

CHINESE INFLUX SLOWING, INDIA BECOMING TOP IMMIGRANT SOURCE

Change will affect education costs, documents show

BY PETER O'NEIL

VANCOUVER SUN

OTTAWA — Canada's racial face is about to change as immigration from China slides, while newcomers from India increase, suggest internal documents obtained by Vancouver immigration lawyer Richard Kurland.

The change will affect English-language training costs paid by provincial governments, because the vast majority of Indian applicants speak English, and will increase the Indo-Canadian community's political clout, Kurland said.

"Everybody thinks China is going to be a top-source country every year in the years to come," Kurland said.

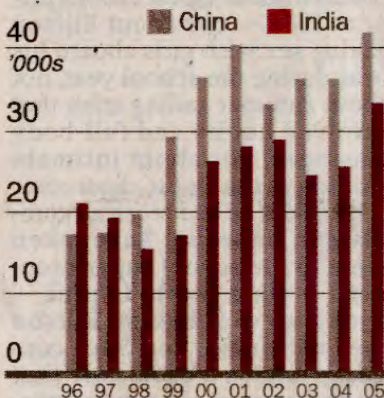
"The data is showing the trend is already reversed. The super-tanker has turned away from our shore."

He said the change has been triggered by increased economic opportunity in booming China, frustration over long waiting times in the backlogged system facing Chinese in recent years, and fallout from the change in the points system in 2002 that gave French- and English-language speakers easier access to Canada.

China remains by far the

New to Canada

China and India have long been in first and second place respectively as Canada's largest Asian source countries of immigrants. But more opportunities in China mean more Chinese are staying put.



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada

VANCOUVER SUN

largest source country, with 44,075 permanent residents coming from that country in 2005, compared to 33,146 from second-place India. The Philippines was a distant third at 17,525.

But Kurland, citing internal Citizenship and Immigration Canada documents he obtained

From A1

through the Access to Information Act, said a change is in the offing.

The number of immigration applicants at the Canadian missions in Beijing and Hong Kong totalled 86,514 on November 26, 2004, fell to 66,315 by September 30, 2005, and to 52,578 by June 30 this year.

"This appears to be a reversal of

a longer-term trend of increasing immigration from China," Kurland wrote in the October issue of *Lexbase*, a publication devoted to immigration issues.

"China's interest in Canada as a place to live is on the decline."

The New Delhi numbers, he noted in *Lexbase*, went from 88,383 in July 2004 to 109,632 in April 2005, then jumped to 132,693 in June of this year. He also pointed out that London showed a

sharp increase, from 42,823 in July 2004 to 71,262 in June of this year.

The London processing centre handles applications from the United Kingdom, Ireland, several north-western European countries such as Norway and Sweden, as well as seven Gulf states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

One document obtained by Kurland, which looked at "ongo-

ing and key program objectives" for the London processing centre for the 2006-07 region, said 62 per cent of the applicants being processed originated in Gulf region countries.

Kurland speculated that the surge from that region probably comes from Indian labourers in those countries who, after working in the Gulf states, prefer to seek a new life in Canada rather than return to India.

CIC spokeswoman Marina Wilson, after consulting with specialists, confirmed the swelling backlog in London and New Delhi and the slide in China.

"They said the trend [cited by Kurland] sounds accurate. What's causing that, I can't say," said Wilson.

Vancouver immigration lawyer Rudolf Kischer agreed that Canada is on track to experience a demographic shift in coming years. He said the primary driver is the increased emphasis in 2002 on getting immigrants who speak English or French and therefore can adjust more quickly to Canadian society, thus easing costs on language training costs which are covered by provincial governments.

Potential Chinese immigrants to Canada with post-graduate degrees are now less likely to apply to come to Canada because of their weak or non-existent English-language skills, he said.

Both B.C. lawyers said China will remain one of Canada's top sources, although it will no longer be far and away the dominant foreign springboard to Canada.

"You will see a switch where [Chinese immigration] is reduced so it's basically family class members coming in. There will be a pretty heavy stream [of family members joining relatives in Canada] for a while, and then they will die off," Kischer said.

"And I think you will see immigration from the Indian sub-con-



VANCOUVER SUN FILES

Documents show the racial makeup of a typical crowd on Robson will change over the coming years.

tinient increasing because they've got that English background."

Kurland said the Canadian business community should take notice. Realtors, for instance, should start looking away from China and towards India for potential buyers of Canadian luxury condominiums.

He said there could also be some fall-out in the Canadian political scene, where Indo-Canadians are already powerful players in federal and provincial politics.

"India is the world's largest democracy and the Indo-Canadian community is politically organized, so they are going to hit the Immigration Department with all

its domestic political resources to continue to widen that flow," Kurland said.

"And this is really going to be the struggle in the five years in Canadian immigration policy."

CIC's Wilson stressed that the government doesn't use a quota system for any region.

"We don't tweak it in any way."

Sun Ottawa Bureau
poneill@hotmail.com

NEWSPAPER VOICES

The Vancouver Sun Read Aloud

This story can be heard online
after 10:30 a.m. today at
www.vancouversun.com/readaloud.