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**SESSION**        **2/62**

**PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND**

**Motion No:**        **5**

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**VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF  
HOUSE COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

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

**Thursday, October 6, 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:**

Honourable Philip Brown, Acting Chair  
Helen MacDonald  
Jim Bagnall replacing Wilfred Arsenault  
Wayne Collins replacing Eva Rodgerson  
Honourable Jamie Ballem  
Carolyn Bertram

**ABSENT:**

Fred McCardle  
Richard Brown

**GUESTS:**

Part I - Canadian Labour and Business Centre:  
Clarence Lochhead  
Part II - Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa  
Part II I - Department of Development and Technology:  
Mark Belfry  
Part IV - Thilak Tennekone

**STAFF:**

Charles MacKay, Clerk  
Thilak Tennekone



**Committee on Community Affairs & Economic Development**  
**Thursday, October 6, 2005**  
**10:00 a.m.**

**Charles MacKay (Clerk):** We'll call the meeting to order. As many of you know, Wilfred Arsenault is not able to be with us this morning so the first order of business will be to elect an acting chair for this meeting. So I would open the floor for nominations.

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** I would like to nominate the Honourable Philip Brown for the chair of this meeting.

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** I second it.

**Charles MacKay (Clerk):** All those in favour, signify by saying, aye. AYE. Contrary, nay. Motion Carried. Mr. Brown.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** I want to thank you for your ringing vote of confidence. We have two people sitting in today. We have Jim Bagnall sitting in for Wilfred Arsenault and we have Wayne Collins sitting in for Eva Rodgeron. This morning, we have three presenters. We're going to go first with Mr. Clarence Lochhead from the Canadian Labour and Business Centre because Mr. Lochhead has an airplane to catch at 12:10, so we're going to make room for him to present his presentation.

So we certainly welcome you to the committee this morning and thank you for taking the opportunity to be with us. As you know, we are exploring the challenges around immigration and retention and the many issues that effect this important subject so we thank you for being with us and we look forward to your presentation. At the end of your presentation, we'll entertain questions. I hope you'll be able to entertain questions.

**Clarence Lochhead:** Sure, absolutely, thank you very much.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Okay.

**Clarence Lochhead:** Thank you very much for having me here today. I'm delighted to be back in PEI. As I was saying to Wilfred, it's been some time. Wish I could stay longer. But in any case, I want to also say that originally this presentation

was to be made by Shirley Seward, our CEO and unfortunately, she had to deal with a serious illness in the family and so was unable to be here and sends her regrets. She of course, asked if I would do this which I found out actually about 28 hours or so ago, so I'm hoping that I can do justice to Shirley's presentation here.

In any case, what I'm going to do today, I'm going to try to go through this fairly quickly. It is a large presentation. I've provided you with hard copy handouts and certainly, we can follow up in anyway that you deem appropriate or necessary. I have five points, I guess, in the presentation that I want to, sort of go over today, five sections. I'll just tell you very briefly about the Canadian Labour and Business Centre. Then I want to provide a brief statistical profile of demographic trends both nationally and in PEI, that are really the backdrop in many senses for the skills in human resource challenges that we're facing, both within provinces and certainly, as a country and these trends have made us all, I think very aware of the important role and potential that immigration can play in meeting our economic and social objectives.

Then what I want to do is share with you some of the results, or viewpoints, what we call our Viewpoints Leadership Survey and I'll tell you a little bit more about that in the presentation. It will present some information on the views of business and labour on the issue of skill shortages and the perceived role that immigration plays in addressing those skill requirements. And as you will see, there's something of a disconnect, I think, between business and labour communities in terms of the potential that immigration might play in meeting the skills issues and human resource issues.

Then I want to move on to talk about some lessons learned from a series of roundtables that we held in 2005 where we went to five different cities across Canada and not the large immigrant-receiving cities but smaller, what we might call, second tier cities, if you will, to understand better the specific immigration issues and challenges that they face and we wanted to engage business and labour, education, government, stakeholders in those discussions and I'll share some of what we learned in those roundtables.

Then finally, leave you with some concluding remarks, really it's a simple message and it's about the importance and value, I think, of engaging business and labour on immigration issues and solutions. Certainly, one of the things we learned in our roundtables is that communities are different and they're facing different economic circumstances, social circumstances. Their immigration patterns, of course, vary dramatically and so, the solutions really have to come from the ground up, so to speak, and not necessarily from the top down. So the level of detail that I might have in the way of prescription, I don't think is appropriate. I think what we heard is that local area initiatives and local solutions are the ones that seem to be gaining the most ground.

The Canadian Labour and Business Centre, my organization is a non-profit organization and we seek to improve dialogue between business, labour, government and education. That feeds into, of course, public policy but also it's our desire to try to influence behaviour in the workplace as well, behaviour among unions, behaviour among employers in the workplace.

We have a multipartite Board which is composed, of course, of business and labour who are the voting members and government and education, as well. All the provinces are represented with the exception of Quebec, I believe, on our board. In fact, Ron MacMillan, the DM of Community Affairs is one of our board members.

We look at a range of issues related to labour market skills and skill shortages and workplace learning. Of course, that includes a whole range of things around the aging population, immigration of course, labour mobility, training and so on. We also have a couple of new developments where we have recently come to an agreement with the federal government to serve as something they call the Workplace Partners Panel which is essentially the same idea of a multipartite forum in which to look at pressing labour market issues of the day, if you will. That's just getting launched now and we are beginning to create an agenda for ourselves for the coming year and we will be undertaking task force and that sort of thing and we actually hope to make some of those regionally based as well. So maybe we'll have an opportunity to do some further work in PEI or Atlantic Canada for sure.

Finally, we have also become the lead

organization of the Work and Learning Knowledge Centre for the Canadian Council on Learning which was again, sort of just getting off the ground. So these are new initiatives for us and we're very excited about them.

There are, of course, a number of underlying demographic trends in Canada and certainly in PEI as we'll see that are heightening what we call, the Skills Challenge. These of course, are slowing population growth and this is by no means, a comprehensive or exhaustive list but slowing population growth; projected decline in the working age population; a rapidly increasing near, what we call "near retirement" population; Inter-provincial migration of course, is a concern; and growing reliance on immigration for labour force growth.

Now I'm going to go through each one of these in turn but for the sake of brevity, I'm probably going to go faster than I should through these and I suspect that most of you are quite familiar, in fact, with most of these. I did read some background documentation produced by, for example, the population strategy and there were very good analysis of many of these trends.

Just in terms of population growth is slowing, a lot of this is based on StatsCan data, somewhat dated using Census data but PEI's population growth rate is below the national rate and was essentially flat between 1996 and 2001 and of course, one of the main drivers for this, as we know, is fertility. And fertility rates in PEI at 1.6 is admittedly slightly higher than the Canadian figure of 1.5 but it's still way below the replacement level. So this is obviously a main driver of what we're seeing in terms of demographics.

We also note that there's a projected decline in the working age population and I think in the case of the PEI data, now this is again StatsCan projections. There's all sorts of assumptions here around these. It's a medium growth projection. I won't go into the details of the assumptions underlining it but in any case, it's probably the middle of the road projections produced by Statistics Canada.

In the case of PEI, the decline in the working age population is projected to happen sooner and be more pronounced than in Canada overall and you can just see by comparing those two sets of bars there. Of course, one of the issues that that brings

up is around dependency ratios, the percentage of children and elderly people, the working age population and in the case of PEI, it's projected to increase from 45.3 per cent in 2006 to 60.6 per cent in 2026. These are quite dramatic figures actually and there's a lot of concern certainly in Ottawa at the federal level, as you know, around issues of productivity, if we've got fewer people who have to add to sort of, GDP and maintain levels of living standards and so on. There's a sense that we need to somehow maximize the utilization of our human resources both by making labour markets as inclusive as possible but also developing the skills base of that labour force.

