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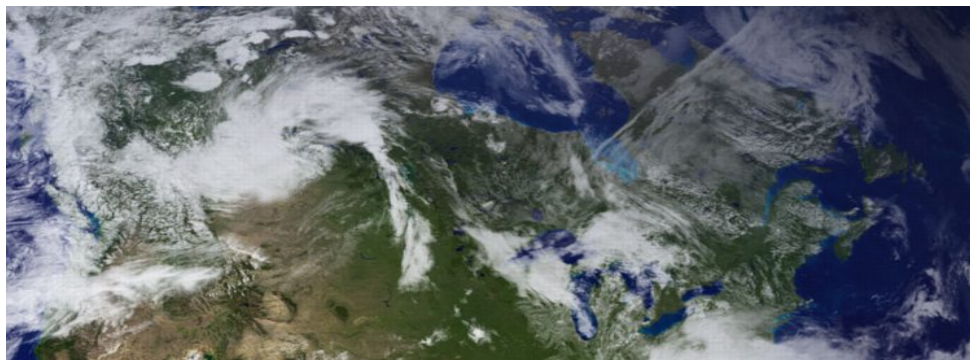
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## More on the Strange Economics of Temporary Foreign Workers

Posted by Andrew Jackson under [labour market](#), [migrant workers](#), [temporary workers](#).

July 9th, 2007

[Comments: 4](#)

Further to my and David Green's posts on the strange economics of temporary foreign workers ..

<http://www.progressive-economics.ca/2007/02/08/the-strange-economics-of-temporary-foreign-workers/>

<http://www.progressive-economics.ca/2007/06/28/the-economics-of-temporary-foreign-workers/>

it is striking to observe that such workers are NOT overwhelmingly concentrated in the Western provinces with well below average unemployment rates. In fact, data presented to an Alberta consultation on the program by the Alberta Federation of Labour show that almost half (44.7%) of the 166,239 temporary foreign workers in Canada in December, 2006 were to be found in Ontario – more than in Alberta (13.5%) and BC (21.8%) combined. And, of the 23,534 increase in the number of TFWs over the last year, 8,785 was in Ontario – almost equal to Ontario's share of the national job market.

Even the mainstream commentators who think that Canada has a "tight" job market concede some considerable slack in Ontario as industrial jobs are shed in large numbers. So what's going on here? Are Ontario employers really unable to recruit in the province – or is this program just a tap to be opened on employer request without regard for the real state of the job market?

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Comment from [Marc Lee](#)  
Time: July 9, 2007, 1:23 pm

Interesting. It might be worth noting that Ontario has 39.4% of employed people, Alberta 11.3% and BC 13.3% — so temporary workers are disproportionately in those three provinces, with BC being the most out of line.

Comment from [Darwin O’Connor](#)  
Time: July 10, 2007, 6:31 am

I think a lot of them in Ontario work on harvesting because Ontario grows crops that are a more labour intensive to harvest then what is grown in the west. There are stories about them in the media regularly.

Comment from [Chris Smillie](#)  
Time: July 10, 2007, 10:31 am

It is also interesting to note the top two “foreign worker” source countries are two of our closest neighbours and trading partners. Some of the Ontario numbers can be attributed to industrial plant shutdowns – ie oil refineries in Quebec and Ontario .

Comment from [Stuart Murray](#)  
Time: July 10, 2007, 4:40 pm

Also, let’s remember that when people immigrate to Canada they are far more likely to choose Toronto as their destination. There is just way more cultural diversity in Toronto, such that it’s easier to get by in your native tongue in certain neighborhoods. I think Vancouver is the #2 destination.

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