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HOUSE COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

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

Thursday, March 31, 2005

SUBJECT(S) BEFORE THE COMMITTEE:

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

NOTE:

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COMMITTEE MEMBERS

PRESENT:

Wilfred Arsenault, Chair
Helen MacDonald
Hon. Jamie Ballem
Hon. Philip Brown
Eva Rodgerson
Richard Brown
Hon. Robert Ghiz replacing Carolyn Bertram

ABSENT:

Fred McCardle

GUESTS:

Part I - Ray and Pat Malone
Part II - Susan Escoffery
Part III - Harry Baglole
Part IV - Gunag Kelly, Eric Gilligan
Part V - Sharon Labchuk
Part VI - Blake Doyle

STAFF:

Marian Johnston, Committee Clerk
Thilak Tennekone

Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development
Thursday, March 31, 2005
9:00 a.m.

Part I - Ray and Pat Malone

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Good morning ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our meeting on immigration. We have one, two, three, four, five; we have six presentations this morning. So we do have a quorum. We have, I believe, one more member of the committee that will be with us here momentarily.

You have an agenda in front of you, committee members. Any additions that anyone would like to bring to this agenda and if not, we'll ask someone to move the - that the agenda be approved as presented and it is done. All those in favour say signify by saying "Aye".

Committee Members: Aye.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Motion carried. We have the agenda approved here, Richard. Folks, we are going to get right into item No. 2, Consideration of Motion No. 5. We have our first presenters at the table, Mr. Ray and Mrs. Pat Malone. We would inform them that they have about 15 minutes to make a presentation and then followed by a question period by committee members, if you would be willing to entertain questions, it would be appreciated. Normally, there are questions. We would ask you perhaps to give you a brief background on yourselves and then step right into your presentation, folks. The floor is yours.

Pat Malone: Thank you, thank you for the opportunity to address the Legislature Standing Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development.

My name is Pat Malone, I'm a retired provincial government employee. I have a nursing and social work background and have worked with senior citizens in the province and have been involved with a group called PFLAG PEI - Parents and Friends of People who are Gay and Lesbian. And Ray, do you want to -

Ray Malone: My name is Ray Malone and I retired for the third time last year. My background is in education, mostly as a school counselor. I like to

say I'm like Hank Snow, -

Marian Johnston (Clerk Assistant): Would you mind moving over to this mike. It's not picking up your voice.

Ray Malone: I used to be a teacher, so I can speak louder. Do you want me to start again? My name is Ray Malone and I'm retired. My background is mostly in education. I'd like to say I'm like Hank Snow, I've been everywhere. I've worked in the elementary system, the junior high system, the high school system, Holland College and UPEI and I've worked from Tignish to Souris and all points in between so I covered the Island like the dew.

Pat Malone: So before we talk about attracting new immigrants to PEI and how we can do a better job of retaining highly skilled immigrants, we wanted to step back a little bit and talk to the committee about inclusion and diversity. So that's what we are going to address today and these are topics that we do hear a lot about these days. Most of us, we grew up on PEI and we didn't always have the opportunity to experience people with different cultures. I grew up in the small town of Souris and we didn't have many people of diversity in that community. Our children as well say that they have not experienced a loss in diversity and educating themselves about diversity of living on Prince Edward Island.

But we want to talk about diversity, we mostly think about racial diversity, but - or ethnicity and disability. But diversity is also related to gender and to sexual orientation. We talk a lot about the Island way of life and we play the Island game - where are you from, who's your father, who's your mother, who's your grandfather? For some of our friends who have moved to PEI or have lived here for a long time and have a name that is not familiar to most on PEI that's easily relatable, that game can be discriminatory. It can allow people to feel like they are from away and we even have a name for people - is it CFA's or PFA's for people that come from away and that is a form of discrimination really. How long does one have to

live on PEI to be an Islander?

So we need to talk - I guess we want to step back a little bit and talk about our attitudes and our values when we talk about inclusion and diversity. So we talk about racism and I know you are very familiar with the Ko family, the plight of the Hong Kong couple and the children, the teenagers that were throwing things at their building and discriminating against them. While in the media, people did not want to address that as racism but it certainly looks like racism; it certainly looks like discrimination. And it looks like we are not accepting people from other places. These are Islanders. So it looks like we're not very accepting.

We have sexism, prejudice based on gender and I'm very familiar as a female living with the old boy's network, the lack of females in management, in positions as MLA's and so on. Heterosexism is another ism and this relates to people with heterosexual privilege that we all think that we are all heterosexual and we don't understand people of different sexual orientation. We are not familiar with people of different sexual orientation and we discriminate against them because we don't understand.

Ray Malone: So some of you may be wondering what is PFLAG and what are we doing here, and how does this fit into your piece of work that you are doing. PFLAG stands for Parents and Friends of Persons who are Lesbian and Gay. That's what the acronym stands for, but it also includes other people such as people who are bisexual, people who are transgender, people who are too spirited, people who are questioning and all of those words are encompassed under PFLAG. And PFLAG has been going for quite a number of years in Canada, especially in the US and PFLAG is a recognized acronym. People know what it is, but if you started changing and including all of these other things into it, it would be unpronounceable or unrecognizable and all the rest of it. So PFLAG encompasses all of those individuals that I mentioned.

We have a lesbian daughter. Our oldest girl is lesbian. She lives and works in North Carolina. We love her very much. We love her as much as we love our other two children. She is very much a part of our family. She says that she could never return to PEI to work. We've talked about this in the visits that we've had with her and she says she

could not return home to live and work because of the intolerant attitudes Islanders have especially towards gays and lesbians. She just would not feel comfortable working here.

So why are we at this hearing? We're here because we think that a good place to start to retain highly skilled workers is to start with the people that were born here and feel that they have to leave. Many gay people that we know tell us that they leave PEI as soon as they are old enough to get out. And we say: well why do you do that? And they say: because we're just not comfortable here. They don't feel safe here on tranquil Prince Edward Island. Some of you may know and remember the assault that we had in Charlottetown last summer. One gay individual with a group of their straight friends were all attacked in Charlottetown because of the sexual orientation of one individual.

Students tell us that in the schools every day GLBT students, GLBT stands for Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgender students. They tell us that they suffer at the hands of their fellow students every day in their schools. They are taunted; they are teased, they are called very ugly names which I will not repeat here and some are even physically assaulted.

As co-chairs of PFLAG, PEI we have been asked by school principals to come into their schools and work with their staff and help them deal with the homophobia and the result of that, that they witness in their schools every day. So we've been in two high schools already and we are going to another high school in the fall and spend a full day with their staff to help them to understand this issue and help them to learn how to deal with it. Because principals and professionals tell us that they receive no training in this area in the professional schools. In fact, there was a study done in 2004 in all of the professional schools across the country, medical schools, social work schools, psychology schools, teaching schools. They do not receive any training or teaching in this area. So when they come and they do their work in their chosen careers, they are just not prepared in any way, shape or form to deal with someone who has a sexual orientation that is different from theirs.

PFLAG PEI has just sponsored a series of workshops that you may of read about in the

paper. We received a grant from the Community Mobilization Program after writing a proposal and we had a workshop in Montague and a workshop in Summerside and we combined the two groups and formed them and had a workshop in Charlottetown at the Dutch Inn. And we had Bill Ryan who is a professor of School of Social Work at McGill talk to us in Charlottetown at the Charlottetown meeting and he is considered a Canadian expert in the area of homophobia.

The theme of the workshop was creating safe communities. And part of the workshop we had, some of the gay people in our gay community share with us and with the participants that were there, what it's like to grow up on PEI and being gay or lesbian. We heard stories of verbal and physical abuse, as well as exclusion and discrimination. They shared their experience of growing up in a very hostile and fearful environment. In the present debate on the Civil Marriage Act, which is Bill C-38 that is presently being debated in Ottawa, homophobia has come out of the closet, cloaked as religious freedom and political debate over their tradition of marriage.

Members of the gay community tell us they leave PEI as fast as they can. They leave because of the intolerance of Islanders and the fear they feel for their own safety. They leave because homophobia is alive and well on beautiful PEI. They've become professionals in a number of areas and choose to live in other parts of the world. They share their skills and expertise in other places that accept them more as equals. It's these communities that benefit from their skills and expertise, not Prince Edward Island.

The Harvard Business School conducted a study on inclusive communities. They found that cities and regions that promote openness and acceptance of gay and lesbian population are the most economically prosperous in the world. Moreover, there was a creativity and a productivity unleashed where gay and lesbian population are accepted. Let us hope that the economic argument is not the only one that convinces people. It should be done and we should be more tolerant because it is the right thing to do.

Pat Malone: We've learned that homosexuality is a lot like left handedness. It's minority but holy natural and neutral trait and it doesn't speak at all to character or morality.

Nobel prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu was asked by a journalist, what injustices he would most want to reverse if he had one wish? Tutu replied by asking for two wishes, the first he said is the moral imperative for forgiving third world debt. The second is the equal treatment of gays and lesbians. For me, he said it is a matter of human rights and a deeply theological issue. I believe they're as much God's children as anyone.

There is a scale that we use to describe people's attitudes and acceptance of people of different sexual orientation. The first attitude is repulsion - saying that people who are different are strange sick, crazy, or aversive. The second is pity - people who are different are somehow born that way and that's pitiful. The third is tolerance - people being different is just a faze of development that most people grow out of. The fourth is acceptance - implies that one need to make accommodation for another's differences. It doesn't acknowledge that another's identity may be of the same value as their own. The fifth is support - works to safeguard the rights of those who are different. Another along the scale as we go up the scale is admiration - acknowledges that being different in our society takes strength. The seventh is appreciation - where we value the different - the diversity of people and we're willing to confront insensitive attitudes. And the level where we'd like to get to is nurturing - where it assumes that people, that the differences in people are indispensable to society.

Ray Malone: We'd like to end by giving some recommendations. Say what would we recommend? Why are you here and what would you like us to do? So we have some recommendations that we'd like to place before you for your consideration.

The first recommendation is - first of all, to educate Islanders about inclusion and diversity. Conduct a media campaign in order to do this. And being a teacher and having worked in school systems most of my life, I guess I would have a soft spot for maybe somehow instructing the Department of Education to revamp its curriculum and to include more examples of inclusions and diversity of people who are different than the majority. And this is especially true in the GLBT area.

In the literature that we've read and researched, what we find is that students who are growing up

with gay and lesbian in our school system have no examples to look up to or emulate in the curriculum and the books that they read or the teachers that are teaching in front of them. We have all kinds of teachers in this school system of ours that are gay and lesbian but are afraid to come out of the closet because they are afraid for their own safety. And that's a pretty telling comment for people who are in the teaching profession.

There is a model that we use to talk about how do we change peoples beliefs and how do we change attitudes and what do we do. It's all part of what we would call education. Our belief system are the things that we believe inside drive action or drive our behaviour. And this creates the reality that we live in and the reality that we create around us. And our own reality results in success or failure in terms of what we do.

The second recommendation that we would make is that to make government HR policies more inclusive by naming gay bashing as one of the grounds for discrimination against people who are lesbian and gay.

We belong to homophobia task force. A couple of years ago when the chair of that task force interviewed all of the HR managers in the provincial government service and in the federal government service and in no case was there found a policy that explicitly named gay bashing as a ground for discrimination. The word is not found there.

The experience that she had in talking to these HR managers was: we don't have that problem here. That's what the school say, too. We don't have that problem. There is a word for that and that word is denial. People just do not want to see what is in front of them.

Recommendation number three - is declare June 1st of this year as Anti-Homophobia Day. The province of Quebec is demonstrating leadership in this arena by calling on all provinces and territories to name June 1st as Anti-Homophobia Day. This year in Quebec, every classroom in the province will read - a person a young person will read a letter of coming out to their parents. So we ask government to proclaim June 1st as Anti-Homophobia Day.

Recommendation number four - Prince Edward Island is one of only three provinces left that still does not grant equality to gays and lesbians to marry. We request that the province grant the right to have same gender couples to register for a civil marriage. The province does not have to wait for permission from Ottawa. The province does not have to wait for the *Civil Marriage Act* to be passed this spring and pass it will. It would be impressive if this government would show some leadership in this area by making this decision.

PEI in 1998 was the last province to include homosexuality as grounds for discrimination in our Human Rights legislation. The Executive Director of the Human Rights Commission was on CBC Radio only two or three weeks ago making the same request as we are making this morning. The editor of *The Guardian* made the same argument several weeks ago. So that is the end of our formal presentation. So we'd like to thank the committee for listening to us this morning.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Thank you very much, Ray Malone. A very informative session and we'll now open the floor to questions from committee members in the order to proceed, Helen.

Helen MacDonald (PC): Yes, I want to thank you very much and I enjoyed your presentation. How long have you been working on this issue and since you've started working on it, have you seen any changes? Have you seen things moving the way that you would like to see them? Or have things not moved at all? Can you just - since you first started on this issue.

Pat Malone: We initiated the group called PFLAG in 2001. We have experienced discrimination as parents, not only people with gay and lesbian experienced discrimination, but we have as parents. Our friends, our relatives, our communities discriminate against us for some reason because we are the parents of a gay daughter. We started the PFLAG group in 2001 and yes we've done a lot. We're very passionate at this point about changing attitudes and we're not afraid to speak out. We know it's a delicate topic. We've seen some difference but there is something happening that although the laws are changing, our attitudes are not keeping up.

Right now with the same gender marriage debate

in society, we're seeing a lot of hatred, a lot of discrimination, a lot of letters to the editor that are very antagonistic. We hear from our churches, we're Catholics, we hear in our churches that discrimination, bordering on hatred being preached and we are very hurt by that. We're hurt personally by that and we know that people who are gay and lesbian are very hurt by that and they can't speak up. So we're speaking up their behalf. So we are - yes we are educating. Seeing a bit of changes but we need to do a lot to address our attitudes and I think it's right across the board. It's our attitudes on PEI. That's why we do compare it to immigrants coming to PEI and to racism and to sexism.

We have a long way to go. We have started to scratch the surface but we have a long way to go. Our homophobia we call it is institutionalized. It's not something enate, it's something we learn in our attitudes, in our families, in our communities, in our churches, but through the media. We're learning this discrimination. It can be addressed, it can be changed, but it needs a concerted effort right across our systems to do that.

