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Report of the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration

IMMIGRATION TO ATLANTIC CANADA: MOVING TO THE FUTURE



Chair
Robert Oliphant

NOVEMBER 2017

42nd PARLIAMENT, 1st SESSION

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Citizenship and Immigration**

**Robert Oliphant
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NOTICE TO READER

Reports from committee presented to the House of Commons

Presenting a report to the House is the way a committee makes public its findings and recommendations on a particular topic. Substantive reports on a subject-matter study usually contain a synopsis of the testimony heard, the recommendations made by the committee, as well as the reasons for those recommendations.

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has the honour to present its

FOURTEENTH REPORT

Pursuant to the Order of Reference of Wednesday, November 2, 2016, the Committee has studied immigration to Atlantic Canada and has agreed to report the following:

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SUMMARY

Canada's four Atlantic Provinces have had to manage a number of challenges in recent decades, including lower natural population increases, lower immigration levels and higher interprovincial migration. According to the latest census data, about 20% of the population in Atlantic Canada is 65 and over, which has led to labour shortages both in the short-term and long-term. The population and labour needs vary from rural areas to the urban centres. In some cases, employers used the former Temporary Foreign Worker Program to fill labour demand.

Broadly, immigration levels in Atlantic Canada have remained relatively low compared to the national average, however, in recent years, the Provincial Nominee Program has increased the number of immigrants to the region. Two out of the four provinces have even doubled the number of immigrants welcomed between 2006 and 2015. This year, the four Atlantic Provinces in collaboration with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) launched the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project. Unique to this immigration program is the employer's obligation to create a settlement plan for the immigrant that is hired. Both federal and provincial governments were of the opinion that this would assist newcomers to quickly integrate and view Atlantic Canada as their home.

In November 2016, the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (hereafter referred to as "the Committee" or "CIMM") was mandated by the House of Commons to study immigration to Atlantic Canada, and in particular, the challenges associated with attracting, integrating and retaining newcomers in the region. This report provides an analysis and a number of recommendations based on the issues heard during the course of the study. Among these, the Committee would like to highlight the need to increase immigration to Atlantic Canada (recommendation 1) in order to facilitate population growth similar to the national average (recommendation 20). Specifically, the Committee heard that it would be important to broaden the skill levels in immigration programs to encompass the needs of all industries (recommendation 15). Lastly, IRCC must provide more services in the Atlantic Provinces and reopen its office in Prince Edward Island (recommendation 21).

The Atlantic region's natural beauty, vibrant urban centres and friendly smaller communities offer a variety of social and economic advantages to newcomers. In particular, the wage gap between an immigrant and a Canadian-born individual is smaller than in the rest of Canada. There are numerous quality higher education institutions, with students who often wish to remain after graduation because of the quality of life.

The Committee wants to ensure that the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Project is evaluated moving forward so that the difficulties encountered in the first year of this program are improved for the second year. In addition to assisting Atlantic Canada, it is thought that other regions in Canada facing similar demographic issues could eventually adopt a pilot program of this nature.

The life cycle of immigration to Atlantic Canada should be clear: promoting Atlantic Canada to potential immigrants; identifying gaps in regional and labour needs; having nimble immigration programs and processes so that immigrants with the right skills come, and, in the end, make their home permanently in Atlantic Canada.

LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of their deliberations committees may make recommendations which they include in their reports for the consideration of the House of Commons or the Government. Recommendations related to this study are listed below.

Recommendation 1

In light of the challenges in retention, that Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada work in collaboration with provincial governments to increase the share of newcomers to the Atlantic Provinces and to adequately fund the infrastructure needs and support services for the immigrant community in Atlantic Canada. 19

Recommendation 2

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with the Atlantic Provinces to ensure adequate provision of settlement services to attract and retain newcomers to these areas. 19

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with Atlantic Provinces and stakeholders, consider predicted labour shortages in all skill levels when planning and delivering their immigration related policies and programs. 23

Recommendation 4

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with the Atlantic Provinces, improve programs tailored to address francophone immigrant recruitment, including outreach campaigns specifically aimed toward countries with French as an official language; to develop strategies for integration and retention needs specific to the different contexts of francophone minority communities; to revise the applicant requirements for provinces so that the percentage of francophone or francophile applicants selected is targeted to the percentage of francophones in each provinces; and to develop an evaluation and accountability framework to measure progress achieved and ensure attainment of immigration objectives in these communities. 23

Recommendation 5

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada better ensure that funding is made available to settlement services and language training in French in the region to improve the sustainability of the region’s French communities. 23

