of the 150 mainlanders allowed into Hong Kong each day, 60 are children born on the mainland to Hong Kong parents, 30 are spouses of Hong Kong residents and the rest come for other purposes.

Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa has said he would like to see a reallocation in the quota to bring in skilled professionals to increase the territory's competitiveness. Tsang gave an assurance yesterday that any

Subject: Malaysia Issues Permits For 30,000 Foreign Workers-Report (at the same time cracking down on illegal immigrants)

Malaysia Issues Permits For 30,000 Foreign Workers-Report
The Associated Press, August 16, 2002
http://online.wsj.com/article_print/0,,BT_CO_20020815_009545,00.html (pay site)

KUALA LUMPUR (AP) -- Malaysia has issued almost 30,000 new permits for foreign workers in the two weeks since it imposed tough new penalties - including whipping - for illegal immigrants , an official was reported Friday as saying.

New laws aimed at cracking down on illegal foreign workers caused more than 300,000 illegal immigrants , mostly Indonesians, to flee Malaysia in recent months and prompted warnings from employers that the loss of manpower would hurt the economy.

Dozens of people have been sentenced to prison and strokes of a rattan cane since charges under the new laws started going before courts last Saturday. On Thursday, 26 people were sentenced in courts in several different states to various punishments under the new laws, the New Straits Times newspaper reported.

Deputy Home Minister Zainal Abidin Zin said in the report that almost 30,000 work permits had been issued since July 31, the deadline set for illegal workers to get out of Malaysia without punishment.

Officials weren't immediately available to confirm the figure.

He said the government understood employers' concerns about a work force shortage, but that the crackdown would continue to try to reduce crimes blamed on illegal workers.

"There is no compromise for anyone who breaks the law," Zainal was quoted as saying. "Punishment will be meted out. When we say whip, we whip."

Officials estimated that before the crackdown up to 600,000 illegal workers formed a labor black market in Malaysia, one of Southeast Asia's wealthiest countries and a magnet for migrants fleeing poverty and violence in the region.

Under the new laws, foreigners found without proper papers face a mandatory prison term of up to five years in prison, fines of up to 10,000 ringgit (\$1=MYR3.80) and six strokes with a cane.

Subject: Japan May Allow Skilled Easier Admittance

6.

Elite foreigners soon to find move to Japan much easier

The Asahi Shimbun, July 9, 2002

<http://www.asahi.com/english/business/K2002070900311.html>

Foreigners with an exemplary education who want to work in Japan will soon gain easier admittance under proposals to address an imminent labor shortage due to the aging population.

The labor ministry is proposing to cut the red tape involved in immigration and residence procedures for non-Japanese with reputable educational qualifications.

In a report, a task force attached to the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare proposed making entering and staying in Japan easier for foreigners who hold doctorate degrees or have matching professional skills.

The panel also proposed bringing more foreigners into industries experiencing labor shortages and introducing new tax formulas for companies that recruit from overseas.

The proposals come on the heels of a U.N. estimate that found Japan needs 610,000 immigrants each year to maintain workforce levels where people between the ages of 15 and 64 have employment.

"Accepting foreigners in any industry is a possibility," a labor ministry official said.

It is the first time the ministry has addressed the issue of foreign labor since 1988, when the asset-inflated economy triggered an influx of Iranian laborers and female workers from Southeast Asia, which created many problems for immigration authorities.

The ministry says there are more than 700,000 foreign laborers in Japan. The figure, which includes illegal immigrants, has increased each year since immigration laws were revised in 1990.

Old in Japan? Retire later, then buy a robot
By Jonathon Watts
The Guardian (U.K.), August 2, 2001

TOKYO -- Nowhere is the threat of a population implosion being felt as strongly as in Japan, where the world's fastest ageing society is proving the great grandmother of all policy headaches.

Robots, immigration and a delay in the retirement age are being discussed as ways for the country to survive in a future where the workforce and tax revenue will decline as the number of elderly people soars.

The Japanese can expect to live longer than anyone else on the planet thanks to a high standard of living, a temperate climate and a varied, low-fat diet. Tofu, seaweed and fish, all washed down with green tea (believed to fight cancer) are part of a healthy menu that has contributed to an average lifespan of 83 for women and 78 for men.

But while life is getting longer, the urge to reproduce is diminishing. Lower sperm counts for men and higher career aspirations for women - who are choosing to marry much later - have pushed the birthrate down to an average of just 1.38 children for each woman. This is far lower than the 2.1 needed to sustain the population.

Japan now has 22.27m elderly people, equivalent to 17.5% of the population. By 2015, the government expects one in four to be in the old age bracket.

