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**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**

**SESSION        2/62**

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

**Motion No:        5**

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**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF  
HOUSE COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

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**COMMITTEE: STANDING COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AFFAIRS AND ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT**

**Friday, March 11, 2005**

**SUBJECT(S) BEFORE THE COMMITTEE:**

Further Consideration of Motion No. 5 - Attracting New Immigrants to Prince Edward Island.

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**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**PRESENT:**

Wilfred Arsenault, Chair  
Helen MacDonald  
Fred McCardle  
Cletus Dunn replacing Hon. Philip Brown  
Richard Brown  
Carolyn Bertram

**ABSENT:**

Hon. Jamie Ballem  
Eva Rodgerson

**GUESTS:**

Gary Luhowy , Shirley Ji and Ron Barrett

**STAFF:**

Marian Johnston, Committee Clerk  
Thilak Tennekone



**Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development**  
**Friday, March 11, 2005**  
**3:00 p.m.**

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** I'd like to call this meeting to order and welcome committee members for the second meeting of the week, as far as the Immigration Committee is concerned. We have an agenda in front of us and I would like you to have a peak at it and if you agree with what's there we will have a motion to accept this agenda.

All in favor signify by saying 'aye'.

**Committee Members:** Aye.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Thank you. We have some presenters here with us today. There are two names on the agenda but we have - it will be all the one, same presentation. We have Ms. Shirley Ji, Mr. Gary Luhowy and Mr. Ron Barrett and guests in the back. Ladies and gentlemen, if you would give us perhaps a brief background on yourselves, you can do this at this point and carry on into your presentation. The floor is yours.

**Gary Luhowy:** Thank you. There is I believe, Marion accepted part of my CD and a brief history of Shirley's so I won't repeat everything. I will tell you that I am a native born Canadian from the Prairies. You may say the second friendliest region, I would say the friendliest but we won't get into that debate.

**Richard Brown (L):** Don't say that here.

**Gary Luhowy:** I have to be true to my mother land. I moved to Ontario many years ago and I was a practicing lawyer for 25 years. Two years ago I retired and I started to work for a Chinese company and that's part - well that's the reason I'm here frankly. I was first in PEI in 1983. I was bitten by the PEI bug, which is the bug which makes you want to come and live here, that many of my friends have had. One of my concerns of course being business and employment opportunities in the Island. If you had a business bug and a PEI employment bug you'd be overrun with people wanting to live here I'm sure. It's a wonderful place.

Shirley was here for the first time in September of

last year. She's been here September, November, December, January and today. She's never been here in the summer months and she loves it. So she'll really love it when it comes to the summer months. Shirley is a mainland Chinese born person. She was born and grew up in an area in central China. Her background there is what we would call an accountant, an economic manager, but the title is basically the same thing. She immigrated here in 1996 and worked in immigration for a couple of years in the Toronto area and then she became interested in finding a new career. And the career that suited her was helping Chinese immigrants in their real-estate purchases. She has grown since 1999 into the first, actually - I'll say this because she wouldn't want to brag, the first Centurion award winner as a top producer for Canada for a Mandarin speaking person. There are Hong Kong Chinese speak Cantonese and mainland Chinese speak Mandarin. She was the first winner of that.

Now, why are we here today? We're here because two reasons. (1) we love PEI and we would like to help with our suggestions for your new immigration policies and (2) for our own selfish business reasons. If we help immigration here, then we can help our own future employment opportunities here because we want to move here with a view of Shirley being in real-estate and my being in immigration and dealing with attracting new immigrants to PEI.

The focus today will be Chinese but many of the view points we're going to present are going to be view points that other countries in the Indian rim and the Pacific rim will have to attract immigrants from those countries. Perhaps when I begin, I should just put matters into perspective. When we talk about the Chinese immigration, since 1997 mainland China has become the number one immigrant producer in Canada. That is expected to increase, if you're read the media reports and the governments statistics for the past couple of months, to a very large amount. Where that amount comes from is best put it in perspective when we look at China. I know that you know these facts but first off, it's the most populous country in the world - 1.4 billion people. It's the

third largest in area behind Canada. At least we beat it in one respect and Russia of course.

There are over 500 cities in China and the majority of them have populations well in excess of the entire population of PEI. In fact, there are more cities of over half a million people in China than there are in the United States and all of Europe combined, over twice as many. It's a very, very populous city. If you have the opportunity to ever go and visit a place like Shanghai - perhaps some of you have visited Toronto and you've seen the three lanes of traffic going up and down the 401, or 12 lanes - you'll see that on the rivers alone in Shanghai. When it comes to modern - I'm from the Toronto area now but I would have to say that Shanghai is more modern than Toronto. And I'm not just talking the magnetic train, it's a booming city. If I had a dollar for every crane that's erected right now today in Shanghai in building, although I've only been there for a few months, I'd be a rich man. I'd probably buy lottery tickets with it all and lose it all anyway. It's a very, very booming economy.