Recommendation 6

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada take into consideration the other pillars of the Atlantic Growth Strategy, namely innovation, infrastructure, clean growth and climate change, and trade and investments, when implementing immigration policy under the Atlantic Growth Strategy in order to more effectively respond to labour demand in Atlantic Canada. 30

Recommendation 7

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada take the immigration lifecycle of recruitment, processing, settlement and retention, into consideration when implementing immigration policy and programs under the Atlantic Growth Strategy. 30

Recommendation 8

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with the Atlantic Provinces, annually evaluate the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program; ensure that the process is harmonized, simplified and expedited for Atlantic Canadian business applicants; and provide the Committee with details of the new process..... 34

Recommendation 9

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada digitize the application process for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program..... 34

Recommendation 10

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada model the service level standards, including processing times, for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program on those currently existing for Express Entry, for which expected processing times now stand at less than six months..... 37

Recommendation 11

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, allow international students in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and those who have been recruited by a designated employer under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program to access settlement services once they have started the permanent residency application process. 39

Recommendation 12

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, work with relevant stakeholders to issue work permits to students that are valid throughout their study program in Atlantic Canada, including co-op terms, and issue post graduate work permits valid for five years in Atlantic Canada. 40

Recommendation 13

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with the provinces to streamline their processes to facilitate the transition from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program to become permanent residents. 43

Recommendation 14

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada consider under its Refugee Resettlement Program ways to bring extended family members of currently settled refugees with skill sets in demand for immediate resettlement to the Atlantic region..... 45

Recommendation 15

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada work alongside the Atlantic Provinces, regulatory agencies and trade unions to simplify recognition of foreign qualifications in the region. 46

Recommendation 16

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada adapt current programs to make room for candidates with job skills classified as National Occupational Classification C or D to address the needs of Atlantic Canada including sectors such as agriculture, construction, fisheries, hospitality and transportation. 46

Recommendation 17

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Global Affairs Canada to finance a recruitment campaign to attract immigration to the Atlantic Provinces, and evaluate on a regular basis if the campaign is successful. 48

Recommendation 18

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work in partnership with its provincial counterparts, municipal partners, settlement service providers, multi-ethnic organizations, employers and other stakeholders to develop and implement a coordinated settlement strategy for Atlantic Canada..... 53

Recommendation 19

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada facilitate access by employers of best practices in settlement services and recognize the ability of local settlement agencies to provide settlement plans to employers within the framework developed for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program. 54

Recommendation 20

That the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada continue to allocate additional immigration to Atlantic Canada, as proposed by the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, in order to create conditions in which Atlantic Canada can enjoy population growth at the national average. 57

Recommendation 21

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada reopen and re-staff the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship offices in Atlantic Canada, which were closed or downsized on June 1st, 2012, and look to Atlantic Canada as a preferred location for future increases to the department’s footprint. 58

Recommendation 22

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in cooperation with Canadian Heritage, review the funding model for service provider organizations to include diversity education that supports inclusion. 61

Recommendation 23

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada perform a gender-based analysis of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and develop targets to set a standard for gender equality. 62

Recommendation 24

That a committee of the House of Commons conduct a formal review of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program after March 2020, to assess whether retention and immigration levels to the Atlantic region improved under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, and whether the pilot should be offered as a new immigration program nationally. 62



IMMIGRATION TO ATLANTIC CANADA: MOVING TO THE FUTURE

Preface

On 2 November 2016, the House of Commons agreed to the motion, Private Members' Business M-39, which instructed the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration (hereafter referred to as "the Committee" or "CIMM") to undertake a study on immigration to Atlantic Canada. The Committee should

consider, among other things, (i) the challenges associated with an aging population and shrinking population base, (ii) retention of current residents and the challenges of retaining new immigrants, (iii) possible recommendations on how to increase immigration to the region, (iv) analysis of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot initiatives associated with the Atlantic Growth Strategy; and that the Committee report its findings to the House within one year of the adoption of this motion.¹

The Committee decided² to hold ten meetings on the topic of immigration to Atlantic Canada. From 29 May 2017 to 19 October 2017, the Committee heard from 55 witnesses and received 10 written submissions.³

Introduction

In July 2016, the Government of Canada and the four Atlantic Provinces (New Brunswick (N.B.), Nova Scotia (N.S.), Prince Edward Island (P.E.I) and Newfoundland and Labrador (N.L.)) launched the Atlantic Growth Strategy,⁴ which aims to "bring stable and long-term economic prosperity in Atlantic Canada."⁵ The strategy focuses on "five areas aimed at stimulating economic growth in the region,"⁶ including immigration and developing and retaining a skilled workforce.