This is, I think, a really interesting thing that I was not aware of until last week when I began looking at some of these figures and this was this increasing near-retirement population. As you know of course, the baby boomer generation is just coming at the front edge of retirement and we're going to see a fairly large exodus of workers from the workforce over the next 10, 15 years.

Some of the comparisons with Canada are interesting here in the case of PEI. Looking between 1998 and 2004, older workers, sorry, workers less than 55 years old increased at a smaller rate than they did in Canada overall whereas the flip side of that of course, is that the increase in the number of workers 55 and over, increased more rapidly in PEI than it did in Canada. The last two figures on there or the last two sets of figures around the percentage of workers within 10 years of the median retirement age, I think, is very interesting.

Whereas in 1987, PEI had 10 per cent of workers who were these near-retirement workers-- StatsCan calls it a near retirement rate--was somewhat below the national average of 11.4. Then we sort of skip ahead to 2002, and we see in fact, this dramatic increase up to 24.9 per cent which is now above the national average. I mean, one in four workers is in this near-retirement group. Part of what's happened there is that the median retirement age has actually declined quite substantially in PEI. In fact, from 65.7 years in 1987 to 59 years of age in 2002, so that's partly why you see that big rise in your retirement workers.

Of course, one of the other demographic issues of concern is migration and in fact, we were just, I

was discussing this with one of the people here today about people leaving the Island, looking for opportunities elsewhere. Now again, these are figures between 1996 and 2001 and unlike the other Atlantic Provinces all of which experienced net outflows of migration over that period, PEI actually experienced a small net inflow into the province of 135 people and the greatest gain being with the case of Newfoundland and Labrador and the greatest loss being as you can see by the bar at the bottom, to Alberta.

I guess one of the simple messages around this is it's hard to develop your skills base if you have people moving out of the province and in particular, as this slide shows, when those movers tend to be your younger folks. And in the case of PEI, this is again net migration by age group and the greatest net losses from PEI over that period were in the 15 to 29 age category. Although as I was just mentioning, I met a young cab driver the other day who once lived in Montreal and now goes to school in Moncton and his parents live in PEI and once he's finished his degree, he wants to come back to the province and teach here in this province and I thought that was rather interesting. Of course, as we were saying, it would be a real shame if the opportunities weren't there for him to fulfil his goals.

Reliance on Immigration for Labour Force Growth, at the national level, 70 per cent of labour force growth over the decade was due to immigration and in PEI, it was seven per cent. I don't think this is surprising to anyone but again, given the population demographics, the reliance on any kind of growth that does happen in the labour force will very likely take place through immigration. It will play, certainly in the shorter term, an increasingly according of growth in terms of meeting the labour supply requirements. In some sectors already, by the way, like manufacturing, over the decade nationally it's an incredible figure something well, it's basically 100 per cent of the net growth in manufacturing over the decade was due to immigration.

So how many immigrants come to Prince Edward Island each year? Well again, you are more familiar than I with these figures, I'm sure. But for the 10-year period of 1994 - 2003, there was about 150 each year. This is according to Citizenship and Immigration Canada data. But in 2004, we see of course, that the number doubled to 317 due

in large part to the success of the Provincial Nominee Program from what I gather. Again, I don't know a lot of the details around it part from the numbers but there's been some really substantial growth in that since the program was announced in 2001. In fact, it went from 10 immigrants under the Provincial Nominee Program in 2002 to 143 in 2004.

So now, in 2004, the most recent data shows that almost one in two immigrants to the province was through that program so there's certainly some success there. Many provinces, as you know, are in fact, moving on the Nominee Program as a kind of a tool to better meet some of the immediate needs that they have around the labour force requirement. Alberta just announced yesterday, I saw in the paper, a plan to expand their program fairly significantly.

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** Just a question, we say there's 150 per year that come in and then in 2004, there's 317. Although we got that many, did we retain them?

**Clarence Lochhead:** Well in fact, if you look at the next slide.

**Helen MacDonald (PC):** Oh, okay.

**Clarence Lochhead:** That's exactly, and no, it's a great point because that data is where people intend to go, I mean, at the time of landing, where you're going to settle and those are settle-in intentions and of course, this is one of the very big issues for many provinces and that's immigrant retention.

As you can see here, this is what I call kind of a crude retention rate. All that we've done here is to look at over the period of 96 to 2001, all of those people who at the time of landing said they were going to come to PEI or wherever and then we look at the Census data for 2001 and say—how many are actually there? Okay, so there's—I won't go into the details of the methodology but it's a fairly crude way to measure it but nonetheless, the patterns make sense to people. When you show this to people, they say, I see myself in that data.

We did a presentation in Hamilton, Ontario and their retention rates are over 100 per cent. They get a lot of spillover from Toronto and they all sat around the table and said—see we knew that was

happening so I think the data are reasonable in that sense. So retention is certainly an issue here but I will say though, it will be interesting to see what happens with retention rates given the large proportion of people coming through the Provincial Nominee Program. There maybe more of a kind of a commitment to settle within the province under that program so it will be something worth keeping an eye on and moving forward.

Of course, all of that demographic stuff and I'm going to have to perhaps speed up here, I'll skip through a few if you will permit me, all of this demographic analysis is really speaking to the issue of tightening labour supply. And there's pretty much, I mean there are some nay-sayers out there about the whole issue of skill shortages and so on but I think there's a sense for the most part that labour supply is in fact tightening. We have people who are aging who will be leaving. We have fewer younger people coming in. We have a greater reliance on immigration. All of this is made even more challenging by the fact of apparently, growing demands for skills and that is what this data here basically shows.

Again, sort of using Census data over the last 10 years that the rates of growth, just comparing occupations that typically require university versus occupations that require secondary or less and you can see for example, in the case of PEI that occupations requiring a university degree increase by 21 per cent which is seven times the rate of the increase in occupations requiring secondary education or less. So again, a very simple indicator but again tightening labour supply, growing demand and for our board members, at least, this is something that they want to take a look at very closely.

One of the things we ask our constituencies, if you will, we do a survey every couple of years, what we call a leadership survey of business and labour and public sector leaders' perceptions of key challenges facing the economy. Now the last one we did was in 2002, it's a fairly small survey of 1,145 in 2002. There is a survey currently underway actually right now. In fact, I'm expecting to get some of the results or the data from that any day now and what I would certainly be willing to do is to update some of this information for you once we have these new results.

I'm also going to tell you that I have taken the bold

step as a researcher of saying that despite small sample size, I'm going to show PEI data here, as long as you recognize that there are a fairly small number of responses in the case of PEI. We had in our survey 30 managers and 39 labour leaders responding to the survey so I'm going to show results for PEI. But keep in mind that those are very small sample numbers.

Now what I did do though was compare the results of PEI to those of Atlantic Canada overall as well as Canada overall and for the most part, they're remarkable similar responses. In other words, the views of business and labour on PEI on these particular issues didn't deviate all that much. So I feel reasonably comfortable presenting that information.

Now having said that, this first chart is at the national level. All it simply demonstrates is that there has been a noticeable increase in the level of concern about the issue of skill shortages and again, this was 96 to 2002 - 96 was the first year we did the survey and what we see now is basically, half or more of each one of those four groups whether it's private sector or public sector, managers or labour feel that skill shortages is a serious, what we call a serious problem.

In the case of PEI, there's also a high level of concern. Again, these are our own survey results about skill shortages. We had one half basically saying that it was a serious problem and another third or so saying a moderate problem and not very many people didn't say that it's not a problem. So I don't know how that resonates with you and your experiences here in the province but it's certainly something that we found among managers and business labour leaders in PEI and it's certainly consistent with what managers and labour leaders are saying in other provinces, in fact, right across the country.

We asked them—how would you deal with those skill shortages then that your skill requirements moving forward? And what we found here is a remarkable level of agreement between business and labour as you might imagine. Sometimes when our board gets together, they don't necessarily agree on all of the issues but when it came to saying—how are you going to deal—what are the most important actions do you feel in terms of dealing with skill requirements? They were things like upgrading skills of current employees,

number one for both groups virtually everywhere in the country. Improve succession planning, mentoring of young workers, specific measures to retain current employees, hiring young labour market entrants; again the rank order varies a bit but those are the top five solutions.