Ray Malone: I could just add a comment to that. Our speaker, Bill Ryan who came from McGill to address our two communities. One of the things that he did mention was that when the Civil Marriage Act is passed in Parliament this year, that will be the end of legal homophobia. That's the easy part, ladies and gentlemen. The tougher part will be to change social homophobia. That's what we're talking about, is social homophobia and that means changing the minds and hearts of people like you around this table and members of the Prince Edward Island community and that's going to take a lot longer.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Eva.

Eva Rodgerson (PC): I was wondering (Indistinct) to see in the school systems where there's been a lot of emphasizes put on bullying. I mean from anything to clothes, to being obese, to having funny ears to whatever. So do you not think you would make it worse if you zero in on one specific area as opposed to the whole bullying principle covering all aspects whether it be gay and lesbian or whether it be because I don't have the most up-to-date clothes or because I'm obese. You think it's not making it worse by zeroing in and really focusing on one particular aspect, have you found that?

Pat Malone: I guess what we need is zero tolerance and we don't have zero tolerance in this area. We're still allowing discrimination against people who are gay and lesbian. We don't tolerate discrimination in other areas anymore. We had a young lady from West Prince who is in the school system talk to us two nights ago at a meeting, talking about the remarks, the bullying, how she's ostracized in her community and no one is doing anything about it.

There's all kinds of comments in the school and people are still not addressing those comments. Where they might address a comment against someone if they are - we don't allow black jokes for example. We don't allow jokes about someone who is disabled. That's not tolerated but we are still tolerating our teachers, our school systems in all systems, we are still tolerating these jokes. They are not funny and we need to stop tolerating that. We need to have zero tolerance. We're not there yet.

Eva Rodgerson (PC): I know in connecting with a lot of people in the community, for example I think of a young man. I would say probably he's a bit mentally challenged. You still deal with all of those things as well. They are still working on them but like you say they're not there yet and let's say for example the people from Newfoundland. We still hear the Newfoundland jokes every day.

So I think we've come a long way and we're not there yet on a lot of issues. So we're hoping that this whole bullying policy and all this thing around in whichever category it is, is going to make a difference on all these aspects with your concerns included but like you say, it's seems like the respect for individuals overall in our society is not there in many aspects.

Ray Malone: Let me give you one example of how far we've come. In one of the schools that we work with, with the teachers we had a matching exercise. We had a list of terms down one side and we had a list of definitions down the other side. And we were trying to get the teachers to match up, gave them a test in other words and teachers are - they want to make 100. They are very upset when they don't get the right answer, right. So we were asking the teachers, well which one is this and the definition was that of homosexuality. And the teacher said: well, it's the third one from the bottom, you know. Count from

the bottom up, it's number three and the teacher could not even say the word - homosexual. So that's where we are in this province in terms of teaching people about this stuff.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: We have time for one more question.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): We have time for one more question. Robert.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Thank you. A couple of quick little questions. You're doing some educating in some of the schools now, are you not? Like you were at the Morell School, or I saw something on the table. What schools have you been to?

Pat Malone: Kensington and Souris. We addressed the Teachers Convention and we did some PD at Colonel Gray.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Okay. Are there any schools discriminating against you, saying no, we don't want to hear from you?

Ray Malone: Only by not asking us to present, I guess.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): So have you made a request to the Minister of Education?

Ray Malone: To do what?

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): To do more presentations like this?

Ray Malone: No. The school system is, how shall I put this, having worked in the school system all my life, I know that people who give presentations in the school, especially to the teachers for a whole day, do so only by invitation. So we only go to a school that invites us. We cannot invite ourselves.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Okay. Your daughter now in North Carolina, so she says it's easier in North Carolina?

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): From the Bible Belts, Robert.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Well that's what I'm wondering because she moved to North Carolina

and I think it was read during the election Republican.

Ray Malone: It was.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Don't get me started on that.

Pat Malone: She lives in the Bible Belt of North Carolina but she's found a community to surround herself. She works in a business that is very open that has policies so that her partner, Tracy is accepted and has rights. So it's not an issue in where she works. In her community, she has a neighborhood that's very open and accepting. They're a very integrate part of their neighborhood. So she's not really experienced the broader discrimination and when she does she could loose her job, she could be put out of her house, she could be ostracizing, and discriminated against with no laws to protect her and very aware of that.

So she has experienced some discrimination at public meetings in the reason she was helping out with the election. They were hoping to have a change so they volunteered to help out. She's not a voting citizen in the US. But she was trying to help out to make some changes there but experienced some discrimination. But it's not affecting her personally. All her friends say they want to move to Canada, they can't wait. They'd love to move here to have a job.

Ray Malone: All of her friends think that Canada is Camelot. They just hear such good things about Canada, especially in this area. We are very, very progressive compared to the southern Bible Belt states of the USA.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Well they all leave there and go to California and New York.

Ray Malone: Yes.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): And Florida.

Ray Malone: Yes.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Something to do with coasts anyway. You mentioned something about being discriminated against as parents of a gay and lesbian child. I'd just like to say if you're being discriminated, you're being discriminated as parents of gay and lesbians who admit that they're

parents of gays and lesbians because there is a lot out there that don't admit.

I remember I was dating a girl when I lived in Ottawa and she happened to be a Lebanese and very traditional parents. She would have been 25, 26 at the time, same age I was and she wouldn't even tell her father that she was in fact dating because it was such a traditional family and she was 25 and she was just allowed to move out of her home then. So you could imagine what a traditional family it was. Anyway, her younger brother was gay and she told me this and I said: what about your father and didn't talk to him for two years when he admitted it and then finally he had to throw his hands up in the air and say: he's my son, I love him, what can I do. Anyway, I think as more of that happens, you might see things - hopefully we'll see things change.

Ray Malone: Just like to add one final comment, Mr. Chairman, if you would. People ask us how many gays and lesbians are there. And the accepted figure in the literature and research is 10 per cent. That's probably underscored but 10 per cent is the accepted figure. So if you have a school of 800 students you're going to have at least 80 students in that school who are gay and lesbian or bisexual transgender. If you're teaching a class of 30, you're going to have at least three students in your classroom that are gay and lesbian. Statistically speaking, right? Not in every classroom. But gays and lesbians have been so successful in hiding their identity and staying in the closet that we meet them every day, we work with them everyday, they're our neighbors and we don't even know it, and that's a pity because they cannot be who they are.

Pat Malone: And we lack productivity in our province because these people have to spend so much energy in keeping their own identity hidden that they're not as productive as they could be. Can you imagine not being able to talk about your own life, your relationships, your partner, what you did on the weekend or whatever, to everyone else? It is - we're being reduced in our productivity in this province because of our attitudes.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Our next presenter has not arrived, I understand. Sir, are you presenting?

Unidentified: No.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): You're not. Okay. So we can continue. Phillip.

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): Obviously, from your presentation as in others, the problem or however, you would view it I would expect, is in a small community as PEI, Thilak, when he presented, presented the same issue is to be different is difficult in a small community. Our society today tends to focus on the sameness as any child growing up. I remember my brother who wasn't - I was kind of fortunate that I played hockey and hockey was the thing to do in our community, so I was the same. He was interested in music so he wasn't the same. That was a challenge for him to carry as he was going through a community of - I mean we went to a two-room school. There was 25 in each school. Everybody knew everything and it was important to be - even though there was only 25 in Grades 4 to 8, it was very important to be part of that 25. If you didn't share the interest that everyone else shared, you were seen to have less value. It was just the reality that people endured.

I know having teenage children, as the pressure on them to be part of the group and be included is huge. Peer pressure is - and when you talk about people hiding their identity for whatever reason, is part of feeling the need to be included and it pushes us to do things that we wouldn't otherwise do. I think the smaller the community, the more challenging it is to be diverse in all senses because that's why people - for example, my sister-in-law who immigrated here from the Philippines, had a huge problem to live in a small rural community early - I mean she's well accepted now but it was difficult to be accepted in a small rural community and not being of white Anglo-Saxon descent.

I guess in some ways my colleague, Ms. MacDonald stressed and I think we are making progress, I really do. I think that the attitudes of my community are different than they were. I see people like my dad who is now 83 struggle with the changes in - but even at 83 he (Indistinct) changes. And certain things come out in the way he expresses himself that was the way that he expressed himself for 50 or 60 years that now when he does that it's very - it's like as soon as I hear it, whoa. But the intent of his heart is not the way that the person who hears it, because it was the way he was brought up and went to war and

lived in a small community and did business and was part of the school trustee and seeing things change.

So I guess, I hope that our committee looking at these issues and I think diversity will be a big part of what we will see in concerns around immigration and other issues. But I think while we are a small community and the Island way, there is goodwill at the bottom of it and I think we have to sometimes tap into people's goodness and their goodwill in trying to allow them to be open to other things because I think that's a core value that while we sometimes see it as a value that is the problem quite frankly, I think it is the value that will be a big part of the solution.

Ray Malone: A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, intolerance is intolerance is intolerance.

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): I don't disagree. I don't disagree, but when people don't understand a particular issue, they tend to express their ignorance and in the listener is the understanding of intolerance but at the root of it is a misunderstanding of the issue. And I think that as we try to educate we have to use the - because I believe in the goodness of people, I think we have to appeal to the goodness in the person who needs education to help them to understand that what we're saying is really what you believe in.

Ray Malone: And that's why Minister, I think that the education piece that we've recommended is so important because education is the answer, at least the beginning.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Well Pat and Ray, thank you very much for the very informative presentation that you've brought forward. I commend you for the wonderful work that you're doing in schools, especially in the area of awareness and you two are very caring individuals and I wish you luck in your endeavors.

Ray Malone: Thank you.

Part II - Susan Escoffery

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Next we have the presenter - the next presenter has arrived, Susan Escoffery is with us and I hope I pronounced her name correctly.

Susan Escoffery: It's quite close and I have been told many times it's not an Island name. That's one of the first comments I do hear.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Okay, very good. Welcome to the committee. You'll have 15 minutes for your presentation followed by about five minutes for committee members to ask you questions if you would be willing to answer those questions.

Susan Escoffery: Oh yeah.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): If you would maybe start off by giving us a brief background on yourself and then you can just get into your presentation.

Susan Escoffery: I welcome the chance to speak with you. I find this a very exciting avenue to be a part of and I do appreciate this opportunity. I grew up in Toronto. I was one of the grandchildren from away. My roots in PEI go back to the Annabella in 1770, but I have a unique perspective of also having one of the newest Canadians and newest residents of PEI. I am the adoptive parent of a three year old little girl from the People's Republic of China. So I have a vested interest in many of the multi cultural things that have been discussed. Being a part of, or growing up in Toronto, I know I was always exposed to many different backgrounds. My friends were mostly of different nationalities. They all spoke another first language at home of which I was quite envious. My own father actually is Welsh and he grew up at a time when Welsh was a forbidden language to be spoken so it became very important in his home to speak it. My mother is from Prince Edward Island.

I think that my perspective is possibly more geared towards the Chinese perspective because I've become sort of an honorary member of that community on Prince Edward Island. It's always been part of my life. I am, by profession a teacher. I spent many years in the school system in Ontario. I do have English as a second language. So this has been an awareness that I've had for quite a long time. Chinese awareness runs very deep. My daughter was 30 months at adoption, yet 10 ½ months later she still consistently gives her name as (Indistinct) Escoffery Emily. (Indistinct) I think her orphanage surname. She tells people that I am (Indistinct) Escoffery Susan. She addresses people she meets in the malls here

with (Indistinct) which is Chinese, only to people of Chinese origins or (Indistinct) which is goodbye which is about all she does remember because that's - language is something that unfortunately does disappear very quickly.

She's very, very aware of her Chinese background even though she is only turning 3½. She loves the smells; she loves the culture; she loves anything to do with China and every night in her prayers, she blesses (Indistinct) which was her nanny in China and she blessed China, is what she always finishes off with. This is something that has come from within her, not something we have told her to do.

I think that immigration to Prince Edward Island is two-fold. Families have to feel comfortable that their children will be supported, that they will be supported. I'm sorry I didn't hear the previous presentation so I'm not quite sure - I probably might go over some other things that have already been discussed. I think that people have to feel that they can participate fully in a community without being marginalized, but a community must also be receptive to opening their doors to others who have no roots in PEI and might have cultural and ethnic differences. It's widely known that if you're not born here you're from away. That's something that - I have three older kids at UPEI who have been to school most of their years in PEI but they're still very aware that it takes a lot more than living here most of your life to be a true Islander.

Historically, without a strong economy and job opportunities, there is suspicion and less acceptance of a newcomer and this is something that certainly was true in many parts of Europe throughout modern history and visible ethnic or religious differences are certainly something that might be scapegoated, maybe not intentionally, but it is something that does happen. Many of the new immigrants coming to Canada are highly educated so they will be in skilled well paying jobs. The reality of PEI, if you listen to the job line and I've been here 13 years, is there are very few jobs that aren't minimum wage, that aren't service jobs. It's very competitive for these jobs no matter what you're level of education. I also heard through one of the communities down here that 80 per cent of newcomers leave within six months. To me, that's quite a high number.

Just as an example. My parents had a doctor in Summerside whose wife wore the head scarf. They did leave very shortly after they came here and he told my mother that his wife experienced quite a lot of bad feelings from the community. I think part of this is just that it's new, I don't think people intentionally mean to be unkind, but I think exposure and education are certainly keys to helping newcomers feel accepted and to helping others accept them into the community.

Another problem in Prince Edward Island is because we've had so few newcomers whose first language is not English, that there is not an established English as a second language system in our schools. This is something that I tried to find out about for myself personally and professionally. There are no ESL courses given at UPEI in the teachers program which is quite different from all the other provinces. There are no established ESL programs within the school system here. There is some tutoring, it's maybe an hour a day. The wages paid to the tutor is \$10 an hour so I'm assuming that most of these tutors are not certified teachers. Teaching ESL is very different from being a resource teacher, it's very different from being a resource teacher, it is very different from being a French Immersion teacher. It encompasses an entire group of realities, experiences and I think instilling a pride in the children who come to our school system.

I've heard that students even who are not visible minorities that come to Prince Edward Island do have difficulty in some of the schools here. I know for instance there is a young boy, I think he's in junior high, whose first language is Spanish who has had a great deal of difficulty fitting in. There was a case in our local high school of a little girl who's mother worked on the Emily Show. Now this child happened to be of Jewish background. Some of the boys picked up on this and told her that all Jews should have died in the Holocaust. Now they did not know what a Jewish person was but this was something they were repeating.