Those people from China want to move here. Canada is a favorite destination for Chinese people. But if we ask ourselves how many of those immigrants are going to come to PEI, in the current situation, the answer is not very many. I assume that's one of the reasons why this committee, through the media, is asking for ideas. But we believe and we are not immigration experts, we are people with immigration experience and Chinese experience that can give viewpoints not full of statistics but full of hopefully practical ideas for attracting good immigrants here. I'm not talking pioneers, I'm not talking refugees, I'm talking primarily business investors and business entrepreneurs. People to operate businesses to contribute to the tax and economic base of PEI.

But the first thing I think we have to look at is that if you want good Chinese immigrants, you need to listen to and follow the advice of good Chinese Canadians that live in other provinces as well as your own. There is a vast number of Chinese that live in Toronto and Vancouver. Chinese has now become the number three language spoken in households in Canada. Well behind English, well behind French, but further and further ahead of the other languages. The ideas in this presentation really don't come from me because I'm a Canadian. They don't come from other people in

Ontario. They come primarily from Shirley and her native Chinese friends.

Now if we want to find what will attract Chinese immigrants to PEI, we'd have to look at what they want. The key as far as we are concerned to improving immigration to PEI from China is three S's. The first is services, the second is simplicity and the third is speed. When I say services I'm going to show you, with your indulgence, a short video, an amateur video done by me, so I make my apologies for it right now, dealing with what you face in the competition for services from the Toronto area. There is no way that Prince Edward Island will catch up with Toronto in providing services to Chinese immigrants. You just don't have the population base. But you can find other alternatives and other ways to attract Chinese immigrants and immigrants perhaps from many other countries in that region of the world. Good immigrants. Immigrants that are going to invest capital in PEI. Immigrants that are going to invest businesses into PEI. That's already started and we'll talk a little bit more about that right now.

When we are talking about attracting a good Chinese immigrant, we're talking not about a pioneer, as I said. When my great-grandparents in the 19<sup>th</sup> century went to the Prairies, there were still medicine men - very few medical clinics but there weren't medicine men back then. Today a Chinese immigrant wants a medical clinic. They want a medical clinic where they can go and see a doctor and say where it hurts in Chinese. They've had a regiment of diet built up over thousands of years of Chinese food and it's not our western Chinese food, as I found out when I tried to bring home take-out to Shirley and she won't eat it, it's Chinese, Chinese food. They're not used to fast food. Although one business entrepreneur I know who loves McDonalds french fries, no advertising for McDonalds intended. They're not used to microwave dinners, they're not used to steakhouses. We have brought four groups of Chinese people here in the past six months and they love the seafood. If I told you how much one eight year old family member ate in the way of PEI seafood, you'd be marketing in all of the public schools in China. It's amazing how much they enjoy it. And we have - when I say we - PEI has as good of seafood as any - Malpeque oysters included.

What they want however, is some of their own

services. They want to be able to go into a grocery store and buy some Chinese vegetables. Because you'll see on the video in Toronto, they can shop as if they're in China. So they want the services in their own language and services with their own goods. When you get enough of them, there is a point, they come to a region, you will attract many, many more. That's what's happening with Vancouver and Toronto. They'll add to the mosaic of PEI, both financially and economically. So they need those services.

Secondly, they want simplicity. The current situation for skilled workers coming to PEI is as follows and this is right from your own website. The skilled worker program criteria asks six questions. (a) Do you intend to settle in PEI? (b) Do you have a moderate language ability in English or French in all four categories? - And moderate does not mean basic, it means moderate. (c) Do you have a bachelors degree, diploma or trade certification from an accredited institution? (4) Do you have 14 or more years of education? (5) Do you have an offer of employment from a PE company? and (6) Do you score in the vicinity of 50 on our self assessment questionnaire?

To be quite honest with you, there is no way that the vast majority of immigrants that I know since all the time I've grown up and the vast majority of Italians in Toronto or Ukraine and Polish people in the Prairies would come anywhere near to that criteria. I think the criteria is a little much. My two wealthiest clients, very nice gentlemen, neither one has a highschool education, one came to Canada from Holland, one came to Canada from Finland, didn't speak a word. One started as a truck driver till he had 11 trucking terminals. Many, many of us know in Toronto, people that came from Italy did not speak a word, worked as a laborer then worked their way up to a foreman and now own a construction company. Putting too many criteria, such as 14 years of education, makes it very, very difficult for anyone to immigrate to PEI. The justification for it is that they will blend into our society better. But Shirley will, in her comments, tell you some real life aspects of what happened when a Chinese family immigrates here.

In addition, for example, in the investors program, they have to put \$200,000 into a specified group of businesses - only certain ones as you're probably

aware in your program - and they must take an active role in the management of the business. So they have to have English, they have to take an active role in the management and they have invest. Investing is not a problem but your own guidelines say they should investigate and have due diligence to invest in good companies. That's very difficult.

