Filipino problem is warning for PNG

The problems now bedevilling the Philippines point up the need for a continuing review of Papua New Guinea's educational programs.

The report in the Post-Courier Weekend Magazine from Deborah Ruiz in Manila, details the grim story of a country with more graduates from colleges and universities than there are jobs for them.

While Papua New Guinea has some years to go before this state of affairs prevails here, there is clearly a need for a constant assessment of the country's manpower requirements and, if necessary, for a tailoring of education programs. The need is to ensure that well-trained people will be able to apply their knowledge to the tasks for which they have been trained.

The Philippines example is vivid and parallel to the Papua New Guinea 15 to 20 years hence. But the same situation is evident among unemployed seeking work in the United States and to a growing extent in Australia. These ranks are swelling each year with graduates registering for unemployment relief.

Some countries have begun drastic measures to avoid such a wastage of educated people. Pakistan, for example, has recently announced a sweeping review of education policy with two main aims. It seeks to boost literacy throughout its millions who cannot read or write. At the same time, it is placing the emphasis in the literacy program on agricultural subjects.

Over the next eight years Pakistan aims at bringing about a massive shift from "aimless general education to a more meaningful agro-technical education".

"Treble shifts" have been organised for schools to make maximum use of the existing educational facilities.

By producing people more proficient in technical knowledge, even at a low standard, there is the chance of a real contribution to national advancement.