Our principal, to her credit, immediately took the boys under her control and showed them a film on the Holocaust. Well at the end of this film the boys were all crying and apologizing profusely. They had no idea what they were saying, they had no idea what it was about and I think it really was an eye opener to them. These were good boys. These boys came from good families whose

parents would have been mortified I'm sure, if they had realized what had been going on. It was done totally out of a lack of knowledge of what they were actually doing and the impact to this child who had grown up in Montreal surrounded by probably family history, perhaps having lost great-grandparents, grandparents in Europe, which was the case of many of my friends. So I think I'm also a little more sensitive and my children as well, they've always gravitated to the international students because this is what they're comfortable with; this is what they knew growing up.

We moved here from Markham, Ontario and home of Pacific Mall and large population of new Canadians from China and Hong Kong. So this is something we're very familiar with. In the Chinese community, culture and heritage is very important. I think that anyone coming to Canada would want to see a continuation of this. One of the issues in the Chinese community here is that the children do not want to continue speaking their first language. They feel embarrassed. They refuse to speak it at home quite often and the families are trying very hard to establish some kind of language program. It's difficult because new immigrants are often working very hard in their jobs. They don't have extra time and yet this is something that's important to them and I think that they fear that their children will lose this culture that is hundreds of thousands of years old. I think that is something that PEI could be very innovative in certain areas in Canada such as Calgary, Edmonton. They have established Mandarin Immersion Programs. Now China is one of the biggest or the biggest trading countries in the world. These programs are not just for children of Chinese origin, they are for children of all backgrounds.

As an example of the interest in these types of courses, I am currently taking Mandarin classes at Holland College. The program was full almost as soon as it was established. There was a waiting list and people phoning the day the course started to see if there were anymore openings. Holland College has a number of programs running in China. I've heard that UPEI is establishing a campus in China.

So I think there is a wonderful opportunity here to provide services, not only for the people who are coming so that they feel they can continue that part of their children's lives while becoming Canadians, but also for people here to establish

educational tools that they can take with them to China, to other countries where Mandarin is spoken. In Canada, Mandarin is the third most spoken language after English and French. I've heard that recently that there are one million Chinese Canadians in Canada right now. So it is a huge community to tap into.

One of the problems with PEI that I discovered as I was doing sponsorship forms to adopt my daughter, is that Prince Edward Island is not differentiated from Ontario in terms of expected income of people sponsoring their families. Now in many countries, extended families are an integral part of the family. Grandparents help to look after the children and wages in Prince Edward Island are quite low. There used to be a difference. It used to be that rural areas and urban areas had different income levels that the parents or sponsoring families had to achieve. It has now been leveled. There is a three-year wait. Even if you meet the income requirements to bring your family to Canada which, in many cases with elderly parents is too long.

Now I realize that's part of the federal mandate. I think that there has to be some appreciation that a province such as Prince Edward Island does not have the same types of jobs and the wages are not the same. Many families perhaps leave because they realize they cannot bring their extended families to Prince Edward Island.

Basically that's about it. I have to admit hearing about the swarmings of the Ko's restaurant has made me very nervous because I do have a little girl and hopefully I will have a second child at some point that will be entering the school system here. We have been met with nothing but welcomes and acceptance. I think the people of Prince Edward Island are very, very open to people coming. I think that it's a matter of educating children in the schools, educating parents.

One example, there is a family where I live whose children speak Cantonese at home. They may have been born in Canada but this is very common. That is their first language. I was approached by one of the teachers of these children in kindergarten and with the comments that it was too bad that the parents would not speak English to them because they were not acquiring English the way they should be. I think

it's not that this person meant to be making a comment that it was a little more detail than that, that was almost racist. But she did not understand that people have a right to their first language. This is part of who they are. Not everybody comes from a background that is English or French. Parents who speak another language often do not want to model incorrect grammar for their children. They want to fit in. I think they are the very ones that will not speak out and I think other people perhaps have to speak for them.

I think there has to be more support in schools for children and an understanding that children may be born in Canada but still not be proficient in English because, until they have started school they are speaking a different language. These are all things I think that can be addressed. Learning about children in other lands is fine in the schools, but I think we have to learn about different ethnicities in Canada as well and how it applies to the Canadian community. I think that's something that as more families come to the Island it will certainly bring more opportunities for this. But I think education definitely is the key for a lot of people, for the children especially.

There have been a number of examples that I'm aware of where children have been singled out and had very unhappy experiences with name calling and racial slurs thrown at them. I know it is not done out of cruelty or even racism, I think it is done out of ignorance of what this does to another human being. That people basically I know - the themes in most Toronto schools are all about me and how we are all the same. I think that's something that perhaps hasn't been necessary up till now on the Island, but certainly with the number of families, even families adopting children, the numbers are growing incredibly and I hope that my daughter will be able to grow up here feeling good about who she is as well as being a new Canadian.

Thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Thank you very much, Susan. I have friends who have adopted a child from China as of recent. It seems to be quite popular now, more so today, than it was in the past. Do you know how much adoption is taking place from China as far as Prince Edward Island goes?

Susan Escoffery: On the Island we have about 16 families. There are more families in process right now. There has been actually quite an upswing on the number of adoptions. I think there has probably been about half a dozen within the last year and a half. The numbers are definitely growing. The children that come, do wonderfully. They are very loved where they are in China. China has a one child policy. So if the child has a minor special need that the parents do not have medical - money for medical care which despite being a communist country, medical care is not free in China, the parents do pay for it. Often a cleft surgery might be a year's salary and families can just not afford it.

The word for abandonment in Chinese is left to be found. These are not children that are thrown away, these are children that are carefully left and watched until they are found. Girls in China unfortunately, do not have the best outcome. Boys in China in orphanages do not have a family name. Family is everything. They often have the hardest time despite the fact that boys are the preferred sex because they look after the parents. They don't have the social nest that we have here.

These are children that are carefully left and watched till they are found. Girls in China unfortunately do not have the best outcome. Boys in China in orphanages do not have a family name. Family is everything. They often have the hardest time. Despite the fact that boys are the preferred sex. Because they look after the parent, they don't have the social nest that we have here. There will be a little nine-year old girl coming shortly that will need services, certainly in ESL. The international student community at UPEI has rallied around this family and is going to provide mentoring to this child as she settles into PEI.

She's the oldest child that has come - my daughter at two and half was the oldest child that had come until this year or last year. And these children do wonderfully. My daughter is already quite fluent despite some ESL mistakes she makes and she loves Prince Edward Island, but as I said, she's very aware of her heritage as well and part of the agreement adopting parents make with China is that they will maintain the child's heritage and part of the six and 12 month update includes how you are including the child in the community, the Chinese community and maintaining this.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Thank you, Susan.

Excuse me. We'll carry on with the questions from committee members in order of Intention. Eva.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): I was wondering of the 16 families that have just adopted children from China, are they more in one area where they can connect on a regular basis or are they spread out across the province which makes it -

Susan Escoffery: We do connect. We have get together. We're trying to integrate some of our get together with the Chinese communities such as Chinese New Year. Most of the families are centered in the Charlottetown area but I'm in - outside Kensington, there are Summerside families and O'Leary, Alberton.

In Prince Edward Island the beauty of it is that we are so compact that it's quite easy to travel -

Eva Rodgeron (PC): To organize.

Susan Escoffery: - and organize in different get together for the children. And we do have an internet group which is - I don't know what we did with international adoption without the internet. So -

Eva Rodgeron (PC): So is there anything in regards to, like when you are adopting a child from China, is there anything you see here as roadblocks from our point of view?

Susan Escoffery: I think there is a great fear on part of the Island with regards to having older children adopted. There are restrictions as to age in certain provinces. Now Prince Edward Island has allowed a nine year-old to be coming which I think is wonderfully open-minded because Ontario blocks them at three or five. The older children know what is going on. They very much want families. Children in China are usually in an orphanage from a very young age. It's a very stable environment. They are not taken from an abusive homes and most of them do extremely well.

So that is something I do hope will change. That there will be more openness to accepting perhaps some of the older children who could also lend their experiences and their language skills to some of the younger children as well and help maintain that. That's my biggest disappointment for my daughter. It's very important even at three and

half, to her that she maintains some of her language skills and for a year now, we've been trying to put something in place and it's been next to impossible and she basically has lost her first language which she's very aware of.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): And the older children would be a great asset in helping to retain that language if you had help.

Susan Escoffery: I agree and I think involving the community and involving the international students I think - the Taiwanese community on the Island has been wonderfully welcoming.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): So what is their rationality behind not allowing children from age three up.

Susan Escoffery: I think the belief is that there may be disruption in the adoptions and they will end up in the system. Some of the earlier adoptions from Eastern Europe where children came from a very different background had unfortunate outbursts. With the Chinese adoption this is almost unheard of. It does happen very, very rarely, but generally now the orphanages having changed a lot of their policies and more money from outside sources going into them. This is not the usual outcome. Usually the children do extremely well.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Philip.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): I'm glad to see your presentation, Susan, and the way that you inform us about the challenges there. I think what we have to hear is how to make the process more open and accessible to people that want to engage themselves. The challenge, of course, we all know is especially when you get into adoption is the legitimacy of the process because we know in some countries, the children are almost sold or could be into this process and you have to be -

Susan Escoffery: And that's why I think China is so popular. It's run completely by their government, the Chinese Centre for Adoption Affairs. All these children are bonafide abandoned children. There is an attempt made to find the parents. They have finding ads. The children are a little older. Usually the youngest babies are about a year or more. But it's a very well run, very legitimate process and I think that's why it runs so smoothly. I think that is the number one country

that Canadians do adopt from. And there are large numbers. Their numbers are increasing all across Canada. And it's wonderful. There's a number of Maritime families in all the Maritime provinces that are bringing home these wonderful children who just bring so much joy not only to the families, but I know my daughter to the whole community because she's so outgoing and so friendly and a real ambassadors for adoption.

She was actually considered a special needs child because she was born with a birthmark. That's now gone. China has a very different way of categorizing their children. This again is cultural. But Canadian families are more than willing to take on these children.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): I can tell. She's certainly has brought a lot of joy to your face.

Susan Escoffery: Oh she certainly has. Especially and China actually really appreciates older parents which is -

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): - in that category.

Susan Escoffery: I have three children in university. So it's just been absolutely a wonderful experience and I really hoping to go through it a second time. And the Chinese community here has just been wonderful. I know we've had tea at the President of the Chinese Association house. My daughter has been welcomed right into the community and they've decided to make it their mandate to try and help her maintain her mandarin.

I don't know how well it's going to work but I think according to STATS Canada the Chinese community is the community least likely to intermarry. Japanese is the most. I think part of that is just sheer numbers. There are a lot of families of Chinese origin within Canada. But it's a very proud culture, it's a very old culture. And again people do not have to give up their culture to be good Canadians or to be true Canadians and I think that's something growing up in Toronto was always very much a part of my life and my outlook and my friend's outlooks and my daughter tells everybody she's Canadian. But she's also Chinese and that's something that is just a part of who she is.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Now we have a quick question from Eva.

Eva Rodgerson (PC): Yes, you talked about older parents adopting. Now I know I've come across even parents wanting to adopt here within the province that once they become a certain age, they're not looked upon very favourably as or not allowed. So when you talk about older parents been looked at in a more favourable way in adopting children.

Susan Escoffery: The guidelines for China are: you have to be minimum of 30, it used to be 35. The maximum age on the books is 55 for couples, it's 49 for singles unless it's a waiting child which is a special needs child and which case it's 55.

The agencies in Canada are basically a non profit. They're run for the children. And there are some - you can get around the guidelines somewhat. The provinces, such as Prince Edward Island did have some difficulty because they don't have the experiences. In the States certainly things are a little bit more liberal. I think because it's a newer process in Canada, people want to make sure that it's done legitimately and but those 55 is the guideline and there are couples of 55 that are adopting quite young children and the children do well.

I think the rational is it's better for a child to be raised in a family even if they are older, instead in a community rather than spend their life in an orphanage and at 14 or 15 be turned out. Because in China without a family name, they really have very little status and it's not done out of cruelty again, it's cultural and I think you have to understand so much that there are cultural differences we have to respect as Canadians and we can't impose our own values onto people with other backgrounds and I think that's something that I learned when I took my SL course, certainly learned dealing with students, a parent's idea, unless it constitutes as abuse. Saving face in a nation family is very important. If people interfere, it can destroy a family.

There's just a lot of things we have to be sensitive to that just comes out of education and experience and I think people in Prince Edward Island genuinely do care. I think the uproar over what's

been going on at the Noodle House is evidence of that. I'm not even sure that it's racially motivated. Although I think it's become that way. I know my own daughter walking to Browns Court with her friend, a couple of weeks ago, was pelted with snowballs by some junior high kids who had no respect for what they were doing.

So I think that there's definitely a problem here. It's probably a twofold problem. Unfortunately the Ko's have been the recipients of some of this which is very unfortunate and very sad because I have met them. They've met my daughter and they are wonderful people, very friendly, very welcoming.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Okay. Well thank you very much, Susan. We appreciate the presentation that you've brought forward. The adoption of a Chinese girl was a wonderful experience for you. You're physically beaming with pride and we wish you luck.

Susan Escoffery: Thank you very much. Thank you for allowing me to speak..

Part III - Harry Baglole

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Very good. The next presenter is Mr. Harry Baglole. Good morning, Mr. Baglole.

Harry Baglole: Good morning, Mr. Arsenault. How are you?

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: I'm fine thank you. Mr. Baglole, your reputation is well known across the Island, but if you would still give us a brief background on yourself, you can then proceed with your presentation.

Harry Baglole: Okay.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: You have 15 minutes or so for the presentation, give or take I guess and then we would like to invite committee members to ask questions and if you'll be kind enough to answer some of the questions we'll have. We'll proceed in that fashion. So the floor is yours, Mr. Baglole.

Harry Baglole: Thank you very much.

I have some copies of my presentation. They are just being circulated so -

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): It's well appreciated. (Indistinct)

Harry Baglole: How far up west are we going?

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Mr. Baglole, -

Harry Baglole: Well I grew up in Summerside, but I was conceived in Northam so -.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: We maybe short of a couple of presentations -

Harry Baglole: Are we short? No, I have extras.

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Is that it? We're covered.

