

July 11, 2013

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Dear Ms. Bourgoin,

We thank you for according us an opportunity to offer a feedback on future directions of immigration programming in Saskatchewan.

Overview of Immigration in Saskatchewan

Immigration provides an important tool for addressing Saskatchewan's labor market and demographic challenges by increasing the pool of workers in the province and enriching the ethno-cultural mosaic of our communities.

To come to Canada permanently, Foreign Nationals can apply for immigration under three main classes - family class, economic class (which includes the Provincial Nominee Program), or refugees. Most Provinces/Territories in Canada operate a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP). In Saskatchewan, the program is called the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP). This provincially-administered immigration program allows Saskatchewan to select and nominate prospective immigrants that would positively contribute to the economy and society, and are likely to successfully settle in the province.

Upon nomination by the SINP, prospective immigrants can apply to the federal government (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) for a permanent resident visa that allows them to live and work in Canada.

The *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act*, 2002, sets out federal eligibility criteria for prospective immigrants in each class: Economic; Family; and Refugees. The Economic class includes Skilled Workers and Professionals, Canadian Experience (for those with recent Canadian work experience or that have graduated and recently worked in Canada), businesspersons (investors, entrepreneurs, and self-employed) and Provincial Nominees. Family members of Canadian citizens or Permanent Residents can apply under the federal Family class. The Humanitarian (Refugee) class includes government-assisted refugees, privately-sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada, and the dependents of refugees abroad.

The *Canada-Saskatchewan Immigration Agreement*, signed in May 2005, outlines the rights and responsibilities of the federal and provincial governments with respect to Saskatchewan-selected prospective immigrants. In light of the demand for labour in specific sectors, and the positive economic and social contributions of newcomers, Saskatchewan continues to improve the SINP to attract and retain new immigrants that will contribute to Saskatchewan's economy.

The SINP operates under the economic category and currently administers seven admission categories:

Skilled Workers, Family Members, Health Professionals, International Students, Long-Haul Truck Drivers, Hospitality Sector Workers and Entrepreneurs/Farmers. The SINP has education, work experience, and official language requirements that ensure more positive settlement experiences in Saskatchewan. Entrepreneurs must be prepared to make a significant investment in the province, must actively manage that investment and must prove a minimum net worth, among other conditions.

In 2011, 171 Saskatchewan communities saw the arrival of immigrants who were migrating from 215 different countries. As a subset of the total immigration population, in 2011 provincial nominees migrated from 100 countries, arriving to 121 communities in Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan reached an all-time population high in 2011. Immigration was the greatest contributing factor, accounting for approximately 65 per cent of the population growth. SINP nominees and their family members accounted for 78 per cent of new immigrants in 2011. Landings of provincial nominees have increased by 624 per cent since 2006, while federal immigration has remained relatively static, seeing a nominal 13 per cent increase over this same period. It is expected that Saskatchewan will welcome approximately 10,000-12,000 new immigrants in 2012. These numbers reflect the most noticeable trend over the last five years, which is the province's increased role in economic immigration. (Sk-immigration-statistical report-2011)

The term "landed" indicates that an immigrant has received his/her permanent resident status. To encourage immigrants to settle and integrate, the Ministry has developed a new settlement and integration model which provides funding to third party organizations to deliver settlement and language services that facilitate better integration. The Ministry is committed to ensuring all services are readily accessible and provided in a timely, supportive manner, in an effort to ensure positive outcomes for immigrants, employers, and communities. Temporary Foreign workers are another component of the immigrant population in Saskatchewan. They participate in the labour market on a temporary basis through arranged temporary employment with employers. This report includes information on only those immigrants that have been issued Permanent Residence through Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC).



Immigration profile of Saskatchewan: Statistics

The flow of immigrants to Saskatchewan followed a slight upward trend from 1999 to 2005, with significant annual increases since 2005, almost entirely due to an expansion of the SINP. This reflects Saskatchewan's efforts to attract newcomers, promoting the province as a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Over the last decade, total immigration to Saskatchewan increased by 437 per cent from 1,667 in 2002 to 8,955 in 2011 (Figure 1). The SINP accounted for 94.5 per cent of this growth.