What we are suggesting is that you simplify that procedure by leaving it but giving an alternative to a business investor. Allowing them to invest, let me say \$150,000 here, in an investment fund operated by the provincial government, whether it be a crown corporation or operated by the government where they to come here, pay say \$150,000. The level can be set by the legislature of this province in a figure that they feel is appropriate. If they reside here for one year, them or their spouse, they get 25,000 back. If they reside here for two years, they get another 25,000 back. Of the \$100,000 balance, they don't get any back for five years, but they're guaranteed a \$50,000 or 50 per cent return. All of those figures are arbitrarily suggested by us. You can set higher or lower figures. But let them just say, okay we're going to give 150,000 to the government and the government fund, the crown corporation, whatever it is, can loan that money out to local businesses or to businesses from immigrants in other countries have whatever criteria they want. It makes it easier. They don't have to try and figure out which business to invest and how to get involved in local management.

They will come, they will stay. But many investors are of an older age, 45 or so and they built up their wealth by working. They're not going to come here and just sit back, they will become involved but they're not going to do it today. In most cases they have active businesses. We're going to talk to you about a person later on who can't come here despite the fact that their income is more than this week's lottery every year, but they don't speak enough English and they want to come. Let's make an alternative program a simple investment program. It also gives PEI control of the money.

Speed, the third area is speed. Currently in Toronto, if you walk into a lawyers office that does immigration, or an immigration consultant, the typical comment is if you're a business entrepreneur or a business investor, you're looking at a four year window to come to Canada. That's

a long time. If you can shorten that window - which is one of the purposes of the nominee program - to a period of months, six months, nine months, you will attract many more investors, many more business men, many more jobs, many more dollars. It's not a situation where you're going to be paying money but a situation where you're going to be receiving money from these immigrants.

Let's look for example at what typically happens. Let's take an entrepreneur and let's assume that you nominate five Chinese immigrant families to come to China as business investors using the \$150,000 matter that I mentioned earlier. You have with the federal government a quota on the number that you can nominate every year but that is coming up for renewal very shortly I understand. So you'll be able hopefully to increase that. You have a 45 year old male typically, he's got a successful business in China. He wants to immigrate to Canada. He has a wife and one child that we'll say is about 17. He wants to immigrate here for his child's education, for the political stability and for the lifestyle. But if he's got a thriving business in China he's not just going to close it down and move here. He's going to want to wind the one down and increase the one here. If he's given an opportunity to come here, knowing he can come here by simply investing, when he does come he will start a business. It may start as a retail business, maybe an import, export business, but he will start.

His wife - typically it's still a fairly male business society there but that's changing rapidly - will stay here with, say their daughter, who is going to go to university and he'll spend a good part of his time back in China running the business, winding it down, often over a period of one, two or three years. They will pay - these five families - a total of \$750,000. And let us assume that the day that they land, four of them turn around and go to Marten, Ontario, which you know is the main Chinese area or to Vancouver. What will the Province of PEI have left? It will have \$600,000 from those people that it can spend in its investment fund to improve businesses for Islanders, new immigrants from other countries or new immigrants from that county. It will have one established entrepreneur that will stay here because we're assuming the fifth will stay, will contribute, will perhaps start a business here with employment and the like. These are all seasoned business people. Even that one family that stays is

going to end up - because they're only guaranteed 50,000 in deposits for residency as I mentioned in my little example earlier and 50,000 in their investment back from the fund after five years - so you'll have \$650,000.

Now if you do that with five families and you consider what happens if you can get five times that, 25 immigrant families, you have a fund of \$2.6 million and you have five vibrant business oriented Chinese families here. They will start businesses here. They'll start services. They'll start a grocery store that is 99.9 per cent western and .1 per cent Chinese foods. As the population grows, that Chinese food section for example will increase. They'll have a thriving business here. You'll attract accountants. They're will be an accountant come fairly soon because these business people pay taxes, they expect to pay taxes. They have enough money and hopefully will continue to make money to pay taxes, so you'll have a ton of tax revenue from them. But they'll want to make sure that they can pay the property taxes and they'll want an accountant. They'll start to form the base for more immigrants and before long you'll have a Chinese dentist and a Chinese architect. When I say that I mean Chinese speaking. They may not speak as much English as your current requirements are but neither did the Italian families that opened stores in Toronto back 55 years ago. Their children however, will assimilate into the English speaking society of PEI or the French one of New Brunswick and so on.

As that base of services increase, they're will be more of a Chinese market and that's what's happened in Toronto. That's how you can get the Chinese to come. Don't worry about the four out of five that you may lose that moved to other provinces. You will keep the one and that's the base on which it grows. As that service in their language, service in their products base grows, more highly qualified people will come. As that happens, more investors will want to come. You can raise the amount of money that's required because you'll now have a product of services here that you can sell. As the program continues you'll get more business immigrants. As you get business immigrants you'll have more employment and that's what we suggest is the route to follow. It's got to be a service based, simplicity based, speed based business.

