

## RECENT CANADIAN IMMIGRATION DEVELOPMENTS

**Bob Birrell**

The number of migrants granted permanent residence status in Canada increased sharply from 93,000 in 1986 to 228,000 in 1991. These 'landed' immigrants, to use the Canadian terminology, include those changing their status from within Canada. The planned annual intake for 1993 and the years to 1995 is 250,000.

These numbers represent a rate of increase of 0.9 per cent for Canada's population, far higher than the 0.5 per cent rate the Australian government has set for 1992/93 program of 80,000. Despite similar bleak employment outlooks - both countries currently experiencing over 11 per cent rates unemployment - Canada is expanding its migrant intake at the same time as Australia is contracting hers. Is this because the Canadians see some special value in migration during troubled economic times? Does this policy validate the claims of some Australian experts that migrants deliver more jobs than job seekers even in a recessionary situation?

The factors shaping the Canadian program can best be explored through an analysis of landing trends by migration category. These are provided in Table 1.

The Canadian government has been supportive of migration since the mid-1980s, on demographic, economic, compassionate and political grounds. But, most of the increase has derived from categories which are not under the direct control of the government

and therefore reflect private rather than public choices. These categories include the family class, asylum seekers and privately sponsored refugees. Only in the case of 'Independents without relatives' has the selection process reflected government priorities linked to the state of the Canadian labour market. But as indicated below, this category too, includes a majority of landings where the selection decision only partially reflects labor market considerations.

The sharp increase in the family class, which the government expects will reach 93,500 in 1992 and 100,000 in 1993 is directly related to the increased landings in other categories, particularly refugees and asylum seekers and their subsequent sponsorship of relatives. The Canadian government did not intend these outcomes and is currently trying to reverse some of them. Nevertheless, the scale of growth in the family class reflects Canada's liberal eligibility rules. In the case of parents, both those of working and retirement age are eligible, as are grandparents. There is no 'balance of family' ruling as in Australia. As a result landings in the parent category have increased from 15,602 in 1986 to an anticipated 40,000 in 1992. By comparison, since Australia implemented a restrictive balance of family ruling late in 1988, the intake of parents has fallen from 11,050 in 1988/89 to 7,422 in 1991/92.

But the Independent categories have also expanded in the last five years

**Table 1: Canadian Migration Levels by Category 1986-91**

Components	1986		1987		1988		1989		1990		1991	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
Domestic Asylum Seekers	1.5	1.6	1.6	1.0	0.9	0.5	1.6	0.8	3.7	1.7	10.3	4.5
Family Class	42.2	45.3	53.5	34.9	51.4	31.7	61.0	31.7	73.4	34.1	84.1	36.9
Private Refugees	5.2	5.6	7.4	4.9	12.4	7.6	21.6	11.2	19.3	9.0	17.3	7.6
Investors	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	1.0	0.6	2.3	1.2	4.2	2.0	5.2	2.3
Retired	1.8	2.0	2.7	1.7	3.2	2.0	3.6	1.9	3.5	1.6	4.2	1.8
Other Business	7.5	8.1	10.8	7.1	14.1	8.7	15.3	8.0	14.3	6.7	11.8	5.2
Independents w/ relatives	6.2	6.7	20.8	13.6	30.8	18.9	34.5	17.9	37.0	17.2	25.9	11.4
Independents w/o relatives	13.5	14.5	23.2	15.2	32.0	19.7	36.3	18.8	36.9	17.1	34.9	15.3
Special Programs	2.5	2.7	2.7	1.8	2.0	1.2	2.4	1.3	3.3	1.5	2.4	1.0
Government Refugees	12.7	13.6	12.8	8.4	13.8	8.5	14.1	7.3	12.8	6.0	7.6	3.4
Sub Total	93.3	100	13.6	88.8	161.6	99.5	192.6	100	208.5	96.9	203.8	89.4
Special Asylum Clearance	0.0	0.0	17.2	11.2	0.9	0.5	0.0	0.0	6.8	3.1	24.1	10.6
Total	93.3	100	153.3	100	162.5	100	192.7	100	215.3	100	227.9	100

Source: Employment and Immigration Canada

from 20,000 to 60,000 in 1991; perhaps this reflects a considered strategy to boost the skilled intake? As suggested earlier, this proves to be something of an illusion on closer examination. Table 2 indicates that only a small proportion of these landings in 1991 were selected on the basis of labour market or skills-based criteria.