Harry Baglole: Well just on my background, I was born in the Summerside hospital, grew up on a family farm in Wilmot and went to university off Island, a couple of different universities and specialized in PEI history actually in Memorial University. Went to the University of Alberta for education. I worked in Africa for two years with CUSO, in rural Africa. And then came back to the Island in 1972 and since then I've been involved in Island culture, writing. I started Ragweed Press and the Island Magazine and I was the founding Director of the Institute of Island Studies. And I'm now working with a few partners in a little company called The Irish Group so I can pass out cards and solicit business sometime at the end of the day. So with that I will proceed then.

"We no longer think as immigration as a gate-keeping function, but as a talent-attraction function necessary for economic growth." The speaker is Pete Hodgson, New Zealand's Minister for Research . Thus does the mandate and work of your committee fit snugly within the looming reality of the global economy. In fact, the so-called "global economy" is not so much something new, as something which is a lot more "in our faces" than ever before.

Mr. Chair, members of the Standing Committee, I shall begin by thanking you for the opportunity to appear before you this morning. I don't think I have much which is too new or startling to say, just some random thoughts and observations, the result of a long-time, really life-time interest in public policy, especially the social economic cultural policy of Prince Edward Island. I've also

had the experience relevant, I think, of having lived for two years as part of a very small, a very visible white minority in rural Africa. I speak to you as a private individual representing no institution, organization, or group, thank God! I've done that, too much.

Over the past couple of weeks, while I've been mulling over this presentation, the news has seemed suddenly full of relevant stories and articles about immigration to Canada - perhaps more a phenomenon of my research focus than of coincidence. In the *Globe and Mail* I read where within a decade or two, light-skinned people, like most of us here today will become the new "visible minorities" in large Canadian cities like Vancouver and Toronto. This being the case, editorial writers were suggesting that the term "visible minority" should be scrapped as no longer relevant or useful. Here on the Island, folks were perhaps a bit belatedly waxing indignant about the ongoing harassment by groups of students of the owner-operators of a local Chinese restaurant. The upshot of this is that we are likely to lose one of the very best dining places on the Island, where I'm having lunch after this. One of my favorite memories of the Noodle House is a fortune cookie which proclaimed solemnly, "You like Chinese food".

All of this or much of this was put nicely into perspective in an article by Christopher Dreher in last Saturday's *Globe and Mail*. "Will the brain drain back up?" the headline asks: the place it might "back up" to is Canada and here's the article. It shows a rather belligerent looking cowboy representing the United States with his gun, who just shot himself in the foot. I'll describe that but - I'll leave this with you. I think it's very interesting and a couple of the books that he writes about seems very pertinent actually.

The place it might back up to is Canada. The article is a commentary on two books by the American author Richard Florida. The first, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, was published in 2002; the second forthcoming, will be titled *The Flight of the Creative Class, the New Global Competition for Talent*. In summary, Florida suggests that American cities should transform themselves into tolerant meccas of culture and art. He cites three T's as being key to economic success - technology, talent and tolerance. These would help provide a diverse, culturally deep ambience to

attract members of the U.S.'s new 37 million strong Creative Class, the artists, writers, doctors, scientists, software developers and engineers *et cetera* who can help a city to flourish, thanks to high tech start ups, tourism and other means of growth.

In his new book, Richard Florida argues that the United States, especially in the post 9/11 mood of intolerance and suspicion of immigrants, is in danger of falling behind in this international search for creative talent. In fact, some Canadian cities are now doing relatively better than their counterparts south of the border. And this is the case also with students coming into our Canadian universities. There's a much higher - much more competition for international students and people at the very highest level. There's been quite a difference.

Florida says his model can be applied to whole countries, like Ireland, which leads the world in a global ranking of the percentage of workers in the creative class. But what about provinces? What about Islands? What about us?

The next section - population strategy. Five years ago, the Institute of Island Studies produced for the Province a major report (over 200 pages) entitled *A Place to Stay? The report of the Prince Edward Island Population Strategy '99 Panel*. I have just reread that document and I want to draw your attention to parts of it, including the very fine research essay in Appendix 3: *Population and Demographic trends on Prince Edward Island* by Wendy MacDonald.

You are all probably familiar with that and certainly that essay does summarize why we have to be concerned because we are very quickly coming into an area where there are time when the population is predicted to decline and where the demographic of age is rising and there just won't be enough younger people working - working people to take care of everyone else.

I should confess here that I had a hand in producing the *Population Strategy*. And I admit that it is a long and somewhat unwieldy document, with perhaps too many recommendations and not enough focus on how to attract newcomers. Still, I think that the report is a fine foundation to build on.

In particular, I like the overall emphasis in the Population Strategy on Quality of Life; that is on creating the best possible quality of life for all Islanders, both long time residents and potential newcomers. For unless we strive for the very highest standards in education, environmental quality, health care and community living, we are not going to be able to retain our own population much less out compete the many other jurisdictions on the hunt for creative and hardworking newcomers. Thus we should cringe not only when the media relates stories of the abuse of visible minorities but also when there are accounts of fish-kills or articles about the poor results, lowest in Canada, achieved by our students in international performance test.

Here are some other points made by the Population strategy that emphasis should be put on understanding and augmenting existing, natural population flows that priority be placed on measures to sustain and foster PEI's Acadian and Francophone community as an integral part of the Island's culture, society and economy. Certainly the facility with the French languages is very, very important for prosperity and other languages. That ways be found to include youth more actively and formally in community and economic activities. We need to engage our young people at the highest level. Make them feel part of this society and community. That local communities be much more involved in the process of recruiting, welcoming and retaining international immigrants. And there's a very fine article I think you have seen by Tom Denton, called Are You Ready for Regionalization. I think it was part of Kevin Arsenault's presentation and he goes into that very nicely - what they're doing in Manitoba. And that priority be given to encouraging and expansion in niche and speciality agriculture, including attracting specialists in this area as a priority group for in-migration. And I think this is very important.

Finally, here are a couple of very pertinent and suggestive statistics cited in the report. According to the 1996 Census, almost 47,500 people born on the Island were living in other parts of Canada and this is an amazing number. Almost a third of our total population suggest, of course, the strategy for attracting, identifying and trying to attract these people, some of them or many of them back to the Island after they've achieved experience elsewhere. Particularly useful I think.

While, and this I think is really amazing to me, 24,600 Islanders, people who are Islanders or who were Islanders in 1996 were born in other parts of the country, so almost 25,000 people living on the Island came from other parts of the country. I don't think we are aware, most of us, just how much coming and going there is. Who are these people? When and why did they come? What sort of work do they do? How can we attract more? This is an amazing statistic and I think this is one of the major building blocks really here into one of the major insights. I see a need for more research, leading to several sound policy initiatives.

Next section - A Lapse into History as an historian - this is a weakness of mine, but bare with me for a few minutes. I have a tendency to think of the future in terms of the past. Thus I sometimes look ahead through history. I promise, though, that this section will be brief.

It's a simple truism to state that all Islanders or their ancestors or our ancestors were immigrants. Even the aboriginal peoples came originally from Asia. I have no intention of presenting an overview of the immigration history of the Island, just to take a brief look at a few cases, by way of illustration.

Lord Selkirk has a special place in the settler history of Prince Edward Island. Not only did he bring out the largest group of immigrants at one time, 800 Scots in 1803 but he did so expressly in order to demonstrate his theories about assisted migration. He was a very fine scholar, a great politician of his time and he was seeing what was happening in the Highlands and he was saying these people are going to leave anyway. Why don't we try and bring them to a British Colonies than they are going to the United States where they might be enemies, so he - this whole initiative to bring immigrants here was - for him he was demonstrating how it could be done and what the results could be. So he was really a model, a test project. It wasn't an act of pure philanthropy. In fact he wrote a book about it. The book is Immigration and the State of Highland in Scotland and published, I think, in 1805.

Although Selkirk himself organized the whole venture from recruiting the settlers to providing for their passage, he insisted that the immigrants pay their own way and purchase their own land. He put great emphasis on these people retaining their proud sense of independence. He absolutely

refused to give them free land. He said they'll value it more if they buy it from me. He also predicted that his settlement would have what modern day theorists call an "echo effect". If the pioneers did well, they would write home convincing neighbours and relatives to join them. And it's a fact that for half a century after the Polly arrived in Belfast, Prince Edward Island was the favourite destination for Skye people traveling to the New World. This continued for several generations and Selkirk was only involved in that one venture.

One particular group of Island settlers were very definitely involuntary pioneers. I refer to the Black slaves who accompanied the early Government officials, after 1770 and the Loyalists in 1774 - 75, 1785 rather. The prejudice they faced was extreme. In one particularly odious incident, two Black brothers were hanged for the theft of a small amount of money and a little bit of food. Over the years, this indigenous Black community became almost invisible, through out-migration and assimilation through inter-marriage.

Until very recently, the very fact that such a community ever existed and that some of the ancestors still lived among us as neighbours, was very scrupulously swept under the proverbial rug. But there's been progress. A new organization has now emerged, the Black Islanders Co-op which will help us to reclaim this part of our history. And these people are very diligently tracing out their ancestors and taking great pride in finding both those links with these involuntary settlers.

Recently, my own sons have been delighted to learn that they like thousands of other previously unsuspecting Islanders might have a little tinge of Black blood flowing through their veins. This is much more interesting, they think than boring old White Anglo Saxon. So I think this is encouraging that a new generation sees this diversity as interesting and nothing - something to be rather proud of.

In terms of a provincial Population Strategy, one of the most interesting groups of immigrants is the Lebanese, who began to appear on the Island in the late 19th century. Although they certainly faced prejudice and much hardship at first, they adapted rather brilliantly, perhaps by affecting invisibility. This has been a small but highly successful group, with members of the second and third generations

achieving the very highest offices in the Province. Moreover, the "echo effect" has continued pretty well to the present time, with new Lebanese immigrants continuing to arrive and apparently, to be welcomed into the existing family networks. I'm not really aware how many people are still coming and if these networks are still strong.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct)

Harry Baglole: as before, is that right?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct)

Harry Baglole: Well this may be a very excellent route to build on the communities and networks that are here and this seems to be a very strong strategy. Are there general lessons to be learned from this? Are there ways to augment this natural migration phenomenon?. In the 20th Century, the period between the Sixties and Seventies was one of particular migration of vitality. Although many of our educated young people continue to leave the Island, there are also numerous fascinating new arrivals on our shores.

Many of these new Islanders came to work for government, attracted by the financial largesse of the Development Plan. Many though were attracted by the beauty and promises it plays, the quality of life, to use a controversial phrase. Some see our quality of life as wonderful, others see it as based on welfare, handouts and whatever. Some of these people were refugees from the cities or the Vietnam War draft or the materialism of the middle-class North American life style. Many were artists, especially visual artists and crafts people and writers. They brought with them a flowering of important aspects of Island cultural life which continues to the present time. Others were attracted by the new age thinking which surrounded the experiment of "the Ark" and the Institute of Man and Resources.

For a heady decade or so, Prince Edward Island was among the world leaders in the search for sustainable technologies and lifestyles. Many of these people also are still here, greying now, some retired, but all perhaps hoping that the search for the Holy Grail of sustainability may one day again be resumed on these shores.

This last category of immigrants, the artists, the New Age settlers attracted by a vision of place. It

fits to a tee the description of the creative classes formulated by Richard Florida. Now, I don't know how I'm doing on time but I think I got four or five minutes left. I don't want to hurt the reputation of West Prince by being too long-winded.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct) Just hope he doesn't ask a question, you can have an extra ten minutes.

Harry Baglole: Well your program is a bit ahead today so I got a little bit of time to fall back on. Leaving you with a few general thoughts, perhaps even one or two recommendations. If I've organized this little essay skillfully, much of what I proposed below flows from what I've outlined above.

For the purposes of a population strategy, the general word "settler" might be more useful than immigrant. For even when attracting people from other countries we intend that they settle down and live among us. I confess that I have a love/hate relationship with a democratic complacency of Islanders. I'm one of the many generations back so I feel that I should have the privilege of criticizing us. We are inclusive to a fault. If we are to be successful in attracting settlers of the creative class, then we must aspire to the best, the highest standards. Instead of making excuses for mediocrity, we should be insisting that our education results be among the best in the country and the world. The same goes for our environmental standards and so on.

More than just aiming for excellence, I think we should seek originality, being the first to do things, gaining a reputation for daring and creativity. Perhaps there is something lingering from the Sixties and Seventies that can be built on - the era of the Ark and the rural renaissance. Prince Edward Island maybe just the place, a creative small Island jurisdiction to take the lead in models for sustainable living. Premier Binns and Minister Ballem seem to have a sense of this with the government's recent increasing emphasis on renewable energy.

Another major opportunity for Islanders, one under our very noses, is to be a pioneering North American jurisdiction for electoral reform. I get to beat a few of my drums here. Most Canadian provinces, including the three largest, are now actively looking at alternative models. I urge all

members of the Island Legislature to support the creative new model of MPP (Mixed Member Proportional) as recommended by former Chief Justice Carruthers in his fine report. I don't think we should think of Mr. Carruthers as a daring wild radical who doesn't know what might work on PEI. This is a very - a man with great -

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): (Indistinct) Conservative.

Harry Baglole: Well he is - he has been known to be - he probably once moved in Conservative circles but he's now joined the two enlightened.

One feature of MPP makes it especially attractive for a jurisdiction seeking more overseas immigrants, it tends to be more representative of women and racial minorities. And I was really - I guess to be blunt, a bit shocked when the Electoral Reform Committee was set up with eight people, only two women. I thought that with a committee that was looking at the fairest possible system that in its makeup, it should be fair as well. So anyway, the group got involved with integral accounts as expressed itself publically on that issue.

I get a little bit visionary and sort of pretty radical here perhaps. In the 19th Century, our provincial government took the lead in helping to secure land for the settlers. It purchased large estates from the absentee proprietors, then resold the land at cost to the actual farmers. We might think of doing something like that again. The day may soon come, I think it may come sooner than a lot of us realize, when citizens may be clamoring for a cap that's more like 50,000 acres on potatoes and 100,000 acres is just - I just don't think 100,000 acres is sustainable. Fifty-thousand acres is more our traditional base for crop rotations and environmental reasons, soil retention and so on. This would free up 100,000 acres or so which- let's think that could be sold in small farms to new settlers who are going to apply new knowledge, new technology, new ways of growing food for niche markets. It could be something, could be a very attractive place for this sort of thing and could be a way to look for new people coming in.

