

OUR VIEW

Welcome to the growing immigrant population

News that the recession has not dampened Canada's reliance on temporary foreign workers should come as no surprise to Brandon residents.

But concerns that large numbers of foreign workers entering the country will hamper the economy and squeeze out qualified permanent immigrants should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt.

The Globe and Mail reported last week that a record 193,000 temporary foreign workers received Canadian work permits last year to fill labour shortages — 80,000 more than came in 2004.

Canada's Immigration Minister Jason Kenney told the Globe that the sharp recession that struck Canada in 2008 also failed to lessen employers' requests for temporary foreign workers in the first half of 2009, when Canada issued 95,060 work permits for specific jobs.

"I expected to see a decline, but I was quite surprised to actually see demand for temporary foreign workers steady in the first quarter of this year, and down only slightly in the second quarter," Kenney said in an interview.

But a new study sponsored by Toronto's Maytree Foundation argues that the growth of temporary work permits is part of a shift in immigration policy to fill short-term job gaps — a policy that has gone too far and could hurt Canada's economy.

Author Naomi Alboim, a former senior federal bureaucrat, suggests that diverting resources to temporary workers slows the processing of permanent skilled workers.

"We're reducing the number of people assessed on human capital, who we know do best, in favour of a whole lot of temporary people — and, by the way, an increasing proportion of those people are low-skilled people," she said.

Statistics for 2005 to 2007 show large increases in the number of temporary foreign workers employed as tradespeople such as carpenters, welders and pipefitters, as well as unskilled labourers — particularly in Alberta — like meatpackers, food-plant workers and kitchen staff.

Closer to home, the vast majority of the Wheat City's growing immigrant population has ultimately been created as a result of the hiring of hundreds of temporary workers by the Maple Leaf Fresh Foods plant, though other businesses have also hired temporary foreign workers.

A majority of these workers have decided to settle in Brandon, and have been busy bringing their families to live with them, adding a wealth of new cultures and voices to our city's mosaic.

The fact that they're considered low-skilled employees is perhaps not as important as Alboim suggests, especially when companies rely on newcomers to keep production up when local citizens aren't banging down the door to get a job.

The province has recognized that Manitoba's relatively stable economy will be dependent on new immigration to sustain it in the long term. By 2016, the provincial government hopes to bring in 20,000 newcomers to Manitoba every year through its Provincial Nominee Program.

The children of these new immigrants will have the same access to education as any other Canadian, and will grow up understanding that their futures will be what they make them.

How can that not be good for the long-term stability of the economy?



REGIONAL VIEWPOINT

Can trustees be trusted after milieu debacle?

We were pleased to see a segment of Kerry Auriat's July 18 Kerry Nation column in the Brandon Sun stating how it looks like the French milieu was forced upon the Harrison school population without the same consultative process that other communities received.

However, it was disappointing that it was only Bea Jolly's name mentioned as a board member who did not agree with the decision but voted for it.

Jolly appears to be the only trustee who attempted to get the board to obtain specific numbers of students that would attend a French milieu school before they displaced more than 200 students and killed off the only remaining middle school in Brandon.

Anyone who has sat on a board knows that one often gets strong-armed to vote for something that they do not agree with. This appears to have happened as in the June 19 special board meeting minutes, which was about the French milieu issue.

It states: "trustees provided closing remarks noting the process that had been followed and the board's ability to work together despite differing opinions."

Amy Buehler's letter to the editor on July 19 confirmed how the board did not consult with Harrison or the other schools. If you go online, you can read through the 400-page French milieu report. However, it does not appear to

explain how Harrison came to be the decision.

If you sift through all of the committee reports you will find how the board passed the decision without the same consultation that was afforded everyone else.

According to Allison Dowd's article in the Brandon Sun on July 14, board chairman George Buri stated that there will be "several opportunities for public consultation as they move toward the program's implementation in 2010."

Will that be the same consultation process that was followed with deciding that Harrison was to be the French milieu school?

In the long run, everyone will adjust to the changes. However, we do not feel that this decision will necessarily resolve all of the New Era school issues or the low capacity at Green Acres school.

How many students will be negatively impacted by this decision compared to other options?

The whole process of making this decision has left a lot of people not trusting the school board at all. We certainly will be reading every committee and board minutes now, as you never know when they will make changes that affect your child.

LAURA LEE & CHRIS SHEARER
Brandon

Good outcome from charity barbecue

Ducks Unlimited Canada (DUC) would like to thank the staff of Brandon Walmart for choosing DUC as the recipient of funds raised at their recent parking lot barbecue.

As well, we'd like to thank the Brandon Sun for covering the event and giving it mention in the paper but I must offer a correction to the caption included with the photo which indicates "Ducks Unlimited Canada's Greener Good program."

I'd like to clarify that the program "Greener Good" is not a DUC program but one that is Walmart's and DUC was chosen to be the environmental organization to benefit by the funds raised at the local event.

BOB GRANT
Manager of Provincial Operations
Ducks Unlimited Canada

LETTERS POLICY

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LOOKING BACK

FROM THE FILES OF THE BRANDON SUN
COMPILED BY CATHY ARTHUR

In 1949: Animal trainer bitten by tiger

SIXTY YEARS AGO

Irwin "Bingo" Hauser, the 21-year-old son of Mrs. W. Hauser of Brandon, now has his own wild animal act with the Royal Canadian Shows currently playing in Vancouver. Last week he received nation-wide publicity when the featured animal in his act, a 300-pound lion, took a bite at the young trainer's thigh.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

Fidel Castro accepted the mandate of a roaring crowd of close to one million people to return to Cuba's premiership. City council will ask the Manitoba municipal and public utility board to push telephone, power and gas services into the Larkhill subdivision before plans for the area in southwest Brandon are registered.

FORTY YEARS AGO

Apollo 11's isolated astronauts cruised toward landfall in Hawaii today and a flight to Houston where they face 16 days

additional quarantine against possible moon bugs.

The Manitoba Vegetable Marketing Commission says vegetables grown in the province will be above-average quality this season but some will be late on the market.

THIRTY YEARS AGO

Brandon Citizen Advocacy, one of six organizations to receive a grant from the Manitoba government in support of 1979-80 operations, has been awarded \$2,500 for volunteer programs for the physically and mentally handicapped.

In recognition of the International Year of the Child, the Brandon Allied Arts Centre has been holding a summer program entitled Art in the Yard.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

Grain prices are higher than they've been for several years and a near-record harvest is expected this fall, but farm income in Canada is forecast to plummet by more than \$1 billion this year.

Dwayne Archie Johnston, the man convicted of murdering

Helen Betty Osborne in The Pas 16 years ago, has been ordered for the first time to give his account of what happened on the night of the killing. Hearings in The Pas will take place early next week.

TEN YEARS AGO

Woodstock '99 concertgoers at Rome, N.Y., faced the ultimate rock 'n' roll letdown yesterday — the end of the three-day festival and the long ride home. State police said the exodus could take up to a day since more than 225,000 packed the site. The 1,214-hectare former air force base was littered with flattened fast-food containers, beer cans, paper and plastic cups and myriad pizza boxes. A riot also broke out and tents and booths were destroyed, concert light stands and a speaker tower were toppled, and a mob tried to destroy a radio station truck.

Once again, Brandon Grade 3 students have exceeded the average on provincial math exams, but the marks remain far from gold star status. Brandon students scored an average of 56.8 per cent on this year's exam, two-tenths of a per cent above the provincial average.

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"No man is an island, entire of itself. Every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main Never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee." — John Donne