Only those arriving in the bottom category, 'independents without relatives' (in this case confined to those evaluated under the points system and receiving no concessions) were chosen on the basis of qualities judged likely to contribute to Canada's economic future. The other components include; foreign domestics (around 60 per cent Filipino). These initially arrived on temporary visas as live-in maids, but are permitted to change to permanent status on 'public policy' grounds (in effect an inducement to stay with their employers) after two years residence in Canada; Special Programs, including Chinese students studying in Canada at the time of the Tien an men massacre; and the Quebec-destined, who receive special concessions on this account. The Independent

category also includes 'Independents with relatives', that is those sponsored by relatives (mainly siblings) who received a 15 point bonus for their sponsorship. This is a crucial advantage in a selection system where the passmark is set at 70 points. Few of these would have passed in the absence of this bonus. In sum, of the total Independent principal applicants landed in 1991 only 5,242, or 16 per cent passed the Canadian assessment system without any concessions.

The main reason for the low 'Independents without relatives' intake is that the Canadian selection system has been constructed to screen out applicants whose occupations are oversupplied or which do not require professional or technical skills. Employment Canada regularly assesses the demand for skilled workers. No recruitment of migrants is permitted in an occupation where unemployment exceeds 10 per cent or the prospects for medium term employment growth are poor or vacancies low. Occupations are then scored on this basis on a 0-10 scale with those considered 'open' for further processing requiring

**Table 2: Independent Landings by type of Selection Criteria, 1991; Principal Applicants Only**

Type of Selection	In Canada		Abroad		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Foreign Domestic	4591	39.2	10	0.1	4961	15.4
Special Program	5670	44.8	1623	8.3	7293	22.6
Arranged Employment	41	0.3	2651	13.5	2692	8.3
Quebec-destined	463	3.7	5999	30.5	6492	20.0
Independents w/ relatives	386	3.1	5271	26.8	5657	17.5
Independents w/o relatives	1134	9.0	4108	20.9	5242	16.2
Total	12645	100.0	19662	100.0	32307	100.0

Source: Employment and Immigration Canada, unpublished

points allocated to the 'Demographic' factor have also been increased from 5 to 8. The function of this factor, which applies to all applicants, is to help regulate the overall size of the program. In combination these measures will increase the intake of skilled migrants significantly.

The Canadian government has moved towards a selection system like that implemented in Australia in the late 1980s when Independent migrants were chosen on the basis of occupationally related qualities, but with no

reference of the state of the Australian labour market. This system delivered thousands of engineers, nurses, teachers and other professionals in the early 1990s into some of the fields worst affected by the recession. It is currently being dismantled.

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## **HAITIAN BOAT PEOPLE AND THE CLINTON PRESIDENCY**

**Katharine Betts**

Only one aspect of immigration was an issue in the 1992 presidential election. This was the case of boat people from Haiti trying to reach the United States who were all potential claimants for political asylum. The Bush administration's initial response was to instruct the Coast Guard to continue the policy established in 1981 which meant that boats should be intercepted at sea, claimants should be interviewed on board the Coast Guard vessels to check their asylum claims, and those judged not to have a plausible case should be sent back to Haiti. (The vast majority have fallen into this category.) Though this policy met serious legal obstacles, it represented the Bush administration's objectives. But, during the long election campaign, Clinton promised to modify

Bush's practice saying that all would-be refugees from Haiti should 'get a chance to make their case' for U.S. asylum. In May 1992 he also said that those who were not victims of political persecution, and therefore not refugees, should nonetheless be given temporary asylum 'until we restore the elected government of Haiti'.

Throughout the 1980s Europe and North America experienced a growing tide of claims for political asylum from people either from the Third World or from the former communist countries, a tide which shows no real sign of abating today. Australia has not been unaffected; asylum seekers, arriving by sea in small boats or at airports with tourists visas, make their way here too, but their numbers are still relatively small. There were 1,913 asylum claims made in the United States in 1973. This figure