Now when it comes to services, if I could take a

moment and show you this little video, it's only about eight minutes long. It's one I took Tuesday afternoon in Toronto. (Shows Video) If I could stop right there. That's in Toronto and if you look at that sign of businesses, it's a small indoor mall. You'll notice that almost all of the signs are Chinese. There are dentists, there are import, export people. There is an accountant right there in Chinese Kenneth (Indistinct). Pharmacies, health foods and this is a small, small indoor mall.

**Shirley Ji:** That Chinese (Indistinct) the immigration centre. That's Chinese (Indistinct) for Chinese immigration service.

**Gary Luhowy:** This is just a corner I picked arbitrarily when I was driving to the Pacific Mall. It will show you the Pacific Mall here.

(Video playing)

**Gary Luhowy:** I'll stop right there. That's the store - the mall directory. When I say 300 stores, I'm not in any way exaggerating. There are over 300. One of the people in our audience, I know, loves jewelry stores. I think there are 22 stores that are jewelry stores in that mall, all Chinese-operated and Shirley can tell you the type of rents that they pay - no government subsidies.

**Shirley Ji:** It's around \$50 for renting a space to start a new business. It's very expensive, but (Indistinct) people.

**Gary Luhowy:** That's a huge mall directory, even by Toronto standards, but the stores are small.

**Shirley Ji:** Every Sunday you hardly can find parking. You have to go around many, many times to find a parking space. They have underground parking, they have surface parking, but there's just so many people.

**Gary Luhowy:** There are the stores on one level.

**Shirley Ji:** The population in Metro Toronto is 300,000.

**Gary Luhowy:** That's in Metro. It's more when you get into part of the (Indistinct). There's the mall directory you can see in the corner. There's a point to this video that I want to bring up that's important. I'm not an agent for the Pacific Mall.

[Video playing]

**Gary Luhowy:** Now that's the inside of the mall. It's surrounded by a small mall - this one - plaza, a larger plaza that has two supermarkets in it and it's just one. It's the largest mall that I know of, its numbers, but -

**Shirley Ji:** Largest indoor mall.

**Gary Luhowy:** Indoor mall.

[Video playing]

**Gary Luhowy:** That's it, folks. The reason for showing you that is to show you what you face as far as competition if you're going to try to attract Chinese immigrants, for example, because there's no way you're going to catch up with Toronto on those services. That supermarket you saw is just slightly smaller than the Super Centre in Summerside, which is a good-sized market.

**Richard Brown (L):** You can have it for \$1.

**Gary Luhowy:** They're building about one every three months?

**Shirley Ji:** No, they in the vicinity of two years, I think, and they have a full store like this size. A much bigger size.

**Gary Luhowy:** One every six months and the parking lot is jammed because Chinese people, as I say, they grew up with a Chinese diet. They love the seafood here, but they want to be able to have their normal food. You might be dying for your normal food if you lived in China.

Therefore, you've got to - and we say this strongly - you have to start getting some services in here. And how do you do that? Well, I suppose you could fund them, but the last thing you want to hear is someone looking for government money. The best way - and the Chinese way - is not government funding. They fund themselves. Everything you saw in that little video of mine was not government funded except the streets. It's all private money. They're very strong entrepreneurs.

When I was in China, March of last year, the government announced a new program to start 300,000 new businesses by the end of next year - 300,000 businesses. I mean, we'd be happy if we

could create 300,000 jobs, never mind 300,000 businesses, but that's the type of economy that you're facing and they are very entrepreneurial. If you can get that initial element in, and they know that there are more Chinese coming, they'll start their own businesses. They'll start the store. They'll start the medical clinic. They'll start whatever it is that the Chinese people need, and the reason for showing that is it's happened in Toronto on a huge scale.

So how do we satisfy the three Ss? As I said, services, they'll do it. There's no reason for you to spend any money. In fact, they will pay to immigrate to Canada, and Shirley will tell you why. It's a self-feeding situation. Where PEI comes in is it's simplifying the nominee program for businesses and entrepreneurs. Don't force them to invest in a company that they don't really understand or care about. They're used to the Chinese way of doing businesses. If you force them to invest here, you limit your opportunities and their opportunities.

Most of them have much more money than the 150,000 or the 200,000 or the 100,000 or whatever level it is that you decide on. Let them use that money to develop a business here. Let them pay the 150,000 - again, it's an arbitrary figure that we've chosen, but it's in the right ballpark. Let them pay that and use the money to support your industry, your jobs and even new businesses of theirs.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair:** Gary, if I could intervene for a moment?

**Gary Luhowy:** Sure.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair:** Some of the committee members have other commitments this afternoon.