Where is Immigration? Well, it's pretty low down on the list actually. We were quite surprised actually to find that very few managers or labour leaders whether it was in Canada, in the big immigrant-receiving provinces or in the small immigrant-receiving provinces, it's just that they didn't—now this is 2002 and I think it's going to be very interesting. There's a lot has happened in three years and the level of awareness about immigration issues has increased, I think, quite a bit. There's been a lot of media coverage for example, committees such as your own looking at the issues. But nonetheless, I mean for us, this was something of a surprise given what we saw in terms of a reliance on immigration for labour force growth that there appeared to be this kind of disconnect and I'll come back to that at my concluding remarks.

Maybe some of the issue has to do with some of the obstacles that managers see when it comes to hiring immigrants or foreign-trained workers. We asked them—those managers who were considering hiring what they thought those problems might be and this basically gives a list of what some of those issues are. Twenty-eight per cent said no obstacles. The most commonly identified obstacle was language difficulties. This chart rather, by the way, is for Atlantic Canada. The numbers were just too, too small in the case of PEI alone. But language difficulty is number one; too difficult to recruit from abroad, lack of Canadian work experience is common. Cultural differences interestingly enough in PEI or in Atlantic Canada at 42 per cent were significantly higher than what we found at the national level so the issue of cultural differences as a barrier is more apparent in Atlantic Canada which I think makes some sense given the relatively small immigrant communities that are here.

So finally, I'm going to run through a couple of final slides on some Round Tables that we held between March and June, or January and March rather of 2005. Citizenship and Immigration Canada asked us to moderate a series of five Round Tables on integrating immigrants into the

labour market, not attracting immigrants but integrating immigrants. But I guess I would argue that a lot of the strategies for integration are also attraction strategies. If you do well at integrating immigrants, I think you'll do well at attracting immigrants. So I think they're kind of split sides of the same sort of issues or objectives if you will. In any case, these Round Tables were more specifically around integration and as I said earlier, we stayed away from places like Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and instead we went to Fredericton, Hamilton, Victoria, Saskatoon and Windsor. We had the participation of local immigrant stakeholders which we defined as business, labour, immigrant-serving agencies, government and education. And basically, they shared their perspectives on the challenges and solutions to immigrant integration.

I'm just going to go through these fairly quickly in terms of what they identified as common issues recognizing again that one of the things we learned is that every place was different and they had their own set of issues and of course, it depended upon who was at the table at a particular Round Table. But they said that circumstances were unique and the kinds of solutions I think and partnerships and things that they were trying to get off the ground were different from place to place. So there isn't that kind of a one-size-fits-all necessarily strategy. But nonetheless, there were some common issues that we heard in those five areas.

We heard people say--immigrant expectations must be set realistically before they immigrate. Frustration can lead to exit, for example, in the case of retention. So we need to have realistic expectations about what their skills are, how they will be or not be recognized, what additional training and so on they may need to have their skills recognized.

We heard often that there was too much emphasis placed on university-trained immigrants and not enough on the skilled trades. Lack of national credentials standards was often cited. Inadequacy of language training, inadequate funding for immigrant-serving agencies was an issue particularly in Hamilton where they were receiving secondary migration from Toronto but only being funded for the intention based on the intention data. We also heard that multiple government stakeholders in immigration can make co-

ordination difficult. And we heard people talk about--they used the term "red tape" quite often.

We heard about as well and I think, this may be again sort of with my sort of business labour kind of focus here, the lack of SMEs, small business internal capacity to integrate immigrants, to have the resources to do whether it's specialized programming or what have you was something that was raised on a number of occasions. Also there was concern about negative attitudes to immigrants and the perception out there of immigrants as "job-stealers". And that's a difficult one to overcome. I'm not sure I have answers for that.

Some of the policy implications, obviously we thought about the need to inform immigrants before they leave home. Some of this is happening, I think at the federal level. Immigration Canada is attempting to do some things in that regard. City-based policies and resources lag the realities of cities as the centres of economic growth. Again, some of these may resonate with you and some may not. Cities were seen as taking on a lot of the burden of immigrant integration and not necessarily receiving appropriate recognition for that task and what it involves.

Resources for enhanced language training, particularly in technical language are essential. Again, we heard people maybe having access to basic literacy or ESL programs but not necessarily the professional and technical language training that might have been, that would have been required. We heard people within cities talk about the need for federal and provincial funds to find their way more directly to the local level for maximum input.

Inadequate credentials recognition is simply unacceptable. I mean we are bringing in a lot of people with skills. The number of people--I did a little cute statistic awhile ago where I calculated the number of immigrants on an annual basis coming to Canada with a university degree and it accentually equaled the output of Ontario's 29 universities each year. So if you think about the amount of human capital that that is, potential coming into the country each year, it's an absolute shame when we find that those skills aren't being utilized to their full potential. One of the problems as we all know there of course, is inadequate

credentials recognition and that's a large issue.

Small employers need help in integrating immigrants - look for union's help in workplace support for immigrants and I'll talk about that a little bit more in my last slide. Also, we heard about some very innovative practices involving business and labour. If you might, I'll just give you a couple of examples - the McCain company, for example, in Fredericton has a buddy system that they've implemented whereby mentors are available to help newcomers integrate and access needed services. So these are things that are in a sense being delivered through and by employers. They're simple things but nonetheless, deem to be very effective.

In Windsor, Ontario, the CAW negotiated a basic education for skills training program with the big three automakers and it's funded out of contract agreements and it delivers basic literacy and ESL training. It's available to everyone but a number of the people who are utilizing the program are immigrants. In Victoria, they have something called a Job Waves Program which operates as a partnership between the provincial government and the local Chamber of Commerce and the program supports job matching and from what we hear, has been quite successful.

Now there is a full report on the CIC's Round Tables and examples of these kinds of innovative approaches and issues and local perspectives and so you certainly, if you're interested, I can arrange to e-mail you a copy or it's available on our website. We have concluding remarks, again come back to the point that I have, I guess, a fairly simple measure and it's around, I think, the importance and value of engaging business and labour on immigration issues.

The first of these, I think, comes back to that data where we saw that kind of a disconnect where business and labour aren't really seeing immigration as a necessarily a very important strategy in dealing with human resource issues. I think that we need to, in a sense, put immigrants on that business agenda and that evolves I think further dialogue with business about the importance of immigration as a human resource strategy, increasing awareness of programs and that sort of thing.

There are, of course, encouraging signs from the

business community around these things both the Canadian manufacturers and exporters and Canadian Chamber of Commerce have put out publications and resource kits and that sort of thing recently, around hiring internationally trained workers but those are business associations. And I think what we need to do also is to put those issues on the agendas of actual business people in real businesses.

In any case, the second point - attracting, retaining and integrating immigrants requires actions on several fronts. Again, you know this better than I, none of this is simple stuff but we need to pay attention to language training; certainly, credentials recognition; employment opportunities; some of us discussed earlier, and the notion of welcoming communities figures prominently I think, in all of this. People come to the country not just to be employees but they come to be members of the community and so it's fundamentally important that if we want them to come that we have to welcome them when they arrive.

I read an editorial in the paper. A guy put it very nicely. He said-it's not enough just to open the door and let them into the house; we have to invite them to sit down at the table. I think business and labour have a role to play there. I think they have a role to play in all of those fronts whether it's unique ways of delivering language training; taking advantage of credentials recognition programs, certainly in the area of providing employment opportunities; and being part of that welcoming community. You know this example of a mentoring system, I think, is a really good example of the way that employers can be involved as part of the welcoming committee, if you will.

Finally, just to sort of to wrap up, engaging business and labour on immigration issues through dialogue, through partnerships and through innovative practices, I think is critical, not just to the integration issue itself but also to attracting and retaining immigrants. Having said all of that and presented all of this, again, the caveat of that, I don't think many of this is necessarily new to you around the table.