1 House of Commons, *Journals*, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, No. 103, 2 November 2016.

2 House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration [CIMM], *Minutes of Proceedings*, 1 February 2017; CIMM, *Minutes of Proceedings*, 3 April 2017.

3 CIMM, *M-39, Immigration to Atlantic Canada*.

4 Government of Canada, *Atlantic Growth Strategy*.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.



As part of this recognition of immigration as an important pillar for economic growth, the federal government and provincial partners announced in July 2016 the development of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP)⁷, which was implemented between July and December 2016 and launched in March 2017 under the larger Strategy.⁸

In order to understand the need for immigration to Atlantic Canada, this report begins with an overview of the challenges in Atlantic Canada associated with an aging population that is also impacted by outmigration and a shrinking labour workforce that is not naturally renewed, which has persisted for decades. There have been fewer newcomers generally to this region than in the rest of Canada, with urban centres faring better than rural areas. However, labour and skills shortages in a variety of sectors have not attracted more newcomers to the region, which has had an impact on the provinces' tax bases and on their capacity to deliver social services. To address these challenges both the public sector and the private sector have sought to find solutions through immigration.

The report describes the immigration programs available to Atlantic Canada (the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, the Provincial Nominee Program, and Express Entry for high-skilled immigration), as well as the specific challenges that each present for the applicant or the employer. Temporary residents, such as international students or temporary foreign workers, are already in the region in significant numbers but there are questions as to which programs can help them best transition to permanent residence.

Attracting immigrants to live permanently in Atlantic Canada requires outreach on a number of levels. Not many foreign nationals⁹ outside of Canada are aware of the benefits of living in Atlantic Canada. Additionally, once they arrive, there needs to be adequate support from provincial governments, municipalities, settlement services providers, multi-ethnic associations, employers and local communities. Immigration programs, both traditional programs and the new Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, must also include consultations with businesses to determine what their labour demands are and how to meet them. Employers participating in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program are required to provide a settlement plan for each new employee. Although challenging, this business engagement is seen as a pivotal element to successful integration and retention. Other elements essential to retention include welcoming communities, culturally, ethnically or religiously specific community infrastructure and the full recognition of the importance of the family unit and its well-being.

7 Government of Canada, [Atlantic Immigration Pilot](#).

8 For a complete timeline, please see the [Atlantic Growth Strategy: Action Plan](#).

9 As per section 2(1) of the [Immigration and Refugee Protection Act](#), "foreign national" means a person who is not a Canadian citizen or a permanent resident, and includes a stateless person."

Part 1: Understanding the Challenges in Atlantic Canada

Canada currently has a population of approximately 35,152,000 people.¹⁰ Using the results of the 2016 Census of Population, Statistics Canada analyzed population size and growth in Canada, which has increased tenfold since 1867.¹¹ “[T]he country's population growth has not been constant over those 150 years”¹² and varies greatly depending on the region. In addition, the growth pattern has changed from natural increase¹³ to migratory increase.¹⁴ Fertility rates have gradually decreased after the baby boom period and the “migratory increase became the key driver of population growth at the end of the 1990s.”¹⁵ These population changes have many implications for Canadian society, namely for its economy, regional density as well as ethnocultural and linguistic composition.

As the Committee heard during the course of its study, Canada’s four Atlantic Provinces have seen a huge variation in population growth over the decades. From 1851 to 1951, the population of Atlantic Canada grew to be about 14% of the country’s population.¹⁶ During the baby boom period, each province in Atlantic Canada had a high fertility rate that ranged from 4.8 to 5.1 children for every woman aged 15 to 64.¹⁷ However, during the decades following 1960 and 1970, nearly half of those baby boomers left the region,¹⁸ which put the Atlantic region on its current trend of slower population growth than the national

10 Statistics Canada, “[Canada \[Country\] and Canada \[Country\] \(table\) Census Profile](#),” *2016 Census*, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2016001, Ottawa, 2017.

11 Statistics Canada, “[Population size and growth in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census](#),” *The Daily*, News Release, Ottawa, 8 February 2017.

12 Ibid.

13 According to the [Statistics Canada](#), a natural increase is the difference between the number of births and deaths.

14 According to [Statistics Canada](#), a migratory increase is the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants.

15 Statistics Canada, “[Population size and growth in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census](#),” *The Daily*, News Release, Ottawa, 8 February 2017; CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0955 (Laurent Martel, Director, Demography Division, Statistics Canada).

16 For more information, see Statistics Canada, [Population of Canada, by province, census dates, 1851 to 1976](#). Source for 1851 to 1951: Statistics Canada (formerly Dominion Bureau of Statistics), *Census of Canada, 1951*, vol. X, table 1. Newfoundland and Labrador joined Canada’s Confederation in 1949 therefore Statistics Canada has no data for this province previous to the 1951 Census.