**Gary Luhowy:** Sure.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair:** And I know there's other people that wish to speak as well. Could we perhaps come to an agreement that we could maybe wrap up in - would 10 minutes be too (Indistinct)?

**Gary Luhowy:** I'm going to be finished in about three.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair:** Okay. Very good.

**Gary Luhowy:** So that's the point. That's what we're here to do, and there are many things that you can do. You can, for example, make it \$160,000 and \$10,000 of it as a language deposit, and if the immigrant or his spouse or her spouse takes an approved - and the approval obviously has to be approved by BDI - ESL or English second language course within two years of arriving, they get their \$10,000 back, and they will. You've all been, I'm sure some, many of you, to a grocery store where you pay a quarter to rent the carts like we do in Ontario, and for that quarter, you spend \$200 on groceries, but you'll walk halfway across the slushy parking lot to get your quarter back. They'll certainly take an English-language course that will benefit them for \$10,000. There are many, many other alternatives. You could increase the language deposit, perhaps, to \$75,000 and they get \$25,000 for the first three years that they're here, whatever. As long as you keep it relatively simple, relatively easy and relatively quick to encourage residency, you'll be fine.

You have a number of windows open to you right now. One is tourism. Recently, as you're probably aware, the Canadian and Chinese governments changed their tourism policies to open the doors and the Chinese government has stated they expect up to 100 million tourists - 100 million tourists - to be leaving China in the next few years, and that will, in the next decade, be on an annual basis. That's a lot of tourists, and I know that's a big part of the PEI economy. Those tourists will come here if it's promoted and if they see a smaller Chinese infrastructure - they're not going to see a Pacific Mall in Charlottetown or Summerside that quick - but they will come and they'll build their own businesses and they'll say: Oh, look at that. All those Chinese families living here and they don't have a dentist. I'm going to tell my brother the dentist when I get back to Beijing.

That's the way that immigration will come here. I want to emphasize with you that there's no reason to abandon any of your programs. These are alternative programs. You may want to fine-tune some of yours, but some of these can be used in addition to what you already have, but we want to suggest that you speed up the process. We have some stories that Shirley's going to tell of how and why people immigrate from China. Thank you.

**Richard Brown (L):** Just one quick question.

**Gary Luhowy:** Sure.

**Richard Brown (L):** There is a program now. There's the - we have a fund called the IVI fund, Island Investments. That's \$150,000 a unit - will get you a visa. What's wrong with that one? You don't have to come here. You don't have to be a part of the Island. You pay your \$150,000 and you get your visa, but you're permanent.

**Gary Luhowy:** It's not part of your nominee program. Your nominee program basically has three criteria. It's your skilled worker program, it's your business program and it's your investor program. But your investor program requires that they learn no English. That is a requirement.

**Richard Brown (L):** It's a \$200,000 investment and you get . . .

**Shirley Ji:** Five years later, you may get a return, but no guarantees .

**Gary Luhowy:** You basically become a preferred shareholder in a corporation that you picked in a country you don't know anything about.

**Richard Brown (L):** Are you saying that's not working good? I think it is.

**Gary Luhowy:** I think you will find a significant increase if you just use a development fund and I say that from Chinese . . . it's a different type of fund than what we have in mind. Perhaps we can expand on that.

**Richard Brown (L):** I know we've had one for about 15 years now, the Island Investment Fund, which you, the nominees, put the money into a government fund and the government then, well, they're sort of a broker in between, but it's sort of guaranteed now.

**Gary Luhowy:** Yes, that's where the situation is, but anyway, Shirley will speak to you.

**Shirley Ji:** Yeah. If you have a moment, I just want to tell you some like why Chinese like to come to this country because I was an immigrant to this country eight years ago and many, many reasons. Within these eight years, I know all my

friends, clients, anyone I know - it's always new immigrants and they're mostly from mainland China - and if you ask them why they want to come to this country, most of them say for our children.

China, right now, is a big country, a big factory. They make everything to export into Western countries, so many, many successful Chinese people, they want their children to learn Western culture, language. In the future, they can, you know, take over the business. So as well you know, many, many families after the 80s, they only have, one family have one kid. So kids in their families (Indistinct) so they want to spend as much as they can to support their kids to have good ability in the future. So that's why people like to come to this country. It's safe, more safe than the States and it's much easier to come here than the US or to get your, like a citizenship or permanent residence.

So that's their main reason. And they do have money. You see from the video there's tons of Chinese stores, supermarkets and many, many things. They opened, the new immigrant did. Now many stores are owned by private and then they have - I remember in Toronto, they had one family, they ran eight supermarkets. Each (indistinct) has one. So they do very, very good and they're contributing to the Metro Toronto a lot.

So when I first came to this Prince Edward Island - last year, September - I think it's very good. It's peaceful and it's lovely and it's excellent. I think many, many people would like to live here. They just don't know you're (indistinct). They don't know they can have a chance to come here or how they can come here. That's the thing, and for sure they like to live in more Chinese community but sooner or later they will be a good community in the future if you let them come easier. So that's the thing I say.