I read through PEI's Population Strategy '99 Panel and I found it to be a very good document and there were a number of recommendations there that I felt were very well placed and this is just one of them and I thought it worth ending on that,

particularly that the panel recommended that particular emphasis should be placed on additional official language training supports; means to support labour force entry by newcomers, including review of credentials and work-term placements; and on encouraging community-based initiatives to welcome and integrate newcomers.

In a nutshell, I think it says it very well. So I'm going to stop there and thank you for your time and patience and also to the other presenters, I realize that I've taken more time than I should have.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Thank you, Mr. Lochhead, certainly a lot of information there and I guess we'll proceed with a few questions. Mr. Collins.

**Wayne Collins (PC):** Thank you, Sir, for a very thorough presentation. Just a quick question regarding credentials, what role do you think governments can play in trying to expedite some of this credential approvals, given the fact that many professions, engineers, architects, lawyers, doctors, nurses, CPAs are very much self-regulating bodies, even legislate itself regulating bodies? You spoke earlier about the sense of job-stealing and one thing and another, there has been some thought that maybe some of these professions are really protecting their turf. What role can governments play in moving along the credential approval process?

**Clarence Lochhead:** Well I think one of the things that they can do is start by bringing various bodies to the table. I'm thinking of an example in Ottawa where we're located, a local initiative started initially by the United Way and funded through, government funding and they brought together the federal government, CIC was there, they brought the provincial government, they identified five particular occupations in the Ottawa labour market that they felt were in most need of attention and they brought together, they brought the professional regulatory bodies to those meetings. They brought the local immigrant-serving agencies. They brought the city to those tables, the economic development arm of the city as well to the table.

So they had the full range of government stakeholders at the table as well as the credential

recognition bodies. They have not come to a necessarily, a solution but one of the things that they have done is they have begun a process of working together to try to—initially sitting down and listening to one another and beginning the process of trying to make gains. I'm not sure that's necessarily a very strong sense of what governments can do but certainly facilitating those kinds of exchanges, I think is a starting point and an important role.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Mr. Ballem.

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** I just want to follow up on Wayne's comments and I guess my question, it's not really a question, more of a comment of finding labour because when you take and I'll use the health professions and you may have the Nurses' Union but you have the Association of Nurses which is a completely different organization so we may have labour at the table on one hand saying—give us more because we have a shortage. But the number of health professionals in Canada who are doing things other than what they are trained to do, would not only fill every shortage we have in health professions but provide us with a surplus and the number one stumbling block is the profession themselves.

There's always a reason and it was interesting your comments about what happened in Ottawa and you said that they don't have any meaningful results yet. I hope I'm pleasantly surprised but I won't be, I'm confident I won't be that it will be lip service because quite frankly, we haven't reached the point where the population is telling the professions, regardless of what it is, that someone trained in another country in all likelihood has equally or as good or better training than we have here. But yet we have this elitist attitude and the minute governments try to enforce it and say—well, we're going to do it and we're going to allow for credentialing here, then everybody's up in arms and saying—well, it's on your hands if something happens and I'm not sure how we get there with government doing it. I think that when you talked about throughout your remarks about having labour and management and employers at the same table, I think we need to have the third party at the table because they don't always, labour and associations don't always say the same thing.

**Clarence Lochhead:** It's a point well taken. I agree with the challenge. I mean, the same thing exists on the business side. You know, there isn't one organization that represents business and if you go to the Federation of Small Business or if you go to BCNI or you go to the CME, you're likely to find different perspectives on any of these issues. There's no one group that represents business and labour. I used that term but I fully take your point. But I guess I would argue that and accept fully the magnitude of some of the challenges and the sort of entrenched positions on many of these things. But if we don't bring these people together to discuss this, I'm not sure where we can even think we can accomplish. . .

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** No question, they should be at the table.

**Clarence Lochhead:** Yes.

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** It can't be just—I think that we have to find a way of not just having people at the table and then they can walk away. I think we need to find a way that they're not only part of the process but part of the process where there's some accountability.

**Clarence Lochhead:** Sure.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Are there any other questions? Okay, we certainly thank you for your presentation, Mr. Lochhead. We hope that you catch your plane and have a safe return to Ottawa. Thank you very much.

**Clarence Lochhead:** I want to thank all of you for your. . .

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** You did say that you will be able to follow up with the results of the 05 survey?

**Clarence Lochhead:** Absolutely.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** And the methodology of the survey has been consistent between 96 to 2002 and 05?

**Clarence Lochhead:** Yes it has.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Okay, so there's good comparisons there.

**Clarence Lochhead:** Yes and on our website again, there's full documentation around that methodology and so on.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** We would look forward to the results of the survey. Thank you very much.

## **Part II - Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa**

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:** Our next presenter is Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa and we certainly want to welcome you, Doctor, to our committee today. We are trying to be fair to all the presenters and we are looking forward to your presentation here this morning.

**Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa:** Honourable Chair and members of the committee, let me first thank you for giving me this opportunity to appear before you. I prepared a very brief presentation to present you at this location today and to save time I will try to go through it first and then if the time permits I would be happy to take some questions and answer to the best of my knowledge.

After reading the previous proceedings published on the website I arranged my presentation according to the format that you were following. At the beginning let me give you a bit of personal background to me. I was born in Sri Lanka and came to Canada as a Commonwealth Scholar in 1987. Having completed my graduate studies at Dalhousie University in this region I decided to make Canada home for me and my family for several reasons, both pertaining to Sri Lanka and to Canada. I lived in Halifax from 1987 to 1996 and moved to PEI in July, 1996. At present I am an Associate Professor of Economics at the University of Prince Edward Island and also one of the Adjunct Professors in the Faculty of Graduate Studies at Dalhousie University.

At UPEI I am a member of the UPEI Board of Governors and the Senate. As a member of the Advisory Committee on Internationalization at UPEI I work closely with international students who are part of the immigrant community living on the Island. In the community I am also the Vice-President of PEI Multicultural Council. As a researcher I work on the issues of immigration as a member of the Economics Domain Committee of the Atlantic Metropolis Centre. The Atlantic Metropolis Centre is one of the centres of

excellence for research on immigration and diversity established under the Metropolis Project. The project is funded by federal government and is connected to a network of researchers, nationally and internationally.

I have done some work on the issues of immigration as a researcher and as I mentioned earlier I read the presentations made by previous presenters of the committee and thought I should make a brief presentation based on the research findings of the researchers in the Metropolis Project. Given the socioeconomic challenges of Prince Edward Island, I strongly believe that there is a need for a proactive provincial immigration policy and strategy. I am here to voice my support for that and to appreciate the work that you are doing toward generating such a strategy.

As we know the issues of immigration have received a great deal of attention recently as a solution to critical population and democratic problems and their consequences facing not only PEI but also other provinces in the region and some other provinces in the nation. This is a time when all of the provincial governments in the region are seriously considering immigration as a solution to declining population and its socioeconomic consequences. These socioeconomic consequences include the likelihood of increasing aging population and the decreasing number of taxpayers to support the social programs and increased reliance, likelihood of increased reliance on federal transfers to the province for maintaining these programs and possible skill shortages that may lead to problems of innovation and technology development in the region. There are so many other consequences which may have been highlighted by other presenters before.

With the prospect of nearly zero or negative natural growth of population, increased out-migration and negligible rates of net immigrant inflows all of the governments in the region are concerned that the rate of declining population may further worsen in the near future. As you are aware Atlantic Canada is largely a region of rural character. The increased rural depopulation is one of the disturbing dimensions of the population problem facing the region. This characteristic is of particular concern for you I know and for other policy makers in the region as well.

The governments, businesses and people are seriously concerned and worried about possible negative consequences of these problems on socioeconomic well-being in the region and its provinces. The governments of the region have never shown this level of interest in immigration as a solution for the regional problems in their recent history. I consider this as a very positive development, not only for provincial policy making but also for national immigration policy making and I ask you to take this seriously into account and make use of this opportunity to work with other provincial jurisdictions to emphasize to the federal authorities the need for an increased regional emphasis in the national immigration policy and strategy.