Figure 1: Saskatchewan Immigrant Landings (2002-2011)

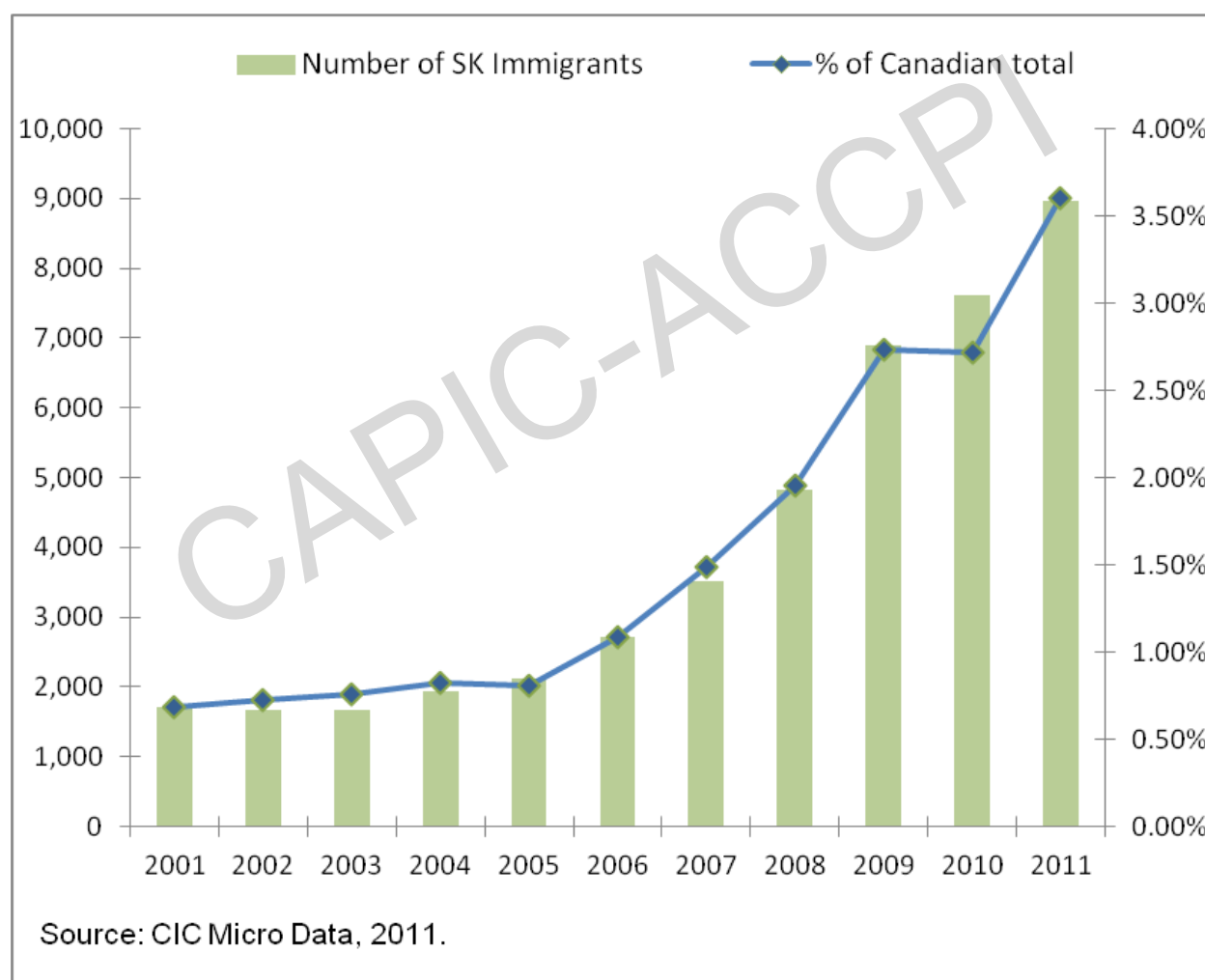
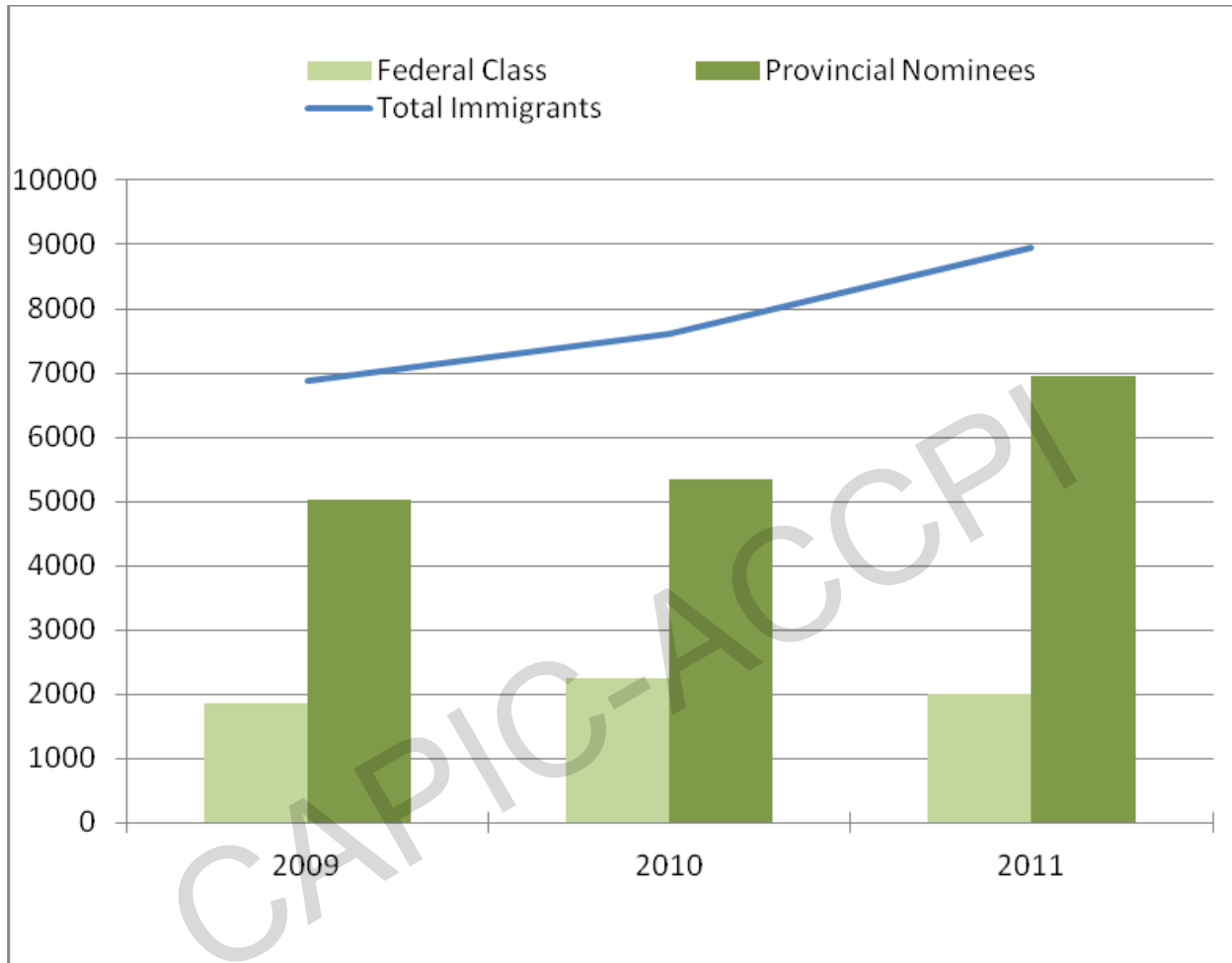