So how can you? Many, many people want to immigrate to this country. Many choose Vancouver and Toronto, but if you offer them basically an easier way, they'd prefer to come here because it's less competition than Toronto and Vancouver. And people will stay here, and the reasons for them to stay here because they want to get a citizenship. If they can't get a citizenship, they need four years or three years of staying in this country in order to get a citizenship. I'm just talking

of realistic (Indistinct). I don't want to say such a big thing or good things. I'm just want you to know what people really want and then they want their kids that started here to learn English.

And, for example, like if a nominee program, they want to speak good English. When I was coming to this country, I had 14 years of education in my country. I studied English well at high school and university, but at first around here, I couldn't understand any English. I went to school, I wanted to continue my accountant, but they refused. They said: You don't speak English.

And the language, you need to practice. In China, you don't have that environment to practice English, so if you require they speak very, very good English at the first time they come here, it's impossible. They need a time to pick it up, so I say maybe we should consider a realistic effect to make it more reasonable.

**Richard Brown (L):** So you're saying under the nominee program, you've got your 200 grand, you get to come to the country under a temporary visa?

**Shirley Ji:** Yeah, I have a friend, she just came back in March - what time? March (Indistinct).

**Gary Luhowy:** Yes. We recently had an experience that we had a Chinese person that I mentioned earlier - their income is private, but it's - their annual income is a lottery win. They have their own medical clinic in China and they want, she wants to - they both, husband and wife - want to immigrate here, but they have no English. In speaking with your program people, there's no way that they will be able to immigrate here until that English is changed or until their daughter, who is just immigrating to another part of Canada, moves here.

**Richard Brown (L):** Is that the same in Quebec under their nominee program?

**Shirley Ji:** Yeah.

**Richard Brown (L):** Okay.

**Gary Luhowy:** Much the same, but we're suggesting that you need to have a better program, a quicker program, if you're going to attract people because you won't do it on services.

We've actually brought four Chinese people here - four groups - since September.

The first one is a businessperson and you've probably eaten his fruit if you've bought it from any Superstore or Loblaw's store. He supplies fruit and vegetables - not all, but certain ones - to that store. He came here and he was very interested in PEI with us in September.

We brought another Chinese businessperson in November and there's now an imminent purchase of a significant nature here on Prince Edward Island that he has made that will be closing shortly. We brought another Chinese business couple in December. They're in the marble, granite, stone flooring business. They're keenly interested.

And in January, we brought another Chinese couple who will be investing here in a matter of a couple of years. We also brought with us that time the particular lady we speak of and when it comes to business experience, they run a cardiovascular medical clinic in China. They have a website that has tremendous results, but they can't immigrate here because they don't meet the English criteria.

**Shirley Ji:** Yeah, she's ready to move because she delayed her tickets. She wanted to go back to PEI again to have your office interview her, but when Gary called in the office said no English. So then she has to go back because we already filled out all the forms.

**Gary Luhowy:** She's the hospital administrator and owner and her husband is the chief surgeon, I guess you could call it, and we took her on a tour of the Summerside hospital, which, by the way, is a very impressive facility. You should be very proud. I wish we had that in Ontario for a city of 100,000, but there's no way for her to immigrate under the current regime.

If she and her husband were to immigrate, I don't think they're going to close down their hospital that makes that kind of income tomorrow and move here on Sunday. They're going to want to wind down. They will probably move on a slow basis with one coming and the other winding down the clinic and it may take two or three or four years. I don't think if we were going there, we'd want to close up our \$5 million a year business.

**Shirley Ji:** But definitely were putting their money

here, so they may buy properties, they may do some thing. In (indistinct) they were doing many things and the reason they want (Indistinct) move their money here, so they want to come here.

The other thing is that Chinese have had a cultural revolution period. So many, many people, when they are 45-up until 50-something, they don't learn English at school at all. Because at that time, we had (Indistinct) revolution time, no people at that age (Indistinct) something. That's very specific of that period of age and on this age of people, they are very successful right now because they're older and they have more experience and they work harder.

**Gary Luhowy:** If I can just add, perhaps, one thing to that, one of our associates is one of the founders of an English-language school (Indistinct) in China, and English is a very important language there. Their total enrollment - full and part-time - this year is 600,000 English students.

That's the largest one. But I mean the size of people learning English. The way the economy is going into the next 10 years, we may have schools learning Mandarin, but that's another story for another day. Are there any other questions at all? Is there anything? I know there is a time limit so . . .

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** I just wondered, Shirley, when you're at the hospital in Summerside, if you'd seen David Wong? You didn't meet David Wong?

**Gary Luhowy:** We know of Mr. Wong - Beaver Street, I think, is where he lives.

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** Yes, wonderful couple.