The prime minister, Junichiro Koizumi, has said the ageing of society is the biggest problem facing Japan. Medical expenses are going up by 1 trillion yen (pounds 5.7bn) a year, while the recession bites into health insurance premiums. This year finance ministry officials warned that the state health insurance programme would collapse within two years as its deficit - 316bn yen last year - doubles by 2003.

But the government's hands are tied by history. Fearing a return to the baby-boosting policies of the pre-war militarist regime, women's groups and pacifists attack any hint of intervention in reproduction. Instead past administrations have tried to encourage women to have more children by increasing spending on day care.

Local governments and private firms have taken more extreme measures. Last year the toymaker Bandai - maker of the Tamagotchi electronic pet - offered a reward of pounds 6,000 to staff members on the birth of a third child. Daihatsu teamed up with the Ikeda city government in western Japan to offer a reward for a fourth child of pounds 1,000 and free car rental for three years. In the countryside several villagers have invited groups of women

from the Philippines to marry their men.

In the future, Japan is expected to import youth and export age. Last year a UN report said Japan would need 600,000 immigrants a year to make up for the shortfall in its workforce later this decade. The elderly who remain will have to work longer, as the retirement age will be pushed above 65. But they can at least expect a society more geared to their needs.

Matsushita has developed a robot cat to keep watch over old people living alone. Osaka Gas Co has designed an intelligent' bathtub that sets off an alarm if elderly bathers fall ill mid-soak.

Subject: Korea Looks offshore for workers to offset "brain drain"

Chaebol look overseas to offset 'brain drain'

By Nho Joon-hun

The Korea Times, August 6, 2002

http://www.hankooki.com/kt_biz/200208/t2002080617142943110.htm

For years, there have been talk about how well educated Korean's with Masters and Ph.D.s were leaving the country to look for job opportunities abroad for various reasons.

Now, perhaps for the lack of top professionals, leading companies are heading overseas to find the next-generation, or even the current generation, of top executives and researchers.

In fact, it has come to a point where CEOs of top companies are getting personal about the recruitment of such professionals, making numerous trips overseas for interviews.

"The fact is that there is an increasing lack of qualified manpower in leading industries such as information technology, and we have to look elsewhere," said an official at Samsung Electronics.

Fortunately, professionals in various disciplines are keenly seeking jobs with leading Korean companies which are increasingly boosting their corporate in the international marketplace.

One case is Hyundai Motor, whose president and CEO Kim Dong-jin traveled all the way to Detroit late last month to conduct personal interviews with applicants.

Hyundai Motor was seeking to recruit 100 professionals who are graduates from the top 18 American universities, including from Harvard, Yale and Princeton, with post graduate degrees.

"I was surprised that more than 1,000 fully-qualified aspirants applied for just 100 jobs that we were looking to fill," Kim was quoted as telling his recruiting officials.

Kim is not alone in heading overseas to find the manpower that will take the company to the next level. The list naturally includes such top names as Samsung Electronics, LG Electronics and SK.

At Samsung, Chin Daeje, CEO of the digital media business division, with a diverse education here and at Stanford University where he obtained his Ph. D, was recently in Silicon Valley to interview and recruit 10 professionals specializing in digital technology.

He is expected to travel to other locations like Japan to recruit other potential experts in disregard of any special criteria on the number of new personnel, as long as they are what Samsung is looking for.

``The basic rule is that we transcend nationality and language barriers in recruiting the best brains in the business. This is essential for our future success,'' one Samsung official said in simple terms.

For Samsung, the need for the best brains was so serious that it recruited 22 MBA (Masters in Business Administration) graduates in 1997 to specialize in identifying future business options for Samsung. ``The basic concept is that we need broader perspective on business to find new corporate territories and the strategy for bringing in foreign manpower will continue,'' said one official of the future business strategy division of the restructuring office.

Going one step further, Samsung chairman Lee Kun-hee handed down a directive in an executive meeting that the number of post graduate degree professionals will have to be increased by 1,000 per year.

``There is no restriction on where we find our prospective manpower. It could be in the United States, Japan or Russia. As long as they are qualified, they are invited to work for Samsung,'' he said.

The desire to recruit the best brains in the business is not just confined to Samsung and LG, as POSCO is seeking to bring in about 30 specialists from overseas this year.

``We have already recruited 38 specialized personnel in the first half of this year and the program for attracting qualified personnel will continue in the second half,'' one POSCO official said.

Indeed, spreading through the entire spectrum of the academia and professional fields of expertise, Korean companies are competing to attract the ones who fit into the picture of where they are headed.

``Be they MBAs or Ph.D.s, we have a wide-ranging need for the most qualified people in the business and we are willing to pay what it takes to bring them home,'' said one Samsung official.