We could be like Lord Selkirk, we'd have to sell them the land and we'd have to provide the environment and encourage them to be self sustainable and have PEI as a place known internationally for this sort of creative thing.

Anyway, I say stranger things have happened.

In conclusion, I look forward to the day when we live in a more racially diverse Island and more reflective of our country and the world and in the mainstream of innovation and creative living. An Island moreover - and here I get my last kick in at what one of my favorite things, where the landscape is treasured and protected for its own particular glory. Really our landscape is one of our very greatest resources and we're doing very little to protect it at the present time.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chair and committee members.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Thank you very much, Mr. Baglole. It was a very well put together presentation. We'll open the floor to questions from the committee members. So do we have a first question? Phillip.

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): I think it would be more comments. Certainly I appreciate your presentation this morning, Harry. There is a lot of food for thought, whether it be land protection or mixed member representation. I appreciate you challenging us as a committee with many of those issues because I think when we look at this area it is really about challenging common held thoughts and might I say, even belief, that the so-called Island way is somehow attached to a status quo which when we acknowledge from a personal point of view, our personal status quo is always changing. So there is no such thing as a status quo and still we have this vaguely held belief that there is some sort of a time when all was right. But -

Harry Baglole: It was always in the past though.

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): - it was always in the past. And we weren't really sure what part of the past. So I believe like you, that we're all immigrants, it just depends what generation in the province and we share mutual identity by seeing it around us, I guess. Our - on a go forward basis, our strength will be how we built that community in all of its difference to the future, not to that status quo in the past. I think the Institute of Island Studies has been very good for this province and I commend you on that work. I'll take one of your cards after.

Richard Brown (L): Yeah, he's got a million dollars.

Harry Baglole: I'll give you two or three if you want. (Laughter)

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): (Indistinct)

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Eva has a question.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): It's more of a comment, I liked your idea of the word settlers opposed to immigrant. It seems to be although a more permanent nature. I read your study as well. Committee members had got it back here awhile ago and I really felt you zeroed in on education and environmental standards. Listening to a survey that's been done by scientists around the world last night and look at what we're doing around the world to our environment. Every day we talk about it and we're trying to make little inroads here and there but it's a pretty scary thing when we see what's happening right around the whole globe.

Harry Baglole: Sometimes a small Island can be used as a model for new things. I guess I see it, I mean we're a very small province and a lot of people - see Garth Staples is beating the old maritime union drum in the paper. I thought people had given up on that. But having our own jurisdiction is so very important for us. It's just an opportunity to do something which is quite original and new. I think it really justifies our being a Canadian - I think for the long foreseeable future we're going to require - continue to require some support from other provinces, the federal government. We don't have the oil say, of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland for example. To justify that, I think we should be a place for new things are done; new models are tried out and we justify our existence partly by our creativity and doing things that others can learn from.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): Well I liked your last paragraph there. I had an opportunity to meet with some of the Dutch families.

Harry Baglole: Yes. This is another very good example.

Eva Rodgeron (PC): So anyway, I thought it was very interesting and I enjoyed your presentation.

Harry Baglole: And the Premier and Mr. Ballem are looking for some more Dutch immigrants. But that's another good - I think it's a really good idea if we can build on the networks that are already here. We have to of course attract new people as well. But with the networks that are here, I think it's very useful, very constructive.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): The next question will come from Robert.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): Thank you. A great presentation. Just a lapse into history here. I almost feel like a test case.

Harry Baglole: Yes, give you a testimony.

Hon. Robert Ghiz (L): I've mentioned it before but you know you talk about Lord Selkirk, well I was a direct descendant from there and then you talk about the Lebanese and I guess a direct descendant from there as well. It's interesting how today, for me it's much easier. I've been invited to speak to Scottish Settlers meetings or anniversaries and I'm invited to one this summer in Brudenell. At the same time, I get invited to speak over in Halifax to like the 50th Anniversary of Lebanese independents a couple of years ago in Halifax. So both sides I seem to be involved in. But there still is some prejudice that goes on even today. I know myself, I can probably even be considered somewhat guilty of it.

I know when I first got into politics, probably one of my main people helping to organize for me was a good friend of mine who is a lawyer here in Charlottetown, his name is Bill Dow. He is also of Lebanese decent. I didn't name him exactly on my campaign committee. Maybe we did it for whatever reasons. Maybe in the back of my mind I didn't want people to see two Lebanese people together. I've heard different little rumblings that are still out there. But let me just say for me it's a joy and I think people before me paved the way to make it easier for today.

But if we talk about bringing new immigrants here today and you talk about some of the - it wasn't easy for the original immigrants who came here, whether or not it's Lebanese, whether or not it's Asian, whether or not it's African, you name it. How do we create an environment today in Prince Edward Island so that we are known as the most tolerant area? For example right now, there is a

lot of people that go to the big cities because they know they can fall into their own community and at least they have that protection of their own community there. But is there a way or suggestion that we can kind of make it in Prince Edward Island so that for example, a group of people that want to come here, they don't have to go through those difficult stages to get to the good stages later on where they can just fall right into the acceptable stages. Do you have any suggestions on that, learning through history perhaps or?

Harry Baglole: I think some really hard work thinking it out and coming up with making sure that the people are welcome. I think talking to people who come here recently and finding out their experience and the most visible minorities coming here now will be African students and people from Africa. So find out from them how they find it. I think we have to look at our education system. I think a lot of aspects of Island life are reaching out. It would be nice to see more people, more immigrants, more people, more visible minorities if we can still use that word. Dark skinned people in the Legislature or in - prominent in public life that this would model. I think that's a good thing to do.

I think that to get communities involved is a very good thing too. Quite often we see communities and church groups getting involved in sponsoring students or people from Africa or refugees and that sort of thing. So I think we have to reach out right across the Island to get people coming to all parts of the Island. But they're going to have to be very well looked after and made to feel at home. This Island hospitality we all talk about is going to have to be put to the test.

I think our Island way of life, instead of always looking to it in the past, maybe we should put it in the future and aspire toward the - put the idea before us rather than behind us. But I think diversity and tolerance should certainly be part of it and we've always prided ourselves on our hospitality and it has been a very hospitable place. But I've lived in other hospitable places, Newfoundland, for a few years. A wonderful, wonderful place but I certainly felt like an outsider because people had their networks, their friends and traditions. If you weren't a member of someone's family then you were stuck in with the university crowd who were - people even called me a mainlander there. I was really disgusted with that. If you're from outside Newfoundland, you're

from the mainland.

So I don't have any particular or anything creative new idea but I think it's just going to take a lot of hard work and a lot of thought and effort on part of the whole society and that has to be it. We have to have a vision for the whole society of what we want PEI to be and really - a lot of this has to come from our political and other leaders to set the priorities and really set the idea and go toward it.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Well, Mr. Baglole, thank you very much for the very articulate presentation.

Harry Baglole: Thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Your involvement in the Institute of Island Studies is highly respectable and keep up the good work.

Harry Baglole: Thank you very much. It's been a pleasure and I have some cards here if anybody -

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Committee members, we will take a five minute break and we will carry on with the following presentation in about five minutes

Part IV - Gunag Kelly, Erica Gilligan

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: : Committee members. The next presenter is Gunag Kelly. I'm not sure if I pronounced it properly.

Erica Gilligan: Erica Gilligan, I'm not on the list but I'm here anyway. So I guess

Wilfred Arsenault(PC) Chair: Okay terrific. Perhaps if you wish to give us a brief background on yourselves. You can proceed after which you can proceed with your presentation and you have 15 minutes for the presentation which will be followed by a five-minute question period from committee members. The floor is yours.

Gunag Kelly: Okay so you know my name, Gunag Kelly. I'm going to speak about our immigrant experience. Are the microphones on? Can you hear me?

Committee Members: Yes.

Gunag Kelly: And so I arrived to PEI in mid-July 2004. I'm married to an Islander so I'm a family class immigrant. I met with my husband in Kosova. We worked together for United Nations there and after three years of working there, we decided to resign and come back home.

During my immigration was handled by Federal Government until I arrived on PEI and I have a lot to tell about that. But since you're more concerned more about the provincial prospective, I think I'll speak first about my experience on PEI. So I probably have a much easier time than many other immigrants, because I have a large family to support me and direct me and as you can see, I speak English and I traveled a lot so really adopting to new circumstances is not a challenge for me.

It is true that even though I traveled a lot and I lived in the United States for two years, PEI was the first place where I actually felt as a foreigner. And maybe it's because it's very Irish/Scottish/Lebanese community, I don't know. But I do feel a bit out of place initially and that is not the problem now.

So even though I'm in a more advantageous position than many other newcomers than especially the refugees; and it was my choice to come to this country. So I feel it's my responsibility to really fit in. Still nobody chooses to come to a new country to be unemployed and I really want to speak about employment. I haven't been able to find a job so far and I did use the resources that are in place. I went to Career Services, that was my first step and I realized that they cannot offer me anything more than I already have. Like I have highspeed internet at home. I can access job advertisements from home. That was what they offered me. I have a resume. They offered to write my resume. I can access web pages where I can learn about interviews. I had interviews before, I was employed before. So I felt that they are not going to provide me with anything that I need really. What I felt I needed is a help to establish a network, to have some contacts, to access jobs that are not advertised. We all know that less than 20 per cent jobs are advertised. So that is the help I didn't get.

So I was a little bit disappointed and I didn't go back. The good thing that came out of Career Services is that I was referred to Thilak and I will

not flatter too, like by saying that he's very friendly and caring. It's really true. It's not flattery, but there's really a recruitment freeze in the provincial government. There's not much that Thilak can do for me. I hope some day he will.

So I did go to the Newcomers Association on the immigration website, government federal website. Newcomers Association say that's their point of contact on PEI. I was given a brochure in Toronto where newcomers are listed again. So I went there and it maybe the wrong impression, but when I entered that building I thought these people need to help themselves, before they can help me. I know it maybe a blunt statement but that was my perception.

Now I realize maybe it was wrong. But they did help me again with my resume a little bit. They helped me to translate my driver's license so I could go and apply for a driver's license that - so there was some help there. But I didn't think they could help me with employment. So I didn't go back.

Then I was really losing confidence throughout all of those months and I was thinking okay, maybe my experience is not that good. Maybe my education is not that good. Maybe something encompasses my accent. Maybe something's wrong with how I look or maybe the fact that I'm an immigrant. I did start think very negative sides of immigration and I did feel unwelcome. I thought okay maybe something comes with my name if it sounds foreign. So there was all this doubt and really losing confidence in my professional skills throughout this process. So finally I did get a few interviews and I think I regained back that confidence and I feel that my profession is still relevant and that yes, I did get short listed, at least someone noticed me even though I have a foreign name and even though I don't have Canadian experience.

So things are probably not as bad as I initially thought they were. But it was a difficult process for a strengthening process. Burning expired applications in the wood stove and feeling kind of good about it. So I think as a recommendation that as a result of my experience, the conditions that I would give - and I don't how feasible it is, maybe you can tell me how feasible it is - what about subsidizing wages for two or three months for newcomers so that the employer could see that

the person has skills and person is reliable. Because I'm not sure if I had a small business on PEI maybe I won't wish to hire foreigner. Who knows where they come from, what experience they have, what education they have. So I understand why people may not wish to hire me.

So subsidizing wages is one, let's say, possibility. Then another possibility with employment services, I think they should be more directed at helping people make contact. Maybe promoting newcomers in some way. Calling an employer, telling I have a good person here. I interviewed, I did a first screening I think you could maybe look at that person. So the employment services that are now in place, I believe, are not adequate and maybe you can look into that, too.

A lot of talk about tolerance and diversity and dissimilation. I think it all comes again back to employment because if you really don't have enough money to buy a car and to go out and buy a snack in a restaurant and be, you know, have a good time. You really can't socialize. Plus if you are anxious about employment, you're not making a very good - you're not a very good conversationalist because there are the only things that bothers you and then you end up thinking about job all the time and people won't want to hear your problem.

So I think again in order to help people socialize one has to give them a means and tools to support themselves and then they can take care of it. There's a lot of volunteers. There's a host program with the Newcomers Association so I think that socialization like tolerance and net simulation they can more or less be supported by a volunteer at (Indistinct) . While employment, I believe, is the responsibility of government and I feel that there is not enough being done in that direction.

So I'm mostly not here to advocate for any organization. But since we have a Newcomers Association and this seems to be a logical place that where funding should go to provide services because they are clearly underfunded and that's probably I had the perception that they can't help me.

That's pretty much about my Island experience. Things are better but I'm still struggling and I don't feel there are enough tools to or enough services

to help me. I realize that refugees are a priority and in all fairness, they deserve more services than I do in my situation. But if the purpose of provincial government is to bring skilled workers, to bring people that can support themselves, not be a burden to society, we have to give them tools to support themselves.

In all fairness, people leave their country to come to Canada to take something, not only give. So in order for them to give to society, society has to give them something in the beginning, some support. So I want to have any questions at this point because I'm going to go to talk a little bit about the federal aspect and maybe you could lobby to change something there.

So I can go ahead with federal.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): One comment (Indistinct) that was made by a presenter earlier, this importance of a network -

Gunag Kelly: Yes.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): - in gaining acceptability and not just acceptability but employment opportunity. Because as you rightfully pointed out, 80 per cent of the jobs are never advertized. Someone hears it from someone and when you are not - when you don't have access to that, it just doesn't happen. And it's a good point you make that we can try and assist people.

Gunag Kelly: Yes.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Maybe there is ways through letting employers know that there is people in our community who are actively searching - because many of them won't go the traditional means of putting an ad in the paper and allowing you to apply for them. If they knew you were here then in some way to make -

Gunag Kelly: To make a connection, yes. I don't want to sound negative. I not here with a personal outcry. I want to make that clear. I have a plan. I'm planning to start. I can afford to start it, not everyone can.

So I have a peace of mind in a sense of that I have a direction. But many people don't. Many people don't have a good command of English. They don't have a good education. So I really wonder

what those people do. If I'm having a hard time, what do people who have maybe less skills or less confidence or don't have family to support them, what do they do? I really don't want to imagine. Because if I'm frustrated, they must be desperate.