17 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 October 2017, 0910 (Michael Haan, Canada Research Chair in Migration and Ethnic Relations, Department of Sociology, Western University, As an Individual).

18 Ibid.



average. In 2016, Atlantic Canada's population was 6.6% of Canada's population.¹⁹ According to Statistics Canada, the slower population growth in Atlantic Canada is mainly due to three factors: lower natural increases, lower immigration levels and higher interprovincial migration.²⁰ As a result of lower population growth, "the share of Canadians living in the Atlantic region has decreased in the last five decades"²¹ affecting the region's economic prosperity and social composition.

Part 1 of the report discusses demographic and labour demand challenges in Atlantic Canada, including a shrinking labour workforce and regional disparities in areas such as social services. It also provides an overview of specific sectors that are employing foreign nationals in Atlantic Canada.

A. An aging population and a shrinking labour workforce

A number of witnesses spoke of the decline in population in the Atlantic region, as well as labour market shortages for skilled labour.²² They noted that the negative effects of the decline in population on the economy could not be mitigated by an increase in productivity or innovation.²³ The Committee heard that the effects of an aging population are well-

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- 19 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant, Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning, Government of Prince Edward Island).
- 20 Statistics Canada, "[Population size and growth in Canada: Key results from the 2016 Census](#)," *The Daily*, News Release, Ottawa, 8 February 2017.
- 21 Ibid.
- 22 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter, Director, Economic Immigration Policy and Programs, Department of Citizenship and Immigration); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Government of New Brunswick); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan, Vice-President, Atlantic Canada, Canadian Federation of Independent Business); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0850 (Reint-Jan Dykstra, Director, Canadian Federation of Agriculture); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1635, (Adam Mugridge, Product Development Manager, Louisbourg Seafoods Ltd.); Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, [Written Submission](#), p. 3.
- 23 Mr. Ray Ivany, President and Vice-Chancellor, Acadia University, spoke of the findings of a 2014 report on the economy that had been commissioned by the Government of Nova Scotia. Projections over a 25 year period showed an important decline in the labour market population that could not be compensated by productivity or innovation. The report had recommended tripling immigration to Nova Scotia. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1535 (Ray Ivany, President and Vice-Chancellor, Acadia University).

known, including a decrease in demand for goods and a decrease in tax revenue,²⁴ making it more difficult for provincial governments to provide education and health services.²⁵

1. Demographic challenges

Data from the 2016 Census of Population indicates that the population of Atlantic Canada is declining in the 15 to 64 age range as the number of senior citizens rises.²⁶ As Mr. Laurent Martel from Statistics Canada pointed out one out of five individuals living in the Atlantic Provinces is now 65 and over.²⁷ He compared the statistic to other provinces such as Alberta, where only 12% of its population is 65 and over.²⁸

Professor Ather Akbari, Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity at Saint Mary's University, provided a ten-year overview of the age distribution of the population nationally and in the region by province, as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1 – Age Distribution of Population,
Canada and Atlantic Canada, 2007 and 2017 (%)**

Age group	2007			2017		
	0–14	15–64	65+	0–14	15–64	65+
Canada	17.11	69.74	13.42	16.01	67.11	16.88
Newfoundland and Labrador	15.12	70.92	13.96	14.16	66.04	19.80
Prince Edward Island	16.94	68.15	14.91	15.99	65.00	19.01
Nova Scotia	15.54	69.54	14.92	13.94	66.30	19.76
New Brunswick	15.72	69.52	14.76	14.56	65.34	20.09
Atlantic Canada	15.59	69.75	14.66	14.32	65.85	19.83

Source: Table submitted to the Committee by Ather H. Akbari, [Population Aging and Immigration in Atlantic Canada](#).

24 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1610 (James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics, University of New Brunswick).

25 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1700 (Marco Navarro-Génie, President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Institute for Market Studies).

26 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter); Statistics Canada, "[Age and sex, and type of dwelling data: Key results from the 2016 Census](#)," *The Daily*, News Release, Ottawa, 3 May 2017.

27 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1015 (Laurent Martel).

28 Ibid.



According to his analysis, the population in Atlantic Canada that is over 65 years old has increased by 5.17% over the last ten years, whereas nationally there was only a 3.46% increase.