Figure 2: Saskatchewan Landings (2009-2011)



In 2011, 78 per cent of immigrants that landed in Saskatchewan were Provincial Nominees (6,959 of the total 8,955 individuals). Immigration through the other federal classes has remained relatively static over the past three years.

Source: CIC Micro Data, 2011

Table 3: Immigrants to Saskatchewan by Federal Immigration Class (2009-2011)

<i>Immigration Category</i>	<i>2009</i>		<i>2010</i>		<i>2011</i>	
	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No.</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>Economic Class</i>						
<i>Provincial Nominees</i>	5,031	73.0%	5,354	70.3%	6,959	77.7%
<i>Other Economic Immigrants</i>	507	7.4%	889	11.7%	699	7.8%
<i>Total Economic Immigrants</i>	5,538	80.4%	6,243	82.0%	7,658	85.5%
<i>Family Class</i>	628	9.1%	726	9.5%	689	7.7%
<i>Refugees</i>	646	9.4%	574	7.5%	547	6.1%
<i>Other Immigrants</i>	78	1.1%	72	0.9%	61	0.7%
<i>Grand Total</i>	6,890	100.0%	7,615	100.0%	8,955	100.0%

Source: CIC Micro Data, 2011.

Note: Federal Entrepreneurs, Investors, Live-in Caregivers, Self-employed, Skilled workers, and Canadian Experience Class are all included as sub-categories under the Federal Economic Class

Gender

Both genders have been relatively evenly represented in total immigrant landings. There were slightly more male than female immigrants to Saskatchewan in 2011. The proportion of male immigrants has been fluctuating just above 50 per cent since 2009.

In terms of provincial nominee landings, there is a similar trend in the ratio of genders, with males slightly outnumbering females. However, if the gender of the principal applicant is examined, the proportion of males is 63.9 per cent for provincial nominees in 2011. Principal applicants are able to bring their spouses and dependents with them on their immigration application.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) can provide an alternate and quicker means of entry into Canada. It allows Saskatchewan to nominate applicants, who qualify under criteria established by the province, to the federal government for landed immigrant status. The SINP offers:

- The ability to select applicants whose skills and abilities best fit the province's labor market needs;
- Application processing times that are faster than other federal immigration classes; and
- Assistance from provincial immigration officers who are available to explain program requirements and processes.

The SINP works through Government of Canada embassies and consulates around the world and does not engage the exclusive services of any agencies or representatives in any jurisdictions. SINP applicants may choose to engage the services of an immigration consultant or not, however, no immigration consultant has or will be allocated an immigrant quota from the Province of Saskatchewan.

Nominations are granted at the sole discretion of the Province of Saskatchewan.

- Applicants who believe they qualify under the program criteria may submit applications.
- Applicants are responsible for completing accurate applications including valid documentation required. Refer to the checklist of the category applied under.
- Applicants are assessed against established program criteria.
- Successful candidates are identified as SINP nominees in their application for permanent resident status with Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

Taking into consideration the above programme strategy and Saskatchewan immigration record analysis the following issues and feasible programme implementation points can be raised for further discussion.

Issues to be addressed by the STAKEHOLDER in Immigration Consultation

Q1: What benefit does immigration bring to the Province of Saskatchewan?

It should bring economy development through labor market development process. It can be possible through leveraging Federal immigration programs.

Q2: What should the role of the SINP be?

SINP can be redesigned according to the labor market demand driven approach. For instance, if the province needs highly skilled worker then criteria set out for immigration purpose can be client specific. Processing of the application should be fast forward. At times it takes s three to four years to get through of the application. This time constraint is the major issue for withdrawal of application.

Q3: What is the most important measure of success for the SINP?

Job guarantee/facilitation, according to the professional profile will retain most of the foreign workers and motivated for permanent residency.

Q4: What is the right balance between protecting the Canadian labor market and ensuring foreign workers can be hired where and when they are needed?

This depends upon the demand and supply approach. To promote Canadian labor markets skilled workers can be provided work-permits with family visa. This will facilitate employee retention and effective work management.

Q5: How can the overall process of hiring a foreign worker are made more efficient while ensuring that effective labor market protections and worker protections are maintained?

Processing time can be kept to the minimum.

Q6: What program or processing efficiencies can be introduced to improve processing times for employers?

Minimum processing time with family visa.

Q7: What program or processing efficiencies can be introduced to improve processing times for candidates?

Less paper work and time period about three to six months is the feasible process efficiency.

Q8: Who should be eligible for the SINP? What categories should exist and what should the criteria be?

Skilled workers, highly skilled migrant professionals, temporary foreigner workers and social development practitioners, entrepreneurs, farmers and international students are

the most eligible for SINP. The criteria to qualify for SINP will be basic English (for skilled workers) and a standard amount of money as fund declaration. English language proficiency cannot be criteria for low level workers like agricultural laborer, apprentice, and factory worker. These categories of people can learn English while on the job. As Canada has number of development organizations, which are providing English language training to the immigrants.