I had the opportunity to talk to two federal standing committees over this summer where I emphasized the need for increased regional focus in their national policy making. One of them was the Standing Committee on Immigration and Citizenship. The other one was the Senate Standing Committee on Banking, Finance and Commerce. In front of both of these committees I asked for increased regional focus in national policy making rather than focusing just on the national issues, national averages, national magnitudes. Lead the flexibility and focus on regional issues-that was something that I demanded for.

I sincerely hope that at the end of these proceedings we will come up with a very interesting provincial immigration strategy. In designing an effective provincial immigration policy and strategy it is really important to understand the factors affecting the attraction, integration and retention of immigrants. The research conducted on these issues has identified several factors as important determinants, determinants of attraction and retention. Broadly they include characteristics of receiving communities as well as characteristics of the immigrant and the countries of their origin or the source countries.

The characteristics of receiving communities that can make a positive contribution to the attraction and retention of immigrants include the existence of the following:

(a) the existence of a critical mass of already established immigrants from a similar background that provide a comfort zone;

(b) the existence of a welcoming community, a community free of misconceptions about immigrants;

(c) the existence of services provided by the community especially immigrant services;

(d) the existence of educational, political and equal economic opportunities.

As you are aware at the present Atlantic Canada accounts only for about one per cent of new immigrant inflows. Actually adding to the population, new immigrant inflows to PEI is less than one per cent, it's .1 per cent actually. The attraction and retention of immigrants in the region has become increasingly difficult for various reasons. Things such as the Atlantic Metropolis and Atlantic Provinces Economic Council have identified several challenges in that attraction, integration and retention of immigrants in Atlantic Canada. So they equal the following- these findings are from the service and research done by the research at the Metropolis Centre. So they look at the issues of the broader Atlantic Canada. When it comes to PEI actually we don't have much research done on the issue about PEI. But these are happening, the research is taking place in that centre at this moment actually. So these challenges include:

(a) a greater incidence of rural communities and small towns that are less attractive to the majority of immigrants.

So when I say less attractive it is not a subject of judgement that we are passing on. These are the responses from the immigrants and the other people;

(b) lack of international links such as flights from international destinations; and

(c) lack of knowledge and familiarity with Atlantic Canada in other parts of the world;

When we talk about immigration we are not talking about one region, we are talking about the whole world. So we really are much bigger than before.

(d) an economy that does not provide economic opportunities to new immigrants;

Again this is one that those who come to this

region is feeling or think.

(e) conscious or unconscious discrimination against immigrants by established residents, employers and institutions including public sector institutions;

(f) lack of resources devoted to immigration on the part of provincial and federal governments;

(g) lack of involvement of the private sector and the public in immigration process;

And then the last one-

(h) international competition in attracting immigrants.

These are some of the challenges highlighted by the surveys conducted by the researchers in the region. These challenges are not easy to overcome in the short term however they are not impossible to, it is not impossible to design innovative policies to overcome challenges in a reasonable time frame. In my opinion this is a time in which not only who comes but also where they go should also receive a focus of emphasis in both the federal and provincial policies. The experiences in other jurisdictions have shown that governments all three levels of government, receiving communities, business communities, local community organizations and educational institutions can play a key role in structuring this immigrant strategy.

In a recent conference which I was invited to and held in Toronto, these governments, receiving communities, business community, local community organizations and educational institutions, all of them have been identified as key actors who can play a positive role in an immigration strategy. Therefore it is very important that the policy makers develop policies and strategies in partnership with all of these key players.

This summer I was invited to a conference organized by the Public Policy Forum on the theme of "Engaging Local Communities in Immigration Matters". In this conference participants from all over the country emphasized the need for multi-stakeholder approach, stable mechanisms for increased funding, increased pre-employment assistance, promising practices of workplace and

social integration as important factors in a strategy. In this conference some participants argued that the current immigration policy puts too much emphasis on the economic immigrants. Economic immigrants can bring immigrant economy benefits but from a long term perspective it is necessary to recognize the importance of encouraging non-economic class of immigrants especially in the early stages of building immigrant communities.

I remember the previous presenter also highlighted in the slides the fact that we are paying much attention to the skilled immigrants or the economic class. But, you know, the other immigrant classes should also receive considerable attention. For example, please let me present some of my thoughts about how family class immigration can help address some of the challenges in attraction, integration and retention on the Island, on our Island. I have worked with many immigrant communities and found that a large majority of immigrants think that this is the class of immigrants least favoured to most unwanted by the authorities and majority of the rest of the public. This is the perception created in part by how the policies and processes were designed and implemented by the authorities-in part by the policies and programs designed by the authorities. The other part is, you know, on the other part. It is important to note the fact that perceptions do matter in the area of attraction, integration and retention of immigrants. As we speak now the federal government has taken some steps to increase family class immigration and correct delays in the processing of applications. I thank the federal government for taking some concerns into account.

In my view family class can and should play an important role in attraction and retention of immigrants into rural Canada. One of the main reasons for the difficulty in attraction and retention in rural areas is the absence of linguistic or ethno-cultural enclaves in these areas. The existence of these committees make available so called ethnic goods, things like foods, places of faith, etc., goods that help attract, integrate and retain immigrants. The absence of them in rural areas poses the challenge of retaining very few skilled immigrants providing essential services in small, rural communities. So absence of these services make it difficult to retain even the small number of skilled immigrants who are living in these rural

areas.

It is not easy to develop a community in these places in a very short time. However, I believe that the presence of a small number of families or family members or close relatives can be a great substitute for ethno-cultural enclaves or ethnic goods. The historical experience of this province and many immigrant families remained in rural areas provide evidence for these. Allowing family class immigrants will initially help retain a small number of immigrants in isolation in those locations. Eventually they can lead to creation of larger communities that ensures easy attraction, integration and retention in the long term.

The small number of immigrants also provides us with international connections which can be very valuable in making links with sources of immigration and competing with other countries or regions. To make use of these links effectively the government departments dealing with immigrants such as citizenship in Canada-Immigration and Citizenship in Canada- and the other government departments must be more accessible to the public than now. The individuals working in these offices, both federal and provincial must be educated and trained to deal better with the public and the immigrants. I also believe that family class immigration will help us minimize the risk of recruiting unwanted immigrants who may, of course, pose threats to national and international security.

So those are some of my thoughts about non-economic class. Before I conclude I want to emphasize the fact that a stand-alone immigration strategy would not produce expected positive results given the social economic realities and challenges of this province. This is one of the strongest points I would like to make-that stand alone immigration strategy would not produce expected positive results given the socioeconomic realities and challenges of this province. As a researcher who has done some research on the issues of productivity of this Island and the fiscal realities of the province and some other economic aspects, I strongly believe what the province needs is a comprehensive development strategy in which the immigration policy is integrated with the strategies for long term growth and welfare improvements in the province. Such strategy must be formulated and designed with both a short term and long term vision. To be effective the policies

and strategies have to have social, economic and cultural needs, aspirations and priorities of the province. To be effective the policies and strategies must take into account the worldly, regional, national and international context and must change over time to adjust to new realities. This is a massive task and even among the Atlantic provinces we have so many disadvantages when it comes to attract immigrants. Our policies have to be very innovative. We have to undertake serious efforts to design effective policies. So it's not that easy. It may be high time now that the province thinks about establishing a task force to come up with a very comprehensive development strategy. Otherwise we'll be talking about the same issue after even a long period of time.

When I say a comprehensive strategy it should look at the issues of productivity, issues of unemployment, issues of fiscal difficulties and from what I have observed so far these are not the problems that can be eliminated overnight or in a short period of time. Given the possibility that these problems may aggravate I personally think this is the high time to establish a task force. There are other provinces in the country which have done this in order to alleviate the prosperity gap. The provinces, like Ontario, have done this before and therefore, if I could say so, one of the main reasons why I wanted to come here was to emphasize this point and I know in promoting such a task force the government can take advantage of a lot of resources that we have in the province, not in a commercial basis but also on a voluntary basis.