So really that's - it's good that you exactly understood what I'm trying to tell here, that there is no connection. Maybe not to some newcomers maybe it's hard to (Indistinct) can do more. The job bank web site it's mostly jobs are for people who have trades, let's say, background and minimum wage jobs. So it's really difficult to help someone with an university education into this jobs because I did apply for them and I'm not chosen because I'm over qualified. And it's really difficult I think to the ones that tell you why do you want to be an administration assistant or I didn't want to be a research assistant. It's really difficult to answer why because I really don't. I just want to start somewhere. So there's kind of a vicious circle there.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Good point.

Gunag Kelly: So regarding the federal aspect of immigration, I recently learned that an office in Confederation Mall, federal office, was closed to public. I think Erica has more to tell about it because she used their services. But - and I do not know if it's within your mandate, but maybe you could lobby to the head office, because after all, we are a province and a province should have an immigration office, especially a province that speaks about immigration. So there is - when we speak about federal immigration services, there's definitely an information isolation.

I applied - we got married in November, in my home country. So we applied for immigration right after we got married. My husband is my sponsor. So for awhile we didn't hear much for about a month. When my husband paid for like initial application fee, he got a receipt with a certain number on it. Now we didn't know that using that number we could access my immigration status and information about my file on line. There is an on line service which basically, you put your receipt number and some additional information and you can see what is going on at what stage the conservation of your file is.

Now first of all, nobody told me about it. So I didn't even know how to proceed. Secondly this status

has to be updated every two weeks. It is not updated every two weeks. There is an 800 number to which you call and after going through waiting for five minutes going through all the options, there's a voice mail. Now if you call from the United States, where I - at that point I resided with my sister who lives in the United States. Well five cents a minute, it's okay to wait for ten minutes on that number. But if you are calling from Azerbaijan where I come from, from Europe, really it's very costly to wait on line and then get a voice mail. So you are frustrated, you can call ten times a day and you are just paying really an enormous amount of money for that. So not everyone who's applying for immigration can afford may cost - the cost of long distance calls. So I felt that I was totally cut off after I applied.

I was on a tourist visa in United States. I was waiting for schedule for 31st of July. So it was winter and we didn't hear anything. Finally, we contacted our local MP, Lawrence MacAulay and he did make a call on my behalf and on my husband's behalf and inquired. So he was given the numbers that I could punch in and access my status on line. He was told, yes, they received my application and they are considering it.

So I was patiently waiting and suddenly on line I found information that even though my file was supposed to be consider on 23 of May, suddenly with no apparent reason is going to be consider on 30th of June. I wrote a letter, actually my husband did, he wrote a letter to the embassy Indiana, my (Indistinct) was considered Indiana, no reply. We wrote a letter to immigration minister, things started moving and again, Lawrence MacAulay gave them a call.

My best guess is that someone was going on vacation and that's why my case was postponed because there was absolutely no explanation why. So now my husband is a Canadian citizen, he could afford to write a letter to immigration minister. He could contact local MP. He wasn't intimidated to write to the embassy thinking okay, now they'll hate us and they will actually stall our case.

So what do other people do in those situations? I have no idea. My tourist visa status was expired in United States. In the end, I was actually for a few days illegally in the United States. My wedding, I was about to miss my wedding. Finally, I heard

from the embassy and they did tell me that okay that my case was approved after I wrote a letter to the Minister of Immigration. My case was approved. I needed to send my passport, so I did send my passport. No mention about any kind of fees, that I owe any additional money or anything. So I sent my passport, nothing happens. So by then I already have a name, a contact name so that I can call the embassy and ask what's going on and she's willing to help - to speak to me at least.

So the problem is that I still owe about \$900 on my permanent residence - landing status or landing immigrant status. I still have to pay that money. So I'm instructed to do that on line. I do it on line, nothing happens. So in the end what happened is that I was supposed to fax the receipt to the immigration processing centre in Mississauga and I didn't know I had to, nobody instructed me to. So because I didn't do it, the Embassy in Vienna could not cross reference that I made a payment. I actually understood that they could not cross reference before they did. I knew it was a problem when I was addressing that issue. So finally it was addressed. I arrived to Canada on 16th of July and my wedding was on 31st. So a close call but still had a happy ending.

But what do other people do whose husband is not a Canadian citizen? Again I don't know. So my conclusion is that as a result of this experience is that there has to be some way for immigrants whose cases are at a stage of consideration to access immigration services. I understand that some people may call ten times a day and they don't want to deal with those people, okay. Give those people (Indistinct) to have one call a month. Give them some code that they can punch in so they can call a second time, somehow monitor.

I'm not an intelligent communication specialist, but there are ways of monitoring incoming calls and somehow limiting them. So people should be able to access immigration services to feel welcome. To feel that they have a control over the situation because really there's a lot of anxiety when you don't have control. And you become very negative and you think that everyone is against you. Well they probably are not.

My experience in the Embassy in Vienna was also very negative when I was applying for a tourist visa. I literally felt discriminated for the first and I

hope, last time in my life, to the point that the lady wouldn't take the money from my hands because I didn't straighten it. I had to really smooth it down before I handed it through the window. I was told that I cannot get a multiply visa because I don't have enough funds. Well I think my UN salary provided enough funds for a two-week tourist visa and a multiple entry.

At the interview there, they asked me what is my relation to my fiancé and if I have an intend to immigrate because we were common law partners for about a year and they did have records of that I visited Canada before. Now a year after I was going again. So I told them yes, I have intention to immigrate legally at a later date when we get married. So far I'm just going as a tourist. So I was denied a multiple entry visa just because I declared that I have intention to legally immigrate. So it is better to lie and than I'd get a multiply entry visa. You know it's kind of - my honesty was punished in the end.

So I feel that there's no checks and balances in that system. I feel that a lot comes to individual willing to help, it shouldn't be like that. Organizations should have some uniform standards you know better than me. They should be checks and balances and there should be a strong leadership and people feel they really have to do their duties to the best of their abilities. Otherwise they are going to be reprimanded or punished or whatever and I feel there's no leadership and there's no checks and balances. Now with a new minister for immigration, maybe things will change and I don't know if this particular hearing and the hearing that will be on the 20th of April from the federal government, if it has something to do with a new minister being appointed. Maybe you can tell me more what actually motivated you to have this hearing and what stands behind it.

But yes, as far as my presentation goes and what I have to tell you is I already told you everything, I think and my recommendations are subsidize wages, better employment services and access to information for people who are in the process of immigration. So I think Erica will speak more about the provincial and the need program because that's how she -

Erica Gilligan: I don't know if I have any time at all to talk.

Mr. Arsenault: Well we could allow you a few minutes then. I'll certainly give you a signal in some way, shape or form.

Erica Gilligan: That's okay. Well I won't be too long. My name is Erica Gilligan and I'm from Argentina, Gilligan like the Irish. My family is Irish and they immigrated to Argentina and but anyway I ended up leaving too. I've been here for the past four years. I'm a Spanish Instructor at Holland College and UPEI so work is not my main problem right now. Even though it's always a concern because I don't have a full time job. I have many part time jobs. So I'm a translator too of Spanish, English and Portugese, which many people don't know, I am.

But so anyway my main - the main point I would like to make in a short fashion is actually two things. One is the immigration process itself and what it entailed for me and many other immigrants. As you can imagine, I can speak English and I can do that since I was born probably. So always thinking of people that are more or less privileged and they don't know how to speak the language or they don't have the suitable personality to be more outgoing and the second point is about the Provincial Nominee Program. I am a Provincial Nominee. I was nominated by the province and I got my permanent residence three weeks ago. So that's new. And I have a couple of concerns about that.

The first thing is I consider Canada - if I think of Canada I can think of six different concepts that for me are represented in this country and those six concepts are not represented at all by the immigration process. So I'm going to go through those six concepts basically, and show you how for me they do not correspond. The immigration thing was not something from this country.

The first concept is trust. I think in Canada I've learned to trust people again and people trust me. However, for immigration I feel there is a lot of mistrust and guilt. I was always thought guilty until, I mean until I could prove myself innocent. Like one time I was called for an interview in the immigration office and the officer told me, I believe you but your story is hard to believe. Or things like, I came on a work visa and I stayed like three years on a work visa because that's what I wanted to do. And than when I applied, like why would a person with all your qualification would like to be on PEI,

that was my first question. Well I like it here and that's why I'm here and I've been here - this is my fifth year, so they were not believing that I was going to stay here for some reason. Anyway so that feeling of guilt and mistrust that you have to prove so much that you want to be here, that you are not lying. That is not Canada.

The second is empathy. Empathy I think is a very big thing in this country. However, for immigration, more than empathy I found loneliness. The loneliness of going through all those forms, all those instructions and knowing English, still not knowing what to say. How much to say. I was told once by another officer at immigration, do not say you are not asked. And sometimes it's hard, especially when you are from another country to think how much you are going to say for a particular thing. So it's a very lonely process.

The third concept is cooperation and sharing which is another thing I find very strong in Canada. However, this was a very individual process. Every time I needed help or not every time, but most of the time I did not get any help and if I got help it was from friends and colleagues that were Canadian, that did not go through this process. So they don't know what it's like.

My fourth point is clarity. Things seem to be very clear in Canada and the laws are clear and we understand how to act in every day life. However, the immigration process is full of confusion. You never know what your supposed to do, when and as she clarified, I don't need to give any further examples, but you never know actually what to do, who to phone and what to do.

There's the sound authority concept I believe in the government and Canada. However, the immigration shows unclear signs of authority. Like one person tells you one thing, another person tells you another thing and there's a lot of individual cases. Like my individual case was number 20. I never knew what that meant. But that is what it says Case 20, Case tried for 20. So again every time I do not understand why somebody I knew had a different reality from mine. They told me it's an individual case. So I don't know what that means.

My last point is respect. I'm not saying that immigration process does not respect the immigrant. But there is lots of instance of lack of

respect too. So having said this, the main thing is we're trying to attract immigrants to Prince Edward Island and Canada in general. So I went through this. I have a strong personality and I'm well educated and I have good English, so I didn't mind going through this on my own, but many people give up on the first day, because it's so discouraging to know that you are going to wait all that and you're going to be confused. I don't think you can live through that. So I think maybe that is one thing that should be taken into account. Try to make the immigration process a little bit more user friendly or friendly or something.

I did have a different experience through the Provincial Nominee Program though at the very beginning whenever I learnt through actually through Thilak, I learnt that that program existed and I applied and everything was different with that. I had a lot of help, I was respected. People - I could always call and get good feed back and so I felt really not lonely through that process at the beginning.

Suddenly one day they told me the officer that I was working with was not there any longer and the people that replaced her or came to look after my case were not like that. So I went back to the nightmare immigration thing. And actually until yesterday and last week with March Break, I was trying to get in touch with somebody in the Provincial Nominee area because I got my papers back and I need to get landed, the Landed Immigration Status. I found and I was told that people were not there because it was March Break and nobody ever called me.

So yesterday I called again and I left a message and they never called. So what I did, because I'm not going to wait until somebody calls me, I asked somebody else and they told me - you just go to the immigration office on Kent Street and ask for an appointment. So I will get landed next week on April 7th. But if I hadn't asked somebody I would still be waiting and the days would go by and I would not get that status. I think that office should really be opened to. At least I have good comments. I went there and left a note saying I needed an appointment and they called me within two hours. So it was good.

So anyway, those are my two main things and if you have any questions I'd be happy to answer them.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Okay. Thank you very much. The presentation did go on longer than anticipated. But we had some very good information come forward. We have two more presenters that are coming to us and we wanted to adjourn very close to noon so we'll have to maybe limit this to one or two questions. Jamie.

Hon. Jamie Ballem (PC): You talk about employment services when you arrive. Would that be a function that the Chamber of Commerce could be involved in as in trying to create a network, the various Chambers of Commerce. They represent businesses in every community. Should we be trying to get them involved with the province?

Gunay Kelly: Yes I think so. Why not? It's really not another hole in the wall. It's not how effective it is. If I would have an employment agency, I mean there are no employment agencies on PEI actually. There are three, PEI Office of the Future, Manpower and Halliwell Consulting are the ones that I contacted. They really deal with temporary employment and Halliwell Consulting deals with engineers and technical stuff.

So if I would have an employment agency, I would probably have the least (Indistinct) and would (Indistinct) network myself and see what positions are available and when someone comes I would already have more or less a list of employers and say okay, I know there is this many positions available and those people may be interested. We could set up an interview, we could go and meet them. I understand that employers do not want really to see me when people open their doors when you're soliciting jobs. Should the balance of certain levels so that it is not a discomfort to employers. So I understand that but whoever is employed, whoever is involved has to be effective; it has to be practical. Helping someone to write their resume is really yesterday, it's not tomorrow.

Just a quick point in my presentation to summarize what I was trying to say is that if someone would ask me now okay, I'm planning to immigrate to Canada, is PEI a place that - should be a good place to come and start up? I would say no. Go somewhere where there are more opportunities like Ontario or other parts of Canada. So unfortunately now, I cannot recommend anyone to come to PEI.

Hon. Phillip Brown (PC): I think this was a very good presentation and I guess from what I hear is I just say, thank God, you didn't give up.

Gunay Kelly: Oh well, we're not going to give up.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Well you ladies are very bright individuals and you have much to contribute to Prince Edward Island and I believe Prince Edward has much to contribute to you as well. So I wish you luck in your future endeavors and welcome to Prince Edward Island.

Erica Gilligan: Thank you very much.

Gunay Kelly: Thank you. And thank you for giving us the opportunity to share our thoughts and suggestions with you. Just a quick question, I'm sorry. What do you hope yourself to achieve as a result of this hearing in practical terms? Do you think you will get more funding as a result of your report or?

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Well okay. I think I can maybe briefly answer your question here. Our committee has been mandated to receive input from the public. What we will do with this input is provide this input in the form of a report to the Legislative Assembly. Our committee has the right or the liberty to provide recommendations to the Legislative Assembly. The report is presented to the Legislative Assembly and then it will be up to government to act upon the results of these hearings. So I guess you would have to stay tuned to get a better idea of where government is going with the process.

Gunay Kelly: Okay, hopefully we contributed.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): You certainly did. Thank you very much.

Gunay Kelly: Thank you.

Erica Gilligan: Thank you.

Part V - Sharon Labchuk

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): The next presenter is Sharon Labchuk and I would ask her to come forward please. Good morning, Sharon.

Sharon Labchuck: Hi there.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Perhaps if you would start by giving us just a brief background on yourself and then you can proceed to your presentation immediately. You have 15 minutes for a presentation which will be followed by a period of questions from committee members. The floor is yours.