Q9: CIC requires changes to the Family Referral Category. How should the Family Referral Category change? What is the impact of the Family Referral Category on immigration to Saskatchewan?

Family Referral category can be broadened further. This will be handy for CIC as referral family will render all supports to the new family members. To manage this programme efficiently, CIC should set a minimum fund declaration system. Otherwise, too much of monetary burden on the part of sponsor will have negative impact.

Q10: How should the program streamline categories?

Categories should be reflective of labor market needs.

Q11: From your perspective what are the most important settlement programs.

Entrepreneurship, small business, promotion of export trade deals.

Q12: On what basis should employers be granted approval to hire foreign workers?

Employers approach to hire foreign workers would be labour market need specific. This will fill the gap of shortage of workers and further contribution towards socio-economy growth.

Q13: What can the SINP do to ensure employers and candidates are using the program in good faith and protect program integrity?

A Program Integrity Unit was established to protect all workers in Saskatchewan, including immigrant and temporary foreign workers, and respond to issues, fraud, and misrepresentation; and a direct email and telephone number was created to ensure the Unit is accessible to anyone who wishes to raise a concern, while still able to protect privacy and confidentiality. Establishing an auditing function within the Program Integrity Unit to ensure quality assurance in Saskatchewan's immigration programs; and regulate the involvement of third party representatives of immigrants and employers will further add values to the programme integrity.

Q14: On what basis should applicants to the SINP be assessed for permanent residency?

Permanent Resident ship can be conferred to applicants according to the job market need of Saskatchewan. Having a permanent resident ship status, without job or monetary avenues in hand is of no value to the applicant. Therefore, pragmatic action is necessary while making a decision on the application of PR.

Q15: What are the most important factors to consider in retention of newcomers to Saskatchewan?

Strong community-based settlement supports are vital to retaining newcomers. Coordinated and comprehensive language assessment and training services must be available to immigrants; and pre-arrival information, orientation and planning services and connections to appropriate community services.

Q16: How should the SINP assess entrepreneur applicants?

Applicants having management capacity and development aptitude for economy growth.

Q17: Should the program focus on both rural and urban entrepreneurship?

Yes

Q18: Should job creation be a specific objective of entrepreneur immigration?

SINP Entrepreneur category could deliver more jobs, new business and continued prosperity, but that processing times need to be shortened and the connection between nominees and the Saskatchewan business community improved

Q19: Should minimum levels of investment be increased from \$150,000?

Funding requirement could be standard amount.

Q20: Should the program prioritize applicants with the greatest likelihood of success based on points or process applicants as they apply?

I think point based system will carry out well in case of highly skilled and skilled professional category. But with regards to farmers, community service providers, point system should be zero. Again processing of applications can be managed through labor-market need specific.

Case Analysis-1

This case information is provided by one of the immigration practitioner.

Saskatchewan is one of the few provinces in Canada, which hasn't been much affected by the economic downturn in recent years. One big reason for this economic boom in the province is due to abundance of natural resources and lot of new projects has been ongoing recently or has been planned for the future to extract these resources. Billions of dollars' worth of projects has been planned for this province. This natural resource Industry has created demand for thousands of jobs and has also indirectly brought opportunities for other small businesses in the province.

Saskatchewan Immigration Nominee Program is one of the tool for government to fill this demand for workers in the province. The purpose of these Provincial programs is not just to provide temporary relief to the business by providing workers to them but also to nominate workers and their families who will continue to live here and will help province in their long term prosperity and objectives. Retaining workers and their families has always been challenge for this province due to number of factors.