I know there are very, very capable trained educated people who are serving the government departments who can contribute to such a task force and there is UPEI where you can find some resources to work with. I'm surprised to see even though we have an Institute of Island Studies that we have not yet established a permanent connection between the UPEI and the province to conduct research on the basic or important economic matters of the province. And that has to be maintained. And these discussions must be brought forward very soon to design such a link.

There are so many other things I would like to discuss. If the questions come up, I may be able to look at those things also and I thank you once again for giving this opportunity to me.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:** Thank you Dr. Rankaduwa for coming here this morning. And I do appreciate the urgency that you put on your closing remarks about the need for an economic development strategy. I'm sure that the committee members noted that and it will be part of our discussion as we deal with this subject. Do we have any questions? Mr. Ballem.

**Hon. Jamie Ballem (PC):** One question. It's one about this task force that other jurisdictions have established. Can you elaborate a little more on what the task force would actually do?

**Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa:** Actually what they would do is they would look at, first of all we would look at the problems of the province. We have to take an account of the elements of the province and the problems we have. So it's very important to know that when we design policies-sometimes we may have to design policies-if you approach it from a point of view of one problem you may design a policy which may not address the other. I'll give you a good example. When I was speaking to the Senate Standing Committee, this idea came up actually- why does PEI have the lowest productive development for a long time per capita? There's reasons for this. There's others who are arguing that low wages, minimum wages in the province is the problem. But now if you look at it and you try and to increase the wages, increasing wages will lead to high productivity, that is what (indistinct) saw but at the same time it's not possible and it might, you know, in a province where you have high rates of unemployment also that can contribute to high rates of unemployment.

Now, how do we find the balance between this? Now, first of all we have to identify the areas where there are problems and then possible solutions as policies and to balance the complete among these policies. So you have to go to a policy that (indistinct). This is why I said it's not an easy task. You may need to gather people who are eligible or experienced in not only the economy areas but also other social areas. For instance some of my studies actually have shown that even the Welfare Payment Act actually, it leads to more and more welfare payments in this province-I don't want to make any serious comment about it because it has to be very carefully, you know, done. So that's the situation of the province.

Actually when I say what are the economy

fundamentals of the province, what are the realities? And I do not think that we have - I did not get the impression by listening to what I read in the papers or the ideas put forward by authorities that we do really understand the serious economic realities in the province. I did not get that.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:**

Would it be fair to say that we are in a process of change in our economic realities?

**Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa:** I think so. Actually there's the need here. I will give you a good example. As some of you know I work as an economist for this Alternative Budget for the province. Last few years, as you know, I was able to forecast the budget deficits very well. I do not claim that to be a very difficult task. It can be done by anyone who understands the economies. It's not difficult to forecast those things. That's what I feel. Let me approach it from my point of view. No government in the province would like to have higher fiscal deficits. But let us face the fact even with reluctance the governments had to realize the deficits. So it is not the willingness that we have for deficits what makes us have deficits, it is the realities of the province itself which forces us to realize the deficits. Have we examined them properly? I personally don't think so and I want to make it very clear most of the work I do I do it in good faith and good spirits. It's not to point fingers to someone, to credit someone politically or, you know, (indistinct) someone. As a citizen of this province I think I have a responsibility for this province. As long as I am here I am ready to give my time and my efforts to make a contribution. It is in that spirit I have come to this committee also.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC):** Ms. Bertram, and will it be Ms. Bertram after?

**Carolyn Bertram (L):** Thank you Doctor, for your presentation. I would just like you to just elaborate a little bit more. You had mentioned the aspect of the liaison with Island studies. I think that's sort of interesting to look at. How might you see that working?

**Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa:** I do not know why it did not happen so far but I do not see there's a link, an ongoing link between, you know, the main policy making body of the province and one of the main education institutions in the province. There is a - it may be a good idea as I said to strike a

committee as least comprising, you know, some young people in the university and in the government to at least gather time to time and discuss issues of the province on an ongoing basis. For instance, there are no research projects that are undertaken in that place about (indistinct) of the province, in my view. That can happen. I know the province supports the university. I mean it's provincial support which makes us exist there largely and perhaps making, you know, a special effort to create that link to do some, you know, research and share ideas that can flow between the government and the university, maybe something to think about. I don't have a model for that but I think that, you know, is a need.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:** Thilak.

**Thilak Tennekone:** Mr. Chairman, I agree, it's a very good point. We have to have a working relationship with Island Studies. Just for our information I would like to mention that the province and Island Studies have jointly helped organize and design a project recently. Dr. Baldacchino and a couple of students from Island Studies Department have come forward to do research in Prince Edward Island to identify some important issues on immigration and settlement during a specific time period. So the province is really supportive and we have a chance to work with that group of students and Dr. Baldacchino regarding this study. So we are going to be working with Island Studies Department and to see the results of this research study.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:** Thank you. Any other questions? If no other questions thank you for presenting here this morning.

**Dr. Wimal Rankaduwa:** Thank you.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) Acting Chair:** And especially as you said you came here out of your concerns for the Island and we really appreciate people that present as individuals because it's your personal concern. Thank you very much, Doctor.

**Part III - Department of Development and Technology: Mark Belfry, Acting Director, Immigration Services.**

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):**

The next presenter is Mark Belfry. Mark works with the Department of Development on Immigration Policy and I think he's in an acting position. Gary Petipas had presented to us earlier and you are doing some of the work that Gary was involved in?

**Mark Belfry:** Yes, Gary was PNP Program Manager. I filled in for Gary while he was away. Gary came back about a month ago and I moved into a position of Director of Immigration Services, an acting role and Gary, the PNP Manager reports to that role and then I report to Allan Smith and work with Elaine Noonan. Gary since has left again, so I'm doing that as well and we'll be filling that position shortly.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):**

Very good. So you have some opening remarks, Mr. Belfry, and then you're open to questions of the committee members?

**Mark Belfry:** Yes. I'm here, of course, at your request. I'm here to provide whatever answers and help and service you need. Just by way of background, I came over the first of June so I've had about four months on the file. I believe I'm probably ready to answer most questions. It's been a very sort of intense learning period and I'm actually handling files as are the program officers so I can see all the pieces of it.

Prior to coming over, I was involved with Elaine. I was Director of Policy for Development and Technology so I led the policy development around the population secretariat so I have that angle as well. So since Gary was here, which I think was probably early-May or mid-May, what we have seen is, of course, the creation of this or soon to be creation of this Director of Immigration Services, an important role. We have set a target of 300 nominees this year. Last year, we did 163 and I think the year before that, we did 40-something, so a dramatic increase.

We're trying to move beyond PNP because really immigration on Prince Edward Island has been the Nominee Program. It's a wonderful tool but really that's what we have done in terms of, within the bureaucracy to encourage immigration and we haven't really looked beyond that. So with the creation of this position, the intent and of course, with Elaine Noonan's role as Executive Director of

the Population Secretariat, the intent is to go beyond just nominees and to use that tool.

What we have coming into the province are some very impressive people. I sit and I interview people and my background is in business, I look at these people and think—my God, I wish you were living here and investing in Prince Edward Island. I mean you know when you meet some people that these are very high quality and they come and a high percentage of them leave. It's a little bit like opening the oyster, eating the meat and throwing the pearl away which Lord knows, we could use as well.

So we need to, we need to not only nominate people, we need to connect to them and we need to get them connected to the community. So we're doing 300 nominations. We've greatly accelerated the process. It used to be a very long process. Now, we want to do our 300 nominations by the first of December and we did a call the first of August for 160. So it's a much accelerated process. We are starting the process of networking better, of looking at, of trying to distinguish when they come through our door—you know you don't, they're people, so you don't know. But you look at this person and say—I think from their answers, they're going to Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver. They're not, they all tell us, oh I love PEI, the fresh air but some of them you get a sense if that's all they tell you. Maybe they're just reticent but for the most part.

