

200 emigrants look to return

By JACQUELINE LEE

MORE than 200 Hongkong professionals who emigrated to Canada have applied for jobs back in the territory through a newly-launched trans-Pacific scheme designed to reverse the brain drain.

About 1,500 potential recruits in Canada have taken application forms since the joint-venture between the Hongkong Government and the Hongkong Institute of Personnel Management (IPM) was launched in Toronto last month.

The service was heavily advertised in the Chinese press and on Chinese television in Toronto, home to the largest number of Hongkong immigrants.

It was established with a \$3 million government grant and will start full operation in two weeks' time when a computer data link is ready to match job-seekers with vacancies registered in Hongkong.

Both groups will be given access to the database.

IPM's managing director, Miss Ivy Yuen Tak-hing, said that of the applications received so far, most were from engineers.

Others came from nurses, architects and management professionals.

Mr Patrick Maule, chairman of IPM Manpower International, which runs the programme, said the response in Canada was encouraging.

"Fifteen hundred people have asked for application forms. It indicates that there is certainly a lot of curiosity about the employment situation here, but it's too early to judge if they are serious applicants interested in getting a job in Hongkong or just want to keep in touch with the employment market in Hongkong," he said.

"There is a lot of stress because of the employment situation in Canada. They want to consider getting a job back in Hongkong.

"There's a lot of potential. If we try and attract them seriously and professionally, many of them could be converted into acceptance of jobs," he said.

The project had been launched at a time when Hongkong needed extra engineering professionals and technicians to help build the huge port and airport projects.