

the foreign student:

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U of A Foreign Student Advisor

As one of a series of changes to immigration regulations, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration announced on December 28th, 1972, that as of January 1st, 1973, rules governing the granting of work permits to people on non-immigrant visas would be much stricter. As a response to abuse of work regulations by ordinary visitors to Canada, the changes have some merit. What was apparently not considered by the Minister at that time was the unfortunate affect upon students with student visas, a group of people who also fall into the non-immigrant class.

There have always been regulations requiring that non-immigrant applicants for work permits go through the following steps:

1. The applicant has first to find a job without the help of Canada Manpower.
2. He must obtain a letter from the prospective employer verifying the intention to hire and specifying the exact nature of the job.
3. The applicant then applies to the Immigration Department for a permit.
4. The application and the letter must be taken by the student to the local Manpower office which is required to state whether or not qualified Canadians are available to take the job.
5. Depending upon the response from Manpower, the Immigration Department will or will not issue the permit.

Until January 1st, 1973, the Immigration Department had discretionary powers to issue temporary work permits to University students without consulting Manpower. As a result, most students on student visas could reasonably expect to obtain permits and then jobs for the summer. In fact, a large number of permits (covering an estimate 80-90% of the 72-73 students on student visas) were granted almost automatically by Edmonton Immigration officers last fall while they were renewing student visas.

Since January 1st, the Immigration Department has been required to put all permit applications through the process outlined above. The result is that unless a foreign student has a special skill of which there happens to be a shortage in Canada, he will not receive a work permit for summer employment.

The average foreign student, then, has to find a job without help from existing student placement programmes and with the additional difficulty of a lack of familiarity with Canadian employment practices and, usually, a lack of fluency in the language. These factors have always constituted a considerable barrier but added to them now is the absolute necessity of finding an employer willing to put himself out sufficiently to write a letter to the Immigration Department. There are very few employers in my experience who will go to the trouble for any kind of student, let alone a foreign one.

Assuming that the student successfully overcomes these obstacles, he still has little or no chance of acquiring the necessary permit. The kinds of work a foreign student is likely to be able to do are of the kind that almost all Canadian students could do. As long as the Manpower Department has one person on its records who could do the required job, its response is likely to be negative.

At any rate, the student has to start back again through the same painful process. It is not too difficult to see why, only a very few foreign students will be in a position to obtain summer or part-time jobs in Canada after the current work permits run out. Blythe statements by Immigration officials, from the Minister on down, to the effect that foreign students may still apply for jobs are virtually meaningless.

It is true that foreign students are required to provide evidence on arrival in Canada of their ability to finance their studies and that this should eliminate the need to work. This requirement, however, leaves no room for a number of possible situations which may detract from that ability after his arrival:

- 1) private financial sponsorship either from home or in Canada may fail entirely or continue at a

reduced rate;

2) the cost of living in Canada may be substantially higher than the student thought (a very common situation even with the best informed students);

3) even with an adequate stipend by Canadian standards, he may not be able to compete successfully with more knowledgeable Canadian students for the limited cheap accommodation;

4) if he has a family, he may either have to support them in Canada on his own or not see them for several years;

5) exchange rates can and do change sufficiently to change an adequate allowance into something less;

6) he may do what thousands of Canadian students do and that is spend his money just a little unwisely or simply out of ignorance of Canadian producers and stores.

As a result of these changes in regulations, any small misstep on the part of a foreign student can result in financial disaster.

Canada exploits C'wealth



Vidya Thakur

A committee of foreign students (resulting from the employment crisis meeting of Wednesday) met last week to investigate problems facing foreign students and plan what action may be constructive. One of the three co-ordinators, Vidya Thakur, a candidate for the executive vice-presidency in the union elections, summarized the problems in an interview after the meeting.

"There are always problems, such as racial discrimination, which we can live with, but the problem of financing our education is one that we must take action on now. There are over 1,200 students on visas, and less than 10% are on any kind of scholarship that pays their way.

"By far, the majority are here on family savings. As in Guyana, where I am from, the annual salary is \$240 Canadian, and Hong Kong the annual salary around \$400. You can see that it is often a lifetime dream for a family to send at least one member to University abroad.

"There are schools in our own countries, but they are overcrowded and do not offer the kind of courses that we obtain here. In any case, the Universities are foreign controlled. Few Canadians realize that Canadians fill the majority of positions on Commonwealth faculties just as Americans do in other 3rd world countries.

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In the whole Caribbean, Canadians occupy the top jobs, even though there are people capable in their own countries to do it. It is all a matter of control by investment. Imperialism that cripples the smaller nations. This is why riots occurred over the Royal Bank in Trinidad a year or two ago."

"Canadians should come to see how we live here while we attend school; we nearly all exist below the poverty line so that we can finish. Without the little that we earn during the summer, we almost certainly will have to go home without the degree we need."