Then you see people and it's at least half who really love it when they see it and really would like to live here if they could make it happen. Those are the people that we have to try to find a way to make that happen. Still you're going to lose some of those people because they're people and they may like it here but they may or may not make the connection. We're trying to move into from simply nominating people to trying to connect to people.

We have to do some work around business. We've started that. The summer really was taken up with, in Gary's absence, my learning the Nominee Program and it was pretty much all consuming but we did make some—we went to some businesses and we've spoken to businesses about their needs and we heard for years, for example, I've heard in my previous role for years that we need 25 machinists in Prince Edward

Island today. Well with the Nominee Program, we have the ability to make that happen.

So we went to a company and we said—let's do it and we've sent them CDs for a number of people. If they pick one of those people, we will nominate them and I think, we've tried to be very clear about that. We've started discussions. We are not nearly at the point that we should be but we've started discussions with people like Wimal or perhaps Thilak around you know, you are a contributing member of the Island community. Is there someone that you would like to see us nominate? There has to be a fit economically because you're not going to do anyone a favour if you bring them from Sir Lanka or wherever and they come here and they can't get employment or they can't start a company. There has to be a fit. But if there's a fit, we're saying—let's do that together because building on the existing community is I think, the first opportunity for immigration.

We've had those discussions with a number of people. We're developing our promotional plans to go out and look for immigrants that will be a fit here. We are working—you heard this from probably from Elaine Noonan as well—we are working on a good quality job portal. We have a good product already in Tech PEI. We're trying to expand that because jobs are the, income is the first requirement. People have to eat.

Elaine is planning and I'm with her on an immigration settlement forum and Thilak is working on this for November. And after that time, we've drafted a policy document for the Population Secretariat but we'd like to have that input from the community. I'm also speaking to the Federation of Municipalities the same week and they will pull that together in the document and if that's approved, we'll have a public document hopefully by the end of the year, if not sooner.

So that's really what we've seen happen since the last time we were here. A final comment, to me the keys to immigration are - build on existing communities. We need to understand that Prince Edward Island, I think like any jurisdiction, will not attract everyone, nor do we want it to attract everyone. We want to attract the select few who fall in love with the place and want to be here and want to build their lives here. The kind of things that Wimal was saying about this is where I want

to be. In every population across the globe, there will be the Wimals and the Thilaks and the others who say—what a wonderful place, I want to be here. And all we have to do is find those people and the potential for success, I think, is very strong. We need to get out there and start doing it.

We need to be open about economic opportunities. They're much better than they were. There are opportunities for people. There's need for people now. Very quickly, our employment rate is a bit disappointing this year. I thought it would drop below 10. It's still 11.3 per cent. But you have to remember that half of those are people who want to work in seasonal industry. So if you take half of 11.3, you're looking at about somewhere between 5.5 and six per cent and Wimal and economists would tell us that that's the natural unemployment rate. So the unemployment rate for people who actively want to join the permanent policies in the workforce is just about at the natural level.

We absolutely have job shortages here as the man earlier, Mr. Lochhead, I think was saying. We have had success in moving people from the seasonal workforce to the permanent workforce but that's a slow process. We've gone from 14 per cent, sorry, we've gone from 20 per cent unemployment in the mid-90s in rural PEI to 14 per cent. So we've made, 14 per cent is pretty good. We've made real strides there but it will take awhile before—we don't know what percentage of the population are never going to join the permanent workforce because of abilities or whatever. We don't know what that is. It could be 2.5 per cent. There's really only a very small room to move now to move people from seasonal to permanent and the progress is being made.

The summary of all that, sorry to be so long on it, was we need people to come to work in Prince Edward Island. We need to win over business, that's a big part of the settlement process. Business are the key. There's a company that told us that they needed a whole bunch of machinists. We said—great. We're here. Tell us how many you want. Here's some applications and nothing has happened. So really they have not come to terms with this yet. I think the local people have—they're absolutely committed because they're seeing work going to other places, Ontario and the United States which I don't think anybody

that's connected to PEI would like to see. So they're anxious but we're not, the company as a whole, I don't think has grasped that yet. But we need to do a lot of work around business. We need to follow up and build networks. We need to say—here's an immigrant.

There's a lady who works at the new Institute of Nutrisciences and Health who wants to be in Prince Edward Island but doesn't have family support. We need to work to connect those people to other people, both immigrants and non immigrants so they'll feel part of the community. That work has to be done. It's person by person. It's slow. It's warm and fuzzy but it's got to be done because otherwise, they won't stay, not because they don't want to stay but because the connection hasn't been made. So we're working on that. We've made some progress. We've actually - I won't go into details - but we're trying to build those connections where we can.

In terms of immigration, we've done some work around specific regions of the globe that we need to target. We don't need major cities. This is a small place. We don't need to have someone in every major city in the world. We can open channels from smaller cities starting with one or two and build that, people where we think that community has a fit. I think you're looking for areas where the legitimate aspirations of talented people are being thwarted for whatever reason. Of course, there's probably as many reasons as there are countries so we've begun that kind of work. There's a lot of work to be done yet. I think in the spring, we'll be probably more actively in the world seeking to bring people.

So that will be a summary of where we are to date. I hope that's useful and I'd be happy to answer any questions people have.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Thank you very much, Mark. Mark himself is an immigrant to the province, an interprovincial immigrant.

**Mark Belfry:** That's right.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** And we're delighted that you chose PEI as the community to live in with your family and we will open the floor now to questions. Mr. Ballem - I just want to let members of the committee know a couple of the participants, including the chair, have

a commitment at 12:00 o'clock so we are going to be restricted a little bit and Thilak has a presentation of about five minutes to make.

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** Mark, I guess the question, in your last few comments where you talked about there's probably as many issues as there are countries. Do we target countries and if not, why don't we?

**Mark Belfry:** We haven't done because really we've been in a receptive mood till now. We need to change that. We need to be proactive. Our sense is that we need to target a couple of different sources. One would be a fairly wealthy source where you would get people that might buy farms or businesses where there's no succession plan in the family. Or people that could come start a business and we're constantly hearing about the Netherlands and it does seem to be the right place to start in terms of that wealthy community.

But we also need to target the less wealthy country because our wages are not as high as other areas, so we need to - if we can bring machinists here at \$15 an hour, the same machinist can make 38 perhaps in Alberta. So it's no sense, it's less likely that you'll get a machinist from the Netherlands or a well-developed country that will be satisfied with \$15 an hour. There are places in the world that have very talented, capable people but their expectations are less. So as well as the Netherlands, we need to look at some other place. My suggestion in the work we've done to date is probably someplace to begin with, in Eastern Europe because if you're going to go to the Netherlands, it's much easier to get to the Netherlands to say the Ukraine, then it is to go there to India. It's not that hard but it makes sense to target.

To me that would be a starting point. That's not finalized yet but that kind of thing. And Minister, not - just to finish - it doesn't have to be Kiev or Amsterdam. It can be a smaller city. What we need is a pipeline from that place. I mean, we estimate we need 500 immigrants a year and we wouldn't want 500 Dutch immigrants, I think we'd like to have a mix of different sources. If you're talking about 30 families from a country, it doesn't have to be in a city of two million people.

**Honourable Jamie Ballem (PC):** I guess our first presenter today finished off with one of his

comments about—you just don't open the door but you must invite people to sit down at the table. I think if we look at the number of Island residents who are moving to another province, very few just go on spec or go by themselves. I mean, we always hear of family members, well I have a cousin in Alberta. I have a friend in Alberta. Are we using our current residents with ties to Sri Lanka because I'm sure that when immigrants come into Toronto, they are welcomed by their community and we don't have that community here. So how do we establish that?

You know, it's one thing to say that somebody moves into Marshfield and you say—well okay, we're going to invite them into our community but we could have very little in common in terms of social, religion, ethnic. The welcome mat can be out but how welcome is it of what we're trying to provide. I guess looking at not only targeting countries but using residents to say, maybe that's the pipeline and are we doing things to make it easier for family members to join, or friends to join people in the province.