Majority of the nomination quota has been given to employer driven streams. In these employers driven stream applicant has to have a permanent offer of employment from a Saskatchewan employer in order to apply for nomination. Example of such programs is Family Stream, Skilled Worker Stream, Existing Work Permit Stream, International Graduate Stream, hospitality sector and long haul truck driver and Health Professionals. I would like to comment on the Family Stream and recent changes made under this program. Before the new changes , the requirement for applicant under this program was to have a relative living in the province from one year and applicant should have completed 1 year post-secondary certificate or diploma and should have 1 year of experience in his/her field of study . There was no English language requirement, no point system, no limit for number of applications for the sponsor and no job offer requirement. This open flood gates for applications and abuse of the process. Changes were made lately to reduce the intake of application and these changes have almost killed this program. Her view regarding new changes to this program is:

According to new changes under Family Class program applicant need to have a job offer in a Skilled Category in order to apply. This basically voids the purpose of the program. The program objective was to attract Immigrants who are Citizens or PR into this province and who will be able to sponsor relatives after living in the province for one year. But by

adding job offer requirement this program become no different than SINP skilled worker program.

My comments for this program is that : **SINP should focus on bringing people from overseas , who have the skills, abilities and support to find a job in the province.** They should make this Family Category as a point system (using creative ways) with minimum English Language requirement and no job offer requirements because I believe that applicant who has support in Saskatchewan, with good education, experience and English abilities should be able to find a job in Saskatchewan in today's economic environment. **By adding job offer requirement SINP is turning away lot of highly skilled applicant from this program.** Immigrants who arrived here to live and at the same time sponsor their relatives are moving out to other provinces such as Manitoba and at the same time is also discouraging other immigrants from coming here.

The requirement of having a job offer for the applicant seems to be common sense, but practically it is almost impossible for lot of skilled applicants to obtain one and most of employers don't hand out job offers to the applicants residing overseas because of various issues. It has created abuse of process.

Case Study: Few years ago CIC did survey of the applicants who arrived in Canada under the Arrange Employment Skilled worker category. Under this category there was a requirement for the applicant to have a skilled job offer from the employer. During this survey CIC found that more than 90% of the applicants arriving under this category (in their 1st year of arrival) wasn't working for the employer who gave them permanent job offer. I believe SINP doesn't want this to happen with their program.

Employer registration process is mess and very time consuming. They should make it user friendly with clear instructions and checklist of documents required. It should be submitted at the time of registration. SINP has been trying to discourage employers and applicants from using authorized representatives. This has created additional problem for them. I have witness SINP staff guiding and helping applicants in completing SINP and CIC forms in their office and also spending lot of time with employers to help them in understanding the cumbersome process of SINP employer registration. All this is taking lot of SINP precious resources and we are commonly hearing from SINP that they have their budget cut and have staff shortage to handle all the work.

In my view instead of job offer criteria, job facilitation to the skilled workers immediately after their arrival in the province can be a feasible idea of getting matured management professionals. Adding to this, skilled workers should be engaged in the particular province job as soon as possible.

Conclusion: Economic development is interrelated with social, political, cultural and demographic development.

Case Analysis-2

SASKATCHEWAN LEGISLATION TO PROTECT FOREIGN WORKERS AND IMMIGRANTS

The Foreign Worker Recruitment and Immigration Services Act received first reading in the Saskatchewan Legislature today. The intent of the legislation is to protect foreign workers and immigrants against abuse and exploitation. It will also improve transparency and accountability when being recruited to work in Saskatchewan or in the process of immigrating to the province.

"This is a critical new piece of legislation," Minister responsible for Immigration Bill Boyd said. "In recent years, we have seen many instances of mistreatment of foreign nationals that will be stopped by this Act."

Since 2007, approximately 39,000 immigrants have made this province home. Last year the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program nominated 4,000 principal applicants, which with accompanying family members will result in 12,000 new residents. These increasing numbers mean more people are vulnerable to mistreatment when they are recruited or immigrate here.

The Ministry of the Economy's Program Integrity Unit received a total of 335 foreign worker case files for the period August 2008 to August 2012; 30 per cent were not covered by any existing federal or provincial legislation.

"Saskatchewan will require as many as 75,000 to 90,000 skilled workers in the next five years," Boyd said. "Skilled foreign workers are a key element of our labour market strategy, as laid out in the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth by the Premier in October."

Five Canadian provincial jurisdictions have some form of regulation of foreign worker recruiters, immigration consultants or employers of foreign workers. Saskatchewan's legislation will provide the most comprehensive protection in Canada.

The province of Saskatchewan is already having legislation for immigrant's welfare and that needs a proper implementation only.

Respectfully,

Dory Jade

Dory Jade
National President