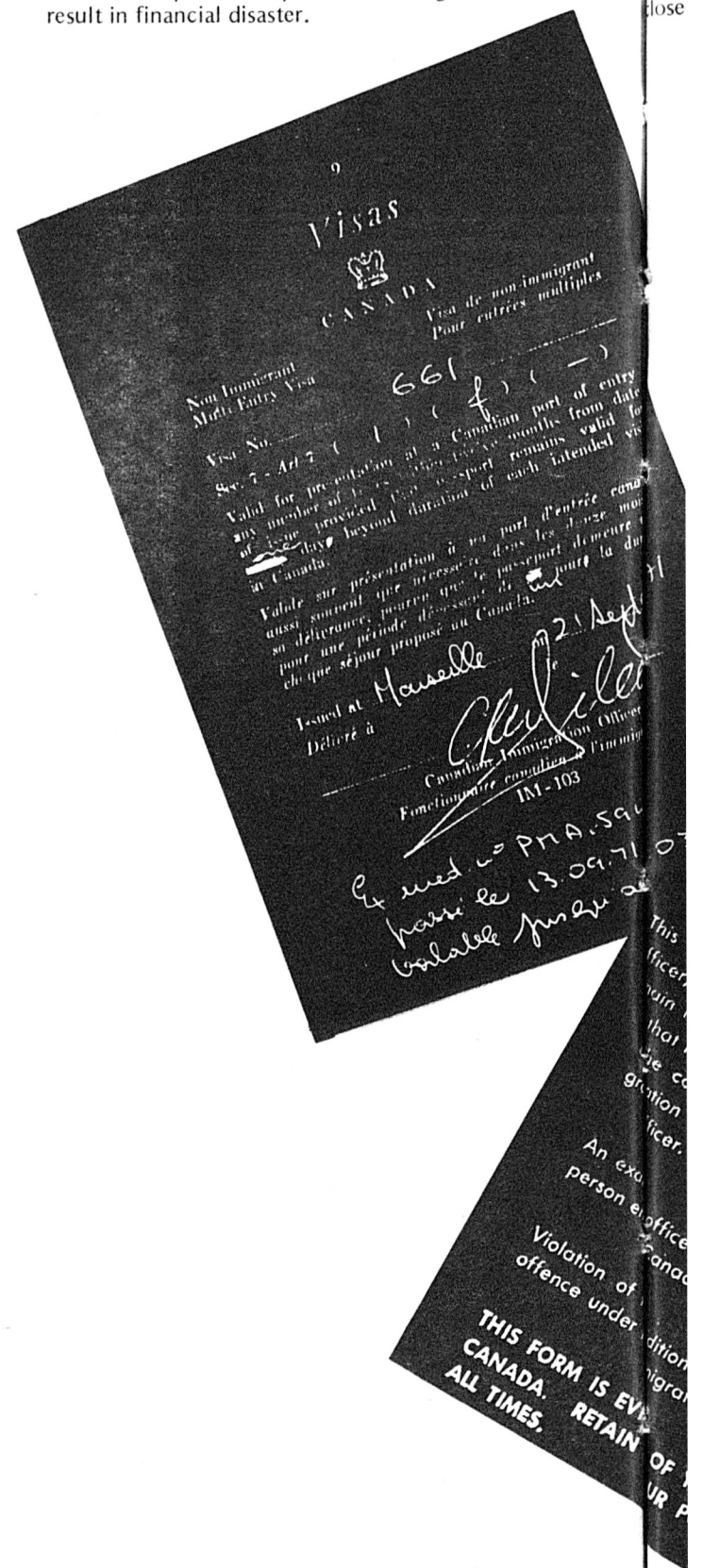
"The exploitation of Canada in our countries brings so much profit to this country as the balance of payments show, that the least the government can do is let us earn our way. We are not looking for handouts — just the opportunity to pay our own way."

"Any Canadian angry over the American domination of this country's finance must see that Canada in turn victimises us. Trudeau should not talk about Human Rights if he means Canadian Rights.

"Action taken by our committee will consist of contacting the local media, obtaining the support of the N.D.P., who appear to be the most humane party within the sphere of influence."

"We also shall contact our embassies, and the universities at home to create pressure there. Hopefully, the federal government is already aware that the Caribbean is already a potential Vietnam, and will stop exploitation before it explodes.

One last ironic point Vidya Thakur made was the policy of allowing military personnel to be employed here, but not students. "Being from a poor country, I can only suggest that our education is potentially more dangerous than is training others to kill."



'truth' in employment arguments

"In a situation of unemployment, it's always possible for someone to hurt someone else by getting a job."

This is the "element of truth" in political and economic arguments which urge restricting foreign students on the labour market, according to Tony O'Malley, a graduate student in labour economics who is doing research on "employment of highly qualified manpower."

But after acknowledging that one must ask, "is it the fault of the person who gets the job, or of the situation both people are in." O'Malley, once a foreign student himself, believes that in this case, the situation is to blame and that foreign students are being made "scapegoats" to seasonal unemployment, a problem which is "not produced" by them.

"I frankly can't see 350 students are going to affect the employment prospects of the students at the university." But he adds that "right now, we have no" on the summer unemployment "on" and that's where his "element" comes in.

"I can always say that you a job that I can't take: I can it men, of people a year older or a year younger than I am"—or of foreign student.

"It's ridiculous to pick one particular group."

"Why," he asks, "do w the seasonal unemployment rates high anyway?" One of the arguments a year-round trimester academitem "has to be that it would even low