**Mark Belfry:** We've established that with immigration, I heard Wimal mention that. We've established that we can nominate family members. We are not restricted from nominating family class. We thought we had to go to Citizenship and ask for approval, for example, to nominate the nephew of someone. That's not the case. So we have to begin to talk to people in the community, begin to reach out where we need someone and say, is there someone you would nominate? I would encourage you to do the same and to send them to us.

A story is, for example, there's a Lebanese restaurant in town where the owner is in his 60s would like to retire. He's having difficulty finding a Lebanese chef. He said, you know my nephew would be perfect and he would like to come. We said—now it's a paper process because the approval is from the federal government ultimately. We can accelerate the time it takes to get it together and we do. In the end, it's a federal process and the paperwork has to be done right. But now we're working with a family member to nominate that young man and they're excited about it. Once he comes to the country, once we nominate, we can get him a work permit. We can't get a work permit first. I could go into that but it's going to be difficult, we think, to get a work permit

from Citizenship before we nominate for a chef. You might be able to get it for a scientist or an engineer. But after we nominate, we're told at the same time we nominate, we send a letter of support, we'll get a work permit.

So I would encourage all of the Members of the Legislature where there's someone in your community who, and you know is a contributing member and somebody we're glad to have, to invite them to say—who would you bring? The only concern we have is we have to open about employment because again, you don't do them a favour if they come and spend three months on unemployment or six months and are disappointed and leave. So we want to try to match, but we believe as we do match, it will create employment for more people, both Islanders and other immigrants that come.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Mr. Bagnall.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** Just on the discussion that you are already taking, you were saying for us to get out and tell anybody that we know too. What advertisement are you doing with the immigrants that are already on Prince Edward Island that this entrepreneur program is available and the sponsorship that we can get these people to maybe talk to their families away? If they don't know this and it's not being advertised because I didn't know until you told me this right now. Why aren't we doing—cause we're looking for to improve our immigration—why aren't we doing something in getting to these people in the form of an ad or a form of a newsletter to our immigrants? I think we pretty well know the immigrants that are here. Why couldn't there be a targeted letter going out to the families from your department stating that this program is in effect?

**Mark Belfry:** You're absolutely right and it hasn't been done and it has to do simply with the transition we're in and the Director of Immigration Services isn't even formally posted yet. So we didn't actually have—we didn't have the structure—we didn't have people doing that. It needs to be done and it will be done.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** Okay.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Any further questions for Mr. Belfry? Well before

we're done it is likely, Mark, we will have to call on your resources again as we conclude our deliberations and we thank you for coming this morning and updating us on what the department is doing. Certainly, a project that we all have to work at together as many of the presenters said. There's certainly government, there's the educational institutions, there is the public in general that has a role to play in this. The story will continue. Thank you very much.

**Mark Belfry:** Thank you.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** Mark, you said you guys would do this?

**Mark Belfry:** Yes.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** Send out? Can you send a copy of that correspondence to our committee? We'd like to have it for, as part of maybe in our recommendations even.

**Mark Belfry:** We're now developing promotional materials so at this point, it's developing—it's a foundation. This will take us a little while to get that done and then what we'll do is share all of that with the committee. Letters—that was a really good point—hasn't been raised before and I don't want to make the assumption that we do know where to reach everybody. But as we—whatever we have, we'll be happy to share and I'm just not certain that we'll know how to identify, will know how to identify people.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** There must be already because we talked about immigration figures, we talked about our population, of how much our population are immigrants. Obviously, we must have the figures there.

**Mark Belfry:** Yes, we know the numbers.

**Jim Bagnall (PC):** The information must be available or we're talking about figures we don't have.

**Mark Belfry:** Well the StatsCan, this gentleman has the number from StatsCan and we know of landings and things like that but in terms of addresses, it worries me a little so I just don't want to commit at this table that I'll send you, if you don't mind, a copy of a letter. We'll certainly share all of the advertising information, everything we

have and anything we can identify like that, we will share. But whether we can do a sort of mass mailing, I just don't know how we'd identify the community. But we'll certainly explore it.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Thank you very much.

#### **Part IV - Thilak Tennekone**

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Okay, Thilak.

**Thilak Tennekone:** Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mine is not a formal presentation. I did my presentation actually a couple of months ago. I just wanted to share with you some of the terminology, definitions and explanation and some key words most widely used during the last few sessions.

I remember one time our members were asking—what is the meaning of that and what is the meaning of this and so on. The other thing as the research and the public service representative for this committee, I thought it is my duty to share this information with you for our own benefit and our better understanding.

Immigration, as we all know, to enter and settle in a country to which one is not near to. I'm from Sri Lanka. I immigrated to Canada in 1992. Now I am a Canadian. So I'm an immigrant too. The whole process actually, the migration from one country to another. We have been talking about immigrants. Who are the immigrants? Individuals living in a country that is not their country of birth. I remember one time about two months ago when we had our last session, we were talking about the immigrants and said why we they are called immigrants and so on.

Some of the influences of immigration as we heard here during the last few months, mainly the most important influences are a variety of languages. I remember the Multicultural Council did a study about five years ago, about six years ago so they identified there are 74 different cultures, people who belong in different cultures, living on Prince Edward Island. These people speak different languages, different religions and customs. The contributions immigrants make, made by these people from other countries—we certainly have skilled workforce enrichment as Mark mentioned,

some economic growth and also we have the richness and the diversity in our community. So those are the main influences of immigration.

I would like to talk about the refugees . One of our major categories of this immigrants- refugees or individuals who left their home country or previous country of residence to escape religious, political prosecution, civil wars or even natural disasters. Ethnicity is a term, is a set of certain heritage, language and cultural practices that define the identity of a particular group.

We have been talking about cultures, cultural differences. A culture is a group of people that share the same customs and beliefs, social form and materials, traits. A cultural group can be a racial group, it could be a religious group or it could be a social group.

A number of our presenters talked about visible minority. All the immigrants are not visible minorities. I am a visible minority but a person who came from former Yugoslavia is not a visible minority. So the basic definitions we have as defined by the *Canadian Employment Equity Act*, a visible minority is a person who is non aboriginal, non white or non Caucasian. Ethnic minorities are individuals whose ancestry is not English or Anglo Saxon.

A number of times we heard discrimination, discrimination against the race, discrimination against the first language or discrimination against a cultural event. So it is basically unequal treatment of non dominant groups or individuals either by a person or a group or an institution with dominate identity which through the denial of certain rights results in inaccurate subordination or deprivation of political, social, economic and cultural rights.

Racism is a term used, a compilation of ideas, ideas that assert the superiority of knowledge of one group over others based on political or cultural characteristics. Racism has two major forms. Individual racism is attitudes and behaviours of individual to a racial minority and we have systemic racism which is practices and policies built into the institution or framework that prevents full participation of racial minorities.

The term prejudice is used prejudging a person or a group negatively. Mostly it's a negative

connotation used today without adequate evidence or information.

That is just food for thought, just to share with you. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Thank you very much Thilak. That group of terminology, will that be circulated to all the members so we can have?

**Thilak Tennekone:** Yes. I'm going to give copies to Marian or Myra so they can certainly distribute among all members.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC) (Acting Chair):** Thank you very much. I also want to bring to the attention of the members a presentation that is presented by the Prince Edward Island Federation of Labour and it's included with your agenda today. I encourage all of the members to read it and it will form part of the discussion package for our conclusions.

With that, I would ask if there's any additional new business for the committee to entertain this morning.

**Wayne Collins (PC):** I'd just like to commend the chair for a fine job here this morning, appreciate it.

**Honourable Philip Brown (PC):** Well I thank you, Mr. Collins and I do apologize for not being able to wear the robe this morning but at the next meeting, I hope that the robe will be available.

Before I call for a motion of adjournment, I'd like to remind the committee members that the next meeting of this committee will be October 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:30 a.m. Do we have a motion for adjournment? Thank You.