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We presently operate two language work-related classes, one in our own centre, and another in one a garment factory where many Chinese work. These classes are directed to employment situations for garment workers, and also for waiters and waitresses. In addition, we have a twice weekly language show on Vancouver radio, in which time is devoted to information on employment. We also have employment workshops, in which we have employers, managers and union leaders as guest speakers. We are trying to do everything possible to familiarize immigrants with the local employment conditions, so that they can have both a knowledgeable and realistic attitude toward job hunting.

The Vancouver Vocational Institute also offers vocational training to immigrants, and many of our Chinese people have taken these courses. Unfortunately, I think there are several deficiencies. First of all, the waiting lists for enrollment are very long. Secondly, the applicants must have the equivalent of a grad 10 or 11 competency in English, which immediately eliminates many Chinese immigrants who have aptitude, but lack the language skills.

These individuals, who are frequently from rural villages encounter the most difficulties in adjusting to Canadian life. Because they are from the mainland, they usually arrive here with little or no money. In many cases, they are required to repay the money put up for them by their Canadian sponsor. This in itself can be an obstacle which might take a year or two to overcome, even if they are able to secure some kind of job soon after their arrival.

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Then there is the long process of adjusting not only to life in a strange city, but also to work which requires totally different skills from the agricultural ones they knew in China. Their agricultural background prevented many Chinese from being exposed to much formal learning. To be thrust immediately into a language class, for six hours a day, is beyond their ability to concentrate, with so many other things on their minds. In the best of cases, the adjustment to Canada and being able to use the language is a long painful process. For many individuals, it is too great a jump.