**Gary Luhowy:** We've heard wonderful things about them. We found it very interesting. In December, we decided we would go see the three Chinese restaurant operators in Summerside. We found out the first one is not Chinese. He's Vietnamese and apparently was a refugee that was brought by a number of citizens in Summerside that's made a great contribution to Summerside. So we went to the second one and we're told that he's from Hong Kong, which until recently, even now, is sort of not really considered a part of China by some Chinese. It's a different culture. And we were told that the third person is from Argentina, which is really a long way from

China, but when you get more Chinese here that are from Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou and all the other cities, that's where you'll have a start and that's why we want . . . I think . . .

We have a handout for you. We call it the Early Bird Program, where in the next few years, if you can get that little foothold, you're not going to have a Pacific Malls, but you'll have mini Atlantic Malls. We wouldn't want to call it Pacific on this coast. And that's why we think it'll benefit PEI. As I said, you only need about 20 per cent to settle. For the rest, you can say: Well, we'll take your money approach.

**Richard Brown (L):** The nominee program is part of the federal program.

**Gary Luhowy:** It's an agreement that you entered into in the period of 2001 with the federal government on sort of a trial basis. You can rewrite that agreement and I think you have a good case in Ottawa. Say, look, how can we compete with - take my video and tell them it was done by an amateur, you found it on the street, don't say it was my name - and show them what's in Toronto. They know and they know that there is no way that you can compete unless you have something else to offer. Speed, simplicity will do it and they'll eventually have their own services. But if you worry that we're going to lose eight - four out of every five, you might - but you'll have their money.. And that one person that will stay will be a vibrant contributor and so it goes. With other countries as well. Canada is a mix - I understand this gentleman is from Sri Lanka - of ethnic cultures and that's why I love living in Toronto. The restaurant foods are totally varied. I can take you to a spicy restaurant that fire will come out of your ears, but it's good food. Was there anything else? I don't want to go too long. I think we were told to keep it under an hour.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Perhaps we'll hear from Ron and then if the committee member have questions we'll continue with that.

**Ron Barrett:** My name is Ron Barrett and I'll stand up because I use to be a school teacher so I'll feel more comfortable doing this. Anyway just a few points. I came from a family farm on Prince Edward Island. I went into the teaching business due to the declining enrollment and people which Prince Edward Island needs. I had to seek a new

career. When I decided where I was going I just thought I was going to get into real-estate. Presently, I am co-owner with Nicolle with Century 21 in Summerside.

In our business we meet a lot of interesting people. I've been doing it for 20 years. We market all over the world. Right now we have 14,000 just on our e-mail which is a considerable amount from a lot of people. We consider ourselves a lot of times to be ambassadors for Prince Edward Island because we love it. I could have moved away but I wanted to stay here. So I found a new position of employment. I've tried retail, I've tried motel/hotel and I've been in several other things, but I wanted to stay in Prince Edward Island. Getting back to the main common denominator is people.

The people we see a lot of times come to us with the same questions that come to you. What do you have to offer us? They're all looking for the hand out. Some properties we've had from 2 million to 7 million or whatever, it's will the government give us 75 per cent of that or can I try to figure out how I can get through CMHC where I'm getting 100 per cent financing. Or if I come into Canadian Forces Base or Slemon Park out there, what are they going to give us? You've heard those stories. I have too. I have to try to overcome that stuff or I have a hard time getting bread and butter on the table. We work by commission so we have to know what we're talking about.

I can tell you what sits before you here today are real people. The people that are here, the people that they represent are real people. They don't present everyday. Shirley does because she's in that business. Right now presently, Nicolle and I are thoroughly impressed with the people they brought in. They brought their money. We asked for deposits, we got large sums. Wasn't a lot of questions, they didn't question whether they were going to get interest tomorrow. They didn't question all the things that everybody wanted. They wanted to spend their money on PEI because Shirley loved it, Gary brought them in. They know what they're doing.

We get lots of people that come to meetings like this and they generalize and everybody sits around and everybody enjoys the conversation and we say well, 5:00 o'clock is coming, I've got to meet my wife for dinner. Let's go or I'm in trouble. What they have to tell you are real facts. If you get to a

point situation where you sit down today to generalize some but if you ask them specific questions, they can give you specific answers. I think they have a lot of meat and potatoes, which Prince Edward Island if famous, for that we should look at seriously.

The tourism business and how they can bring people into Summerside, Charlottetown - why did I say Summerside first, I don't know why that happened. Yeah I know, but we got to talk when we get a chance. Lot's of people from Summerside years ago, you got that in first or you just don't appreciate it. But that's the way it is. Their money is good. Shirley came to us and she said, we got to do something in Prince Edward Island. They've invested their own money to come here four or five times. She has 40 people potentially as a number right now - 40 - if you can fathom that, that are major, major million dollar people that can bring it to Prince Edward Island. That to me is worth listening to. I've had 3 million people in the last 20 years that have had great aspiration to come to PEI with no money. These people have their money. The first thing Shirley said is, our people don't want your money. They are bringing their money with them. Summerside has a few empty departments up there right now. You're probably a little familiar with them. These people could fill those places. They could fill some places in Charlottetown and it's not just with families it's with people that want to set up businesses and invest money.

