

## **Special Feature: Team Canada's Mission to South Korea, the Philippines and Thailand**

The third "Team Canada" trade mission organized by joint federal-provincial efforts is visiting South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand from January 8 to January 20 in order to promote business relationships between Canada and these three countries. The team is led by the Prime Minister and includes provincial Premiers and territorial leaders, as well as a delegation of more than 400 business people, representatives of educational institutions and municipalities, and young entrepreneurs. The mission focuses on eight important Canadian sectors: agri-food, financial services, education and culture, environment, transportation, energy and natural resources, telecommunications and information technology, and building products and construction.

As pointed out by the special article "*British Columbia Has Biggest Export Stake in Team Canada Mission*" featured in the recently released *Exports (B.C. Origin)* by BC STATS, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand have become important trading partners with the province. There is great export potential for British Columbian manufacturers and producers to meet the fast growing demand in these countries. From a cultural and immigration perspective, South Korea and the Philippines are also important sources of immigrants to the province. South Korea and the Philippines have been among the top ten sources of immigrants to B.C. in the last few years. They represented injections of foreign investment, entrepreneurial skills, creation of businesses and employment, as well as demanded labor skills. The number of immigrants to B.C. from Thailand has been relatively small although it has been slowly increasing. In 1995, there were 3,266 immigrants to the province from the Philippines, 1,137 from South Korea and 94 from Thailand.

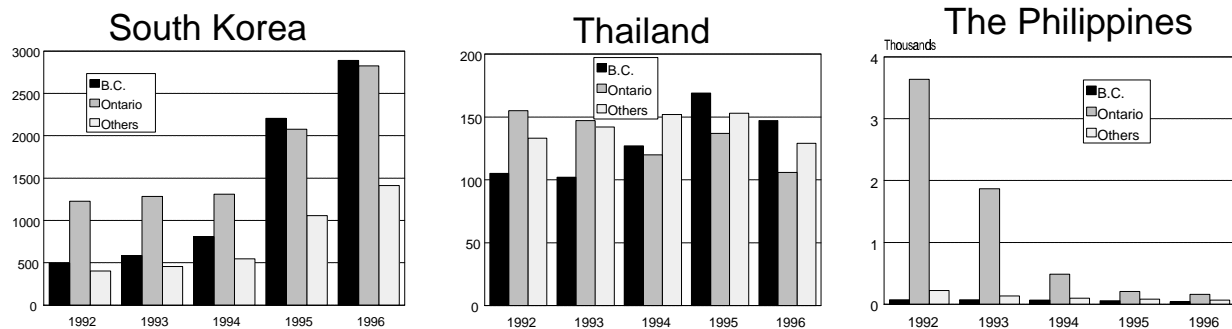
The demographic effects of immigration from these countries were reflected in the increase in the representation in the B.C. foreign born population between the 1986 and 1991 censuses. In 1986, for every 1,000 foreign born population in the province, approximately six were born in South Korea, 25 in the Philippines and fewer than one in Thailand. These numbers had increased to 10 in South Korea, 33 in the Philippines and more than one person in Thailand in 1991. In addition, B.C. attracted a relatively higher proportion of the Canadian foreign born population from these countries. In 1991, of the foreign born population in Canada from these three countries, B.C. accounted for 22 per cent of those of South Korean origin, 20 per cent of Filipino origin, and 18 per cent of Thai origin. B.C.'s share of total foreign born population in Canada was 17 per cent in 1991.

While immigrants from Thailand were fewer and mainly in the Family Class, immigrants from the Philippines were largely independent skilled workers, and those from South Korea were mainly in skilled worker, Investor and Entrepreneur classes. In 1995, 63 per cent of the Filipino immigrants came under the skilled worker classes, and 35 per cent under the Family Classes. On the other hand, 55 per cent of South Korean immigrants came under business classes, and 40 per cent under the skilled worker classes. In 1995, South Korean represented 9 per cent of all B.C. immigrants landed under business classes. A total of 120 entrepreneur cases and 31 investor cases were visaed in 1995 to South Korean business immigrants destined to the province. The total net worth as reported by them totaled more than \$259 million.

Compared to other provinces, B.C. also attracts a higher number of foreign students from South Korea and Thailand. While Ontario has always been the favored province for students from the Philippines, the overall number of foreign students from the Philippines has decreased considerably. As of the first of December 1996, the number of foreign students with a valid status in B.C. was 147 from Thailand, 2,891 from South Korea and 38 from the Philippines. A high percentage of students from these three countries were enrolled in trade schools, secondary schools, and other non-degree university studies. The length of study varies normally from one to four years.

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## B.C. Foreign Students as of December 1st of Each Year, By Home Country



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### BC STATS

Foreign students choose a country or a province to study based on different reasons. The factors affecting their selection may include ease of obtaining a visa, language, field of study, the degree of similarity in the education system between their home country and the chosen country, reputation of institutions, proximity to home country, fees and charges, etc. From many of these perspectives, B.C. is positioned to attract many students from the Asian Pacific. B.C. can offer not only many reputable schools in different levels/fields of study and a well-developed English as a Second Language (ESL) system, but also a place closer to home, with milder climate and ample scenic beauty, when compared to other provinces.

Economic benefits of immigration include injections of capital under the Investor Immigration Program, creation of domestic businesses under the Entrepreneur Immigration Program, and provision of skilled workers to industries with a shortage of labour supply. Indirect economic benefits of immigration are also generated through trading activities carried out by immigrants who settled in the province and found opportunities to export Canadian or B.C. products to their country of origin. At the same time, as more foreigners conduct trade businesses in the province, more people will be exposed to the life style, education system and other climate/environmental benefits that B.C. can offer. These elements of living are considered to be highly desirable to many people in other countries, and as a result, more potential immigrants or visiting students might be attracted. Historically, trade and immigration promotions interact and re-enforce each other; that is, trade activities could potentially bring more immigrants to the province, and vice versa. Team Canada's visit to Thailand, the Philippines, and South Korea is expected to have positive and long term effects on B.C. immigration and enrollment to the province's education system from those countries.