Sharon Labchuck: Okay. My presentation is going to be fairly short. I'm here as an individual today to relate an experience I've had with the immigration process in Canada which has been hellish to say the least. My experience began about a year and a half ago when I was asked by a cousin in Ukraine to help her immigrate to Canada. So at that point I knew zero about the immigration process so I went on a real quick learning experience and I think I know a lot about the immigration process now, both federally and provincially from doing research and also from the experience I had in trying to get my cousin into this country.

What I wanted to talk about mainly here is what's within your jurisdiction, the Provincial Nominee Program. There is lots to complain about Immigration Canada but I realize that's nothing really that you can deal with at this point. So I'll stick to what I've discovered about the Provincial Nominee Program and my experience with it and compare it to some of the other provinces' programs and what they're doing.

I didn't first go to the Nominee Program but I eventually ended up with the Nominee Program and at first it was pretty encouraging. I called up the woman, I don't know who she is but she was the point person for the public, explained the situation who my cousin was. We went over some of her qualifications and that sort of thing to see if she could fit in. The woman was very encouraging, great. Just the kind of person we want, I'll get back to you.

So she got back to me the next day and at that point she had spoken to I presume, one of her superiors and the door was like shut, closed, just totally shut. Does she have \$10,000? No, sorry. Now my cousin comes from a country where the average wage for someone with an education and a good job in her part of Ukraine is about \$40 a month. So to have \$10,000 to immigrate is ridiculous.

I was told this was required by Immigration Canada and the province was simply complying with Immigration Canada's requirements. So I pretty much abandoned the Nominee Program at that point but I did go and I looked at what some of the other provinces' Nominee Programs are like just to see if there was somewhere else I could get her into the country.

I looked at a couple of provinces. I looked at a lot of provinces but for today's purposes I just want to show you the differences between the programs for other provinces that are losing population and would like to have more immigrants. So I looked at Manitoba; I looked at New Brunswick and I looked at Saskatchewan. I found the PEI Nominee Program was very restrictive compared to especially Manitoba which seemed to have the best program. PEI is very restrictive. For starters, there is a \$1500 application fee. Now who's got \$1500 unless you're coming as a business immigrant? But ordinarily, you come from countries like Ukraine where you make 40 bucks a month, you don't have \$1500 just to apply.

Now, unless I'm mistaken, I did do a thorough search of the programs, the websites on these other provinces, I didn't see anywhere these other provinces had any kind of a fee to apply. I couldn't find that anywhere. Another difference I found was that in PEI you have to have a job offer. You've got to have an employer and that employer has to prove that there is nobody else in Canada can take this job. I mean that is really restrictive and I doubt unless you fudge that portion of the application that anybody is going to get in the country on that requirement.

What I found in Manitoba which seemed to be the best one was very - and they indicated that they revised their program at some point very recently to make it much more open and friendly and non-restrictive. So they have no job restrictions. PEI has a skilled - maybe I'm going over stuff you guys already know about the Nominee Program. But what I found was in PEI, we have a skills list and if your job isn't in one of those occupations you can't apply and that list is revised as things change. It's very restrictive. There are 25 job categories. In Manitoba there's no job restrictions. There are a few occupations where - and there is only a few - where if you fall into that you have to let them know and maybe you won't get in. But for the most it's wide open.

They have fast tracked the application process so that if you fall into certain new categories, they'll fast track you. Also in PEI, there was no indication when you look at the web site how long it's going to take you to the process, where some of the other provinces they tell you it will be this many months to get through. In Manitoba, you don't have to pay the application fee, there is no job restrictions, you don't need a job offer, but what they do do to ensure that people end up staying in Manitoba is the program seems to be very focused on what are your Manitoba connections? Why would you come here to apply for a job? They want to know that you've got some kind of connection in Manitoba and that's just not an entry point to Canada and then you're going to head off to Toronto. So you've got to show what is it that's attracting you to Manitoba. If you can show this connection to Manitoba they will fast track you through without having a job offer and without falling into certain job occupations.

Some of those connections you can have are family support. If you have close family support, that family can write a letter and offer to be your support system for a certain period of time. It even goes beyond that, much more inclusive, in that if you don't have family support, if you got community support. If there is an organization that's approved by the province to be your support system while you come, then they can support you and you have an easier entry and a faster entry into the province. You can also get an invitation to apply from the province specifically if you've got what they want. But that was the main difference. Show us why you want to come to Manitoba and what your connections are here and we'll let you in quicker. We're not going to say you've got to have \$10,000, we're not going to charge you \$1500 and we're not going to tell you you've got to have a certain job, it's wide open.

For a province like PEI that struggles to get immigrants and there really are a lot of reasons why people wouldn't want to come here. But when somebody is sitting in another country scanning the various nominee programs on the website and they see right off the bat a \$1500 application fee, well that's probably going to be the last province they're going to apply to. Now I don't know about Ontario and Alberta, where they do have a lot of immigrants, maybe they've got fees. But these other provinces that want immigrants don't.

On CBC Radio in February I heard a report on immigration and they said that since Manitoba changed their immigration processes that there has been a steady increase of immigrants to Manitoba whereas the province used to lose population. So they've changed their system. What I've noticed too about the PEI Nominee Program, well first of all the website is really bad, I mean it's really bad. It doesn't even look good. It's not friendly. It's not welcoming. Visually, it's unattractive and to try and go through it, you're just faced with this whole line of links of forms to go to. Go to this one, go to that form. You don't get sort of an overall picture of here's the process and here is how you do it and call us. It's really not very friendly at all and intimidating to use if maybe English is your second language.

With the Manitoba program, I guess everybody gets money from the feds to run these programs. It seems like the PEI program is kind of coasting. It's got this money and it doesn't seem to have done a whole lot with the program. Like the web site is really crappy. I didn't get a friendly reception when I got involved with it. The Manitoba program seems to have gone way beyond what is expected of it. In PEI we seem to be relying on Immigration Canada for a lot of the stuff because you referred to Immigration Canada on the website to go get this one or that form. Manitoba seems to have sort of taken control of the whole situation and they seem to be wanting to welcome people and guide them through the whole process so they've expanded beyond just funneling people off to Immigration Canada and they've got these new categories. There is the family support category.

If you look on the website you'll see you can apply through different levels of entry points into the province. You've got the family support program, you're got the community support program and you got the invitation to apply. So you can click on each one of those and find out what the requirements are and it's much more friendly and much more inclusive. I found a Saskatchewan web program too was not too bad. They're also another province that people are leaving and they're looking for more immigrants. Their program wasn't as good as Manitoba but it was a lot better than PEI. Again, there was no skill shortage list there where you had to go to a certain occupation in order to get in. No minimum amount of money was required for support but you get points for having the money. There's lots of points awarded for

again, what connection have you got to Saskatchewan and what support systems have you got here. So that was mainly about what I wanted to talk about, was those differences between the Nominee Programs and how much easier it is to get into other provinces than PEI.

I guess while I'm here, I noticed one of the other presenters just before me brought in a few points from Immigration Canada in hoping that you could lobby. Well I'm just throw in a few points too. The federal system of immigration is, like this woman here said, daunting. I'm not one to give up but when I got involved with this, I felt totally defeated after awhile, totally and utterly defeated and demoralized and I'm a Canadian citizen. I've a certain amount of connections here and a certain knowledge of how to get through the system and how to lobby and that sort of thing. I felt utterly defeated and wanted to give up at one point.

I can't imagine how people from another country who have no connections here, no money, don't even know the system, ever manage to find their way through it. I just can't imagine because I'm still trying to get my cousin in the country. She's 22, she's got three years of college. She's a graduate of power engineer. She speaks English well enough to do a job. She's got family connections here. She's got a ton of family in Canada who are ready and willing to support her until she's on her feet. Seems to me she's exactly what this country wants. Can I get her in the country? No, I can't. I can't get her in this country. There is a lot of reasons why federally, but that's I guess, not your jurisdiction. So that's my presentation.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Okay, thank you very much, Sharon. We have time for a few questions here. Jamie, followed by Eva.

Hon. Jamie Ballem (PC): Thank you very much Sharon. We had a couple of presenters, like you said, that talked about Immigration Canada and I can't remember what television program I saw in the last couple of days that quoted a statistic that said Canada has one of the highest rates of immigration of the western world. Maybe I dreamt it but you know -

Sharon Labchuck: It does, I heard that.

Hon. Jamie Ballem (PC): - you're not the first person and the first presenters and today is not the

first presenters that we hear issues of immigration and how difficult it is, but yet there's 250, 300,000 people a year. Are they all going through the same thing I wonder?

Sharon Labchuck: Well we take in a lot of refugees too which is good so not everybody comes through that program. Then you've got the business people who have money and if you've got money, Canada is an open door if you've got money. If you're just a regular person that's the difficult part, getting in if you're just a regular person.

The federal program too, the Skilled Worker Program which is how you get in with the points if you're just a regular person. Well the problem with my cousin is she's got all the points but she doesn't have one year of work experience. She's a graduate, she graduated a few years ago. I mean she's never going to get one year job experience in Ukraine, ever. That's just not going to happen. So the door is shut for her in Canada because of that.

Then there are problems with our embassies. I found another kind of a - it's not a loophole but another program, a living care giver program. This is what I'm working on now. She actually has qualifications for that because she's got the education, the language, she's got a job offer in PEI and she has job experience and she's doing that in Ukraine right now with a family member and she did go to our Embassy in Ukraine to apply for that position and she was turned down. It ended up on the Federal Minister of Immigration's desk. I went to Shawn Murphy's office to find out why she was refused.

Well I found out why she was refused. They said she didn't speak English well enough which is ridiculous. She translated for me when I was there. She didn't have education. Well she's got the college degree, she's a power engineer. I forget what the third one was but they were all wrong. The Minister of Immigration agreed; this was wrong why wasn't let in, she would intervene. Well the employer died and we found a replacement employer but the minister then suddenly out of the blue said: well sorry, we're not going to intervene now, you've got to go back to the embassy and start all over again.

Well the problem with the embassy is it's corrupt;

our embassy is corrupt. Now when I first went to Wayne Easter before I started any of this, I said to Wayne: I've heard through the Ukraine Canadian community in Canada that our embassy in Ukraine is corrupt, it takes bribes. The whole country of Ukraine runs on bribes. I want some help before I even get started because she's nobody from nowhere and she's not getting in the country. Well I ended up not getting that help. She went to the embassy; she paid my \$150 fee to apply which is non-refundable. She was turned down.

The Minister of Immigration said she shouldn't have been turned down but she was and I knew why. It had to do with bribery. She was interviewed in our Canadian embassy, not by Canadians, but by Ukrainians who run on bribes. We're going through that process again. I have gotten, you can't imagine how many phone calls I've gotten on PEI because this was in *The Guardian* at one point. Still I was approached - this article in *The Guardian* was about a year ago now by people who want living care giver help here because they are home and they've got elderly family members that can't deal with them. I had tons of calls wanting my cousin to work for them but I can't get her in the country to do that.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Eva.

Eva Rodgerson (PC): Thank you as well, Sharon, because I know it seems like - and I keep hearing that right now I've had a call on a situation very similar. The husband lives here, has always lived here trying to get his wife here just from the US. So a lot of things you're saying - and we had Mr. Marshall here, I guess, from the federal immigration to try and understand again if there is areas here where we have to improve in our own Nominee Program or if there is recommendations that we can make this consistently coming to us on behalf of the federal program. It seems like consistently we're hearing that there is so many roadblocks for a regular person to come here, it seems to be one of the biggest factors. There seems to be people wanting to come, it's just how do we get them here.

So I guess again, your presentation just reaffirmed some of the things we've been hearing. But he has told us when 9/11 happened, what was it, 60 per cent of the people that worked in the office working with the hands-on, like the paper work side are now at the borders as opposed to being in

the office. It seemed like there was a shift in staffing there as well. So I don't know if things have gotten worse or we're still dealing with the same problems. So hopefully before we're through this, we'll be able to get more an idea on really what's happening. So again, how long have you been trying to reach your relative?

Sharon Labchuck: I think it's been a year and a half or two years. There is a family on PEI now that approached me just a month ago and asked if she was still available. I told them how it didn't work out before and they said: well, we're desperate. We're willing to - we'll pay for her to go to the embassy again and go through the process. So I've again gone to Shawn Murphy's office. They're well aware of what happened before and asked them to try and intervene when she ends up at that embassy. I mean otherwise, my only other option is to find out how the bride game is played and see if I can do that. I don't know how to do that but I could find out I guess.

Eva Rodgerson (PC): Okay, thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Well Sharon, thank you very much for the presentation. Thank you for bringing up the problems arising with your cousin through the immigration process. I hope that things turn around and she could be with us very, very soon.

Sharon Labchuck: Thanks.

Part VI - Blake Doyle

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): Thank you. Okay folks, we have one more presenter, Mr. Blake Doyle. Welcome to our committee.

Blake Doyle: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) (Chair): And appreciate you patience.

Blake Doyle: It's good to come and listen to the presentation.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC)(Chair): Please introduce yourself with a brief background and we'll let you jump into your presentation immediately and we'll allow you 50 minutes for your presentation.

Blake Doyle: Fifty minutes? Fifty, okay. Just

briefly, I guess I'm a repatriated Islander. I moved to Halifax and just returned in July after an eight-year absence. And I guess the context in which I'm here today is threefold; one to talk about some research I've been doing for my executive MBA, which I'll be completing in a couple of months. It centers around immigration, attraction and retention in immigration; specifically, economic immigrants and the ability to use their influence and their capital as an economic stimulus in PEI.

I just returned from a trip two weeks ago to Asia where I visited Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Ho Chi Min city in Viet Nam and I have a few suggestions or recommendations for policy reform potentially and in the interest of time, we may not get to all that. I did present or prepare a Power Point presentation, but maybe I'll just walk through that quickly and probably it would be most useful in the question and answer period, so I'll go through this fairly rapidly.

I guess the reason I have interest in policy reform and the status of our population really stems from a number of reports that I've digested over the last few months. If we look at demographic trends in PEI, we will have within the next decade 25 per cent less enrollment in high schools and what the impact of that will be provincially.

If you look at Nova Scotia, they've acknowledged that by 2023, their population growth will stagnate and be at zero per cent so they're taking some fairly aggressive reforms now to try to alleviate that.