I don't know what else I can tell you but I met, the first gentleman that was here - I'd like to say one thing is that he said and I was thoroughly impressed and I never understood a word he said until Shirley interpreted the whole thing - was that if their business doesn't work for them they are ashamed. It's not like we'll just declare bankruptcy and away we go.

**Shirley Ji:** No, they feel ashamed to - many, many Chinese people they pay their mortgages so quickly - they don't want a loan. They're afraid of - in China we don't borrow money, we don't (Indistinct).

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** We stand to learn something from you. (Laughter)

**Shirley Ji:** They don't. We just don't feel comfortable having a mortgage on our house. We

(Indistinct) to pay off. That's the way of Chinese people.

**Ron Barrett:** The other thing is that they are talking small number, and I'll finish up in two minutes, is that they're very, very - and I'm only going by what they said and Shirley can certainly correct me - but when somebody comes to new land like here and they want to invest, if they're a big operator which the people we've discussed and are working with are, everybody wants to know why. Because it's very competitive and they don't want other people to get - or if it's a great way of life they're going to bring people with them. And again I stress they bring money.

So I guess I'd just like to take two seconds to thank you for your time, but I'd like to thank Shirley and Gary for their interest in our province because the future of people like them is going to put people in our province, which is going to bring dollars in our province, which is going to make life a little easier for all of us. We're struggling with that on a daily basis from our schools to our businesses, be it small towns or whatever, but these are the types of people that can do it. Some of the speakers we listen to from time to time are very impressed with what they had to say, but they are not action people. I got 20 years experience dealing with them. These are action people. Their money is good, it's in my account.

Thank you very much to you. Thank you to you.

**Shirley Ji:** Thank you. It's all about your project that we know PEI.

**Gary Luhowy:** Thank you very much. I hope you found our presentation somewhat informative. I think Ron just mentioned that we have heard through the media and other sources a big recent vacancy on a commercial property in Summerside. Shirley could have investors tomorrow to buy that commercial property and to open businesses in it except for one thing. That investment is not a qualified investment because it's not a tourism attraction. You're nominee program just allows investment in real estate.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Committee members, we have time for perhaps a few quick questions provided that we can have quick answers to them. So Richard go ahead.

**Richard Brown (L):** Thank you very much for your presentation. I agree with you. We have good ideas here. Not only do they bring good money, but they bring good ideas to start companies to help Islanders get employment. We should emphasize that too, the ideas. We just don't want you money we want your expertise too in helping new companies start and things like that.

**Shirley Ji:** I'm sure Chinese people appreciate a (Indistinct) (Indistinct) stay here. Because I love it. So most people, they would love it.

**Richard Brown (L):** Thank you.

**Cletus Dunn (PC):** Just a quick comment . I really appreciate your presentation and I appreciate how poignant you were on what some of the barriers are to accomplish what you're trying to achieve. I have two daughters teaching in Hong Kong so I've been to that part of the world. I'd love to see more of those people over here. They are very industrious people and quite welcome. So I really thank you very much for being very poignant as far as what the barriers are.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** I had the opportunity to go to Beijing last year. I think it was in May. I can fully appreciate what you've presented to us, Gary. You were talking about the cranes in operation. One day I started to count the high risers that were under construction. I think I was beyond 70 and I had not seen the whole city. So I can appreciate also why the price of steel has gone up because the construction industry in China, if it's the same as it is in Beijing in other cities, I can see why the price has doubled.

Well now, Ron, Shirley and Gary, thank you very much for the very entertaining and very informative presentation that you've given us. It's very enlightening. Our committee has heard a certain number of presentations. We have more to come. As far as I'm concerned, the Chinese people would be a wonderful addition to Prince Edward Island. Prince Edward is open to all kinds of immigration. I can assure you that your presentation will be an important part of the proceedings of this committee and if you have material to leave with the committee it would be more than welcome. Again thank you for coming from Toronto for this presentation. Very much appreciate what you have . . .

**Cletus Dunn (PC):** I don't think Gary should test the film industry. (Laughter)

**Gary Luhowy:** I have no intentions. For one thing I want to keep my clothes on and (Indistinct) to me in the film industry. (Laughter)

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Again, thank you very much.

**Gary Luhowy:** Thank you very much. Mr. Chairman, if I could just say one thing.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Yes.

**Gary Luhowy:** If - Ms. Johnston has our contact information, I think it's in the material - if you have any questions or any follow ups you want by e-mail or telephone, Shirley and I would be more than pleased to respond.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes the agenda for today. Do we have motion for adjournment?

**Richard Brown (L):** So moved.

**Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair):** Thank you. Meeting adjourned.