Subject: Korea

Korean Migrants. Korean employers may hire foreign workers through the trainee system, begun in 1993 with up to 80,000 trainees, and increased to 85,000 admissions a year in 2002. Trainees receive about half of the minimum wage because they are learning, and must stay with the employer to whom they are assigned. Many run away from their employers because they can earn more money as illegal workers.

The government estimated there were 266,000 unauthorized foreigners in the country in spring 2002, and offered to allow those who registered to remain in Korea until March 31, 2003. Some 256,000 registered; 60 percent were Chinese.

Most experts want to turn trainees into guest workers, with the same rights as Korean workers. Unions argue that trainees fill the same jobs as Koreans for half the pay. The Korean government supports legislation that would turn trainees into guest workers, but employers oppose it, arguing that wages and labor costs would rise.

Emigration. Korea was hard hit by oil price hikes in 1973-74, and sought to earn foreign exchange to pay for more expensive oil by sending workers to the Middle East. Korean firms bid on construction projects in the Middle East, and took Korean workers with them. There were 395 Koreans in the Middle East in 1974, and 162,000 in 1981, when about a seventh of Korean construction workers were employed in the Middle East. They earned monthly wages for a 48-hour week of \$750, and in 1981 remitted \$1.4 billion to Korea.

Korea sent about 4,000 miners and several hundred nurses to Germany as guest workers in the 1960s, and about 21,000 workers to Vietnam in the mid-1960s to work for Korean and US firms with US military contracts.

Subject: Korean Government plans to let in more migrant workers as industrial trainees

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Government plans to let in more migrant workers as industrial trainees

The Korea Herald, July 11, 2002

http://www.koreaherald.co.kr/SITE/data/html_dir/2002/07/11/200207110050.asp

The government plans to increase the number of migrant workers hired in the country as "industrial trainees," and allow them to work in the service sector, officials said yesterday.

The Office for Government Policy Coordination decided to fix a plan to introduce additional foreign workers, and revise the industrial trainee system, which has been blamed for a surge in migrant workers.

These and other policy measures were suggested during Tuesday's meeting for fostering working class and improving their lives.

"We are mulling over measures to legalizing illegal migrant workers through necessary proceedings in stages," one official was quoted as saying.

Illegal migrant workers are estimated at 260,000 in Korea. The government is to recognize this figure as the number of workers, of which Korean industries need to fill with foreigners, officials said.

More than 250,000, or 90 percent of illegal migrant workers, reported to immigration offices to stay here legally until March next year, as required by the Justice Ministry. The government plans to force them to leave by the deadline. Then it is to again bring in the migrant workers who are requested by industries.

In addition, it is to enable foreign workers to take service jobs. So far, migrant workers have been allowed to work only in the manufacturing, construction and fishing sectors. But a significant number of illegal migrant workers, mostly ethnic Koreans from China and Russia, have been working in the service sector.

The plans are intended to help small and medium-sized firms, particularly those offering so-called 3-D (dirty, dangerous, and difficult) jobs. They reportedly face chronic shortage of manpower, which have been filled by industrial trainees.

Under the industrial trainee system, foreign workers, some 80,000 a year at present, come to Korea on condition that they work for a company for two years and one year freely afterwards. But most ran away from workplaces, seeking more pay and better working conditions, while becoming illegal and making them vulnerable to workers' rights and human rights abuse.

Subject: Thailand 3nad 6 month work visas

Three, six-month permits to assist foreign labourers
Panel devises plan to cut employment costs

By Penchan Charoensutthipan

The Bangkok Post, August 22, 2002

http://www.bangkokpost.com/News/22Aug2002_news08.html

A panel on immigrant labour has moved to help foreign labourers save money by introducing three and six-month work permits for those with employment contracts of less than one year.

Foreign workers seeking to renew work permits before Sep 25 would be able to choose three-month permits for 540 baht, six-month permits for 900 baht, or one-year permits for 1,800 baht, said a source from the Administrative Commission on Irregular Immigrant Workers.

Permits would be renewed only for the 568,249 Burmese, Lao and Cambodian workers who registered at labour offices in September 2001.

Those applying for registration would be asked to pay a 1,000-baht registration fee, a 1,200-baht guarantee, and 300 baht for medical check-ups.

Foreign labourers were permitted to work in six job categories:

- land and water transport, mineral mining, pottery and brick-making, construction, rice mills, processed crop factories, processed wood factories and warehouses;
- fisheries and related industries, fish-sauce and ice factories;
- labour-intensive factories;
- maids and laundry-shop employees;
- animal-breeding farms (non-specialist);
- vegetable farms, fruit plantations, flower orchards, and rubber and palm tree plantations.