Atlantic Canada's population has been decreasing. Ironically, the last couple of census periods, PEI's has been up and the majority of that decrease is probably attributed to Newfoundland. But regardless, there is a demographic shift happening, both in labour availability and in declining birth rates and out-migration so that's why this is strategically important I think for me and for the province.

The research that I have looked at, most of it you're probably familiar with. Probably the most relevant is by Barry Edmonston and Sharon Lee from Portland, Oregon; Barry Chiswick from Chicago, Illinois; Richard Florida with his work on *Rise the Creative Class* and some various other provincial sources of materials that's been done.

I'm not sure how much time I have to talk about the research so I'll leave that for specific questions, I guess.

In terms of my trip to China, you know, there's no question I'm sure many people have been to that part of the world. It's very aggressive and ambitious. Shanghai is projected to be the economic social and commercial capital of the world and overtake New York. That's their ambition. They're certainly a long way from that today but they're making great strides.

If you look at the percentage of immigrants who come from various parts of the world, the majority come from Asia and the majority from the People's Republic of China and I think that's a strategic location that PEI should probably invest more energy into trying to attract immigrants and economic immigrants from that area. There's certainly a lot of affluence there.

When I was in those geographies, I met with the consulates, a couple of MBA Shanghai International MBA School, did presentations to business people and immigrant co-ordinators and agents. There is a strong desire of people in those communities to migrate to Canada. It's an attractive location. PEI has some benefits that could be communicated better, I think.

You know, there's people there who are making a great deal of money. The interest is certainly for their families, I think more so perhaps than to lose their opportunities that are presented to them today but that's the generation that we should be trying to recruit and integrate and retain over the long term.

Again, this is probably more data than I can get through in a short time so I guess some of the comments when I read the transcripts, a lot of the stuff that you have that I have to speak to you, you're familiar with but as far as potential changes to some of the policy and I'm most interested in the economic immigrants, the business class, the Provincial Nominee Program and how they can be used as an economic catalyst here. Some changes that could be made you've heard about as far as reducing and removing the barrier to English as a second language, increasing the infrastructure to help those people immigrate and that's probably deficiencies both within the number of full-time equivalents in the population secretariat

division as well as within the new immigrant settlement services.

Those are both important centers of interest that should be funded perhaps better. Look at probably re-evaluating the Provincial Nominee Program and how it's administered and evaluating abuses that may, in fact, be occurring in that structure.

And I think when we start, I've heard that this morning is how to create a more open environment amongst the Islanders and we have a tourism budget, which the honourable minister is here today. Perhaps some of that budget could be focused on not just attracting tourist dollars but also promoting Prince Edward Island as a place to live and I think you see that happening now in other provinces as well.

So in the interests of time, there's certainly much more I intended and would like to speak to you, I've got a wealth of statistics probably in my head if I can reference any of those but I'd be happy to take questions from the commission if there are any.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC)(Chair): Okay. Blake, I, we will have more presentations come forward. If from what I can understand from your comments, perhaps a 15 minute presentation would not be sufficient for the information that you have.

Blake Doyle: Well, I'm certainly grateful to have the opportunity to present and I can share the data that I have that's relevant. I can do that in 15 minutes. I'm happy to come back if that's what you're suggesting but -

Wilfred Arsenault (PC)(Chair): If you would like that, I'd be certainly be open to having you back to set yourself up with the Power Point presentation and so forth. I don't know if there would be any objection around the table. I hear none.

Jamie Ballem (PC): I suggest, Mr. Chair, that I mean some of the things that - and I'm not against statistics - but I think we may have seen a lot of statistics. I'd be more interested in having you focus on your ideas of where we should be going and how we should do it. I'm in full agreement with you coming back and doing a presentation, of course, but I'd rather you focus on recommendations as opposed to hear the

numbers and what you think our opportunities are.

Blake Doyle: A lot of that data comes from stuff you've heard with the longitudinal survey done by Statistics Canada. There's some interesting research out there. I think there's stuff like Michael Porter or Richard Florida on how you actually recruit and attract the right type of immigrants and I think there has to be a balance. I don't dispute that but I think there's an economic benefits that could be realized by attracting the right creative class and creating an environment that sort of promotes PEI's place as well to that type of newcomer. So I'm happy to take questions now. I'm happy to leave the commission to their work.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC)(Chair): Sure thing, Richard.

Richard Brown (L): If somebody wanted to immigrate to Canada and go to the consulate in one of these countries, what do they see when they go in the consulate door? Pictures of Toronto?

Blake Doyle: No. They're pretty sterile places, I think.

Richard Brown (L): Okay.

Blake Doyle: And I've only been to a couple, certainly a couple in the States and Shanghai.

Richard Brown (L): They're diplomatic.

Blake Doyle: They're diplomatic and they're secure. Even for myself, when I was with a group of Canadians, it's a very secure environment. You have to leave cell phones outside the back office for photographs, I assume, on digital phones.

Richard Brown (L): Because I was at a presentation last night there, John Epperson.

Blake Doyle: I recognize his name.

Richard Brown (L): Yeah, he's pretty good. He says Quebec is very aggressive in the consulates around the world marketing Quebec as a place to settle and it was quite interesting and one of his recommendations to the group last night was, you know, lighten up a bit, and these consulates are -

Blake Doyle: Yes. The most aggressive one -

Richard Brown (L): Jamie was there. I wasn't there.

Blake Doyle: Oh, is that right?

Richard Brown (L): In China, yea.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): There's nothing on Prince Edward Island in the embassy in Vienna.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Do we still have the Hong Kong office?

Richard Brown (L): Do you have any brochures with you?

Blake Doyle: Actually, I met with the immigration co-ordinator in Hong Kong, named just recently, I think, within the last several months, shut down the office in Hong Kong, so we do not have a representation on the Asian market.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): In terms of just PEI, you mean?

Blake Doyle: Yes.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Because there was a PEI office there, was there not?

Blake Doyle: Yes.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): An Albert Young. He passed away. His sons took over there.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): We shared some office space with him. We hired a company and that was the PEI office.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): I didn't think we had to pay for it.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Yeah, I think we did. I had meetings with him when I was doing some work for Holland College.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Okay.

Richard Brown (L): Lots of cash at IIDI.

Blake Doyle: If the province was interested to

have a regional office in Hong Kong, I do have a contact who would be quite willing to share office space at perhaps a more reasonable cost.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): My understanding was what happened was it was Albert Young - everybody remembers was Albert Young. He donated the money out at the centre there - super-wealthy, a billionaire - and when it comes to Hong Kong, a lot of it has to do with titles. You know, you can only have so much money, and then after you have so much money, you start looking for something else, and people want titles, and he was somehow named or something happened where PEI named him the consulate from Prince Edward Island to Hong Kong or something like that and PEI gave him a title and then he used his cash to promote PEI in Hong Kong, and I'm not sure if we could do something like that or -

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: It's hard for me to relate to that particular situation, having too much money, but it's certainly something we could look at. Any other questions for Blake? Philip?

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Yeah. I, too, am very interested in hearing from you again, Blake, on ideas. The nominee program was pointed out this morning, and I think it's fair to say that other than some experiences into some markets like Hong Kong, but this is a new area for PEI, really, to go into.

We don't have a lot of experience on this whole immigration area. The people who were coming here in the past seemed to be coming on their own, but now we understand that we have to be a part of this.

As you pointed out, all areas of the world are looking at this as an opportunity to grow their economies and to replenish their population, which is extremely important. So we need the ideas and I think we're going to have to revisit - from many of the presenters we're going to have to revisit how we do the nomination program. Obviously there has to be improvements. I would expect that there will be recommendations of this committee and so I'd be interested in hearing your ideas about those things, how we're going to participate in this, because I -

Blake Doyle: I'll briefly respond to that. Nova Scotia has a minister responsible for immigration

and that might be a first initial step and it's a small portfolio, so I don't know how the burden would be on existing -

Richard Brown (L): (Indistinct) Currie's the man. He could attract them.

Blake Doyle: I guess what I would - I've kind of lost track of my train of thought, but -

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): That happens when they speak.

Blake Doyle: Yes. There's - from Asia, 68 per cent of the immigrants come from Asia, and I think there's about 32,000 that come from the People's Republic of China, so the question was how we attract more of those people, if I'm paraphrasing correctly.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): Yeah, for anywhere. I mean, one of the statistics given to us is that most immigrants in PEI come from the United States.

Blake Doyle: Right.

Honourable Philip Brown (PC): That's the majority that are coming now. They're second, I think, was the UK.

Blake Doyle: I don't know if that's consistent with my research, but 18 per cent of the Canadian population is foreign-born. It's 22 per cent in Australia. This is a very important initiative for many countries. All these western countries have declining populations, so my concern is that an initiative is struck from this commission that would have a long-term view, certainly strategic in intent and hopefully over a 20-year horizon, not the mandate of a traditional legislative assembly and I think there's an opportunity here for privatization of services. Work in conjunction with some of the services that are currently funded or part of the provincial mandate.

So that's why I'm interested in this opportunity. It's an economic development opportunity. It's an opportunity to increase the diversity and the variety within our mosaic and I intend to pursue this as a business venture, so my motives are declared.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): So when you graduate - you're doing this for your (indistinct)

research?

Blake Doyle: Yes, as part of the executive MBA, we have to do international travel. That's what the trip to China was, and research, so my research is on economic development.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Is it at Dal you're doing it?

Blake Doyle: No, St. Mary's.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): St. Mary's.

Blake Doyle: Yeah, complete in May, so this research is the final component. If we get together again, I'll probably have it done at that time, so -

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Okay. Well, Blake, thank you very much for the presentation. I wish you the best of luck with your effort.

Blake Doyle: I will. Everyone needs a title. Thank you very much.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: I wish you luck with your thesis. Please communicate with the clerk's office for your presentation. Normally, we allow 15 minutes per presentation, but with all due respect, for the recommendations that you're going to bring forward, if you need more than 15 minutes, please communicate with the clerk and we'll accommodate.

Blake Doyle: Thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: So thank you very much. Okay, folks. Yes?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): I just have one thing that I'd like to raise. Do you have more stuff on?

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: The only thing I was going to recommend was a quick in-camera session to discuss briefly the next step here.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Okay. Can I just raise one thing before we go in camera?

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Please do. Go ahead.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): It's been brought up a couple of times today about the Noodle House restaurant and it's an establishment in my riding, but I'm sure many people use it here on this committee and I know our office orders from there. There's probably many people there, and I thought it would be a good idea if we showed - I've got a resolution here just saying: Valuing New Islanders and the Contributions They Make to Our Quality of Life.

And I'll pass these around so all the members can have a chance to look at it, but it's a resolution that says:

WHEREAS Prince Edward Island continues to be enriched by the cultural, social and economic contributions of new Islanders that contribute greatly to the quality of Island life;

AND WHEREAS the Legislative Assembly of Prince Edward Island is called upon a legislative committee to examine how to improve immigration;

AND WHEREAS the recent deplorable actions of a group of students towards Lina and Tommy Ko does not reflect the way in which Islanders view and value our immigrants who come to make a life on Prince Edward Island;

AND WHEREAS Islanders have expressed deep concern over this incident and municipal officials, the police and the school board have made attempts to stop this kind of behavior;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this standing committee continue to address the issue of how best to end instances of intolerance towards our immigration population;

AND THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this standing committee express, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly in the province, our deep regret to the Kos for the behavior of those who in no way represent the views of the vast majority of Islanders.

And I've been following this issue very closely over the last couple of days, and I know that this committee is studying this and it's been brought up many times today, and I would hope that I could have unanimous consent for us to approve this resolution if so desired.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Could we make one little change?

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): Sure.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): You move it and the chair signs it.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): That's fine.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Or the committee seconds it.

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): No problem.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): I think that I agree with the intent. Let's just make it -

Honourable Robert Ghiz (L): It doesn't have to be seconded, but we just kind of put the seconder on there, but if the chair so wishes, I'm fine with that.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Any other comment? Do we have unanimous consent on this? Richard?

Richard Brown (L): I've been following this, too, and it greatly disturbs me what has gone on with this instance out there, and I think the city has taken the lead role here in addressing it and I commend the mayor for his efforts here. Clifford Lee has done an excellent job, I think, in addressing it quick and having a meeting and getting his police together.

I want to commend the school board and Sandy MacDonald for his efforts here, but I also think that we, as a province, should take some role in this also because after all, it is a provincial - I see it as more of a provincial issue also. This is a reflection of PEI as a whole, not as the city of Charlottetown, and I in no way endorse what went on out there, and I think all Islanders should be upset with it and I'm quite pleased to see how the Islanders have rallied around this family and have said: Look, this is not PEI. This is not what we want to be. And I commend all of them.

And I've written Minister Dover on the day it happened. I've requested Minister Dover to do some things here on a provincial issue across Prince Edward Island, that school boards institute something in the schools or through the

Department of Education, to educate our youth that this is not the way PEI is and it should be not only Charlottetown, but across Prince Edward Island, and I support the resolution and I think the committee should support it because we shouldn't be talking out of two sides about wanting immigrants and then at the same time, endorsing - and I'm not saying we have endorsed what went on - and it disturbed me. I think I was disappointed to see it, and I hope our youth do not look at this as something that they can get away with, nor should they get away with it, and anything the province can do in conjunction with the city and with the school boards to alleviate this and knock it in the bud, sort of thing, right away because when I was growing up, if I was ever caught - I know if I would have been out there and my father caught me -

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Well, it's not the school system.

Richard Brown (L): Yeah.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): It wasn't the school system, then, that you were scared of?

Richard Brown (L): No. So you know -

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): (Indistinct)

Richard Brown (L): Yeah, and I think all parents should take heed here and I was greatly disturbed at it, and I don't want PEI to be that way. Thank you.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Well, Richard, I certainly agree that the large, the vast majority of Islanders have been disturbed with the events of this issue and I was very impressed with the vast outpouring of support for the Kos, and I think obviously the events of the issue will probably have an impact on the work of this committee, so I think it's a very good resolution brought forward and I'm glad to see that we have unanimous support (Indistinct).

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Mr. Chair, do you see forwarding something to the Kos from this committee officially?

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Absolutely.

Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC): Okay.

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: I think the implication is there in the resolution. Okay, excellent. Yes, I believe - okay, I'm not sure if I did. A question is called on the resolution. All in favour signify by saying aye?

Some Hon. Members: Aye!

Wilfred Arsenault (PC) Chair: Contrary-minded? Motion carried. Very good. Now we'll quickly get into an in-camera session to finalize the next step of the committee.