In addition, Atlantic Canada is facing a decline in birth rates, lower than the national average,²⁹ and a long-standing trend of young residents leaving the region to settle and work elsewhere.³⁰ Mr. Martel observed that of these young adults in the Atlantic Provinces it was mostly those who live in rural areas that seem to be leaving in a significant way to settle elsewhere in their province or in Canada.³¹ He is of the opinion, however, that these migratory losses of young adults do not exist in the Prairie Provinces, for example. He suggested that there are many demographic factors in the Atlantic Provinces related to retention of young adults (particularly from those in their early twenties to about 28 years old).³²

Finally, witnesses were concerned with the fact that New Brunswick's population has declined by 0.5% since 2011, meaning deaths are now outnumbering births, which is a first in Canadian history.³³ Mr. Martel also cautioned that this population decline “trend ... will increase in coming years.”³⁴

2. Low numbers of newcomers in Atlantic Canada compared to the rest of Canada

Statistics show that Atlantic Canada receives only a small share of immigrants in proportion to its population. In 2016, New Brunswick, with a population of approximately

29 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1000 (Laurent Martel); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0905 (Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Provinces Economic Council).

30 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1000 (Laurent Martel).

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0955 (Laurent Martel); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0905 (Finn Poschmann).

34 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1015 (Laurent Martel). The Harris Centre Regional Analytics Laboratory at Memorial University also estimates that in Newfoundland and Labrador

deaths would exceed births over the projection period [between 2016 and 2036] and, excluding migration, there is little or no internal propensity for growth. When migration trends are factored, [the] outcomes are similar ... - the overall population is projected to decline by nearly 8% between 2016 and 2036 under the medium scenario.

Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, *Regional Population Projections for Newfoundland and Labrador 2016-2036*, September 2017.

730,710 people, had an immigrant population of 4.6%, whereas 21.9% of Canada's population was composed of immigrants.³⁵ Nova Scotia's population was about 908,340 people and had 6.1% of immigrants. In P.E.I., there were 139,685 people and 6.4% identify as immigrants. In Newfoundland and Labrador, 2.4% of the province's population (521,250) identified as immigrants.³⁶ Based on data from the 2016 Census, Table 2 illustrates the share of immigrants in Atlantic Canada in proportion to the region's population and Table 3 provides an overview of the percentage of immigration living in Atlantic Canada by period of arrival to Canada.

Table 2 – Population of Atlantic Canada in 2016 by Non-Immigrants, Immigrants and Non-Permanent Residents Categories

	Total population	Number of non-immigrants ^a	Number of immigrants ^b	Number of non-permanent residents ^c	% of non-immigrants	% of immigrants	% of non-permanent residents
Newfoundland and Labrador	512,250	496,410	12,080	3,770	96.9%	2.4%	0.7%
Prince Edward Island	139,685	129,405	8,940	1,340	92.6%	6.4%	1.0%
Nova Scotia	908,340	842,760	55,675	9,900	92.8%	6.1%	1.1%
New Brunswick	73,0710	69,2535	33,810	4,360	94.8%	4.6%	0.6%
Atlantic Canada	2,290,985	2,161,110	110,505	19,370	94.3%	4.8%	0.8%
Total in Canada	34,460,060	26,412,615	7,540,830	50,6625	76.6%	21.9%	1.5%

Source: Table compiled by the authors using Statistics Canada, "[Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity Highlight Tables](#)", 2016 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016007, Ottawa, 2017.

Notes: a) According to [Statistics Canada](#), "'non-immigrants' includes persons who are Canadian citizens by birth."

35 According to Statistics Canada, Ontario has the highest share of immigrants (29.1%), followed by British Columbia (28.3%), Alberta (21.2%), Manitoba (18.3%) and Quebec (13.7%). Statistics Canada, "[Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity Highlight Tables](#)", 2016 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016007, Ottawa, 2017.

36 [Ibid.](#)



b) According to [Statistics Canada](#), “immigrants’ includes persons who are, or who have ever been, landed immigrants or permanent residents. Such persons have been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Immigrants who have obtained Canadian citizenship by naturalization are included in this category. In the 2016 Census of Population, ‘Immigrants’ includes immigrants who landed in Canada on or prior to May 10, 2016.”

c) According to [Statistics Canada](#), “non-permanent residents’ includes persons from another country who have a work or study permit or who are refugee claimants, and their family members sharing the same permit and living in Canada with them.”

Table 3 – Percentage of Immigrants Living in Atlantic Canada in 2016 by Period of Arrival to Canada

	Total number of immigrants	% immigrated before 2001	% arrived between 2001 to 2005	% arrived between 2006 to 2010	% arrived between 2011 to 2016
Newfoundland and Labrador	12,080	45.9%	8.2%	15.5%	30.4%
Prince Edward Island	8,940	41.3%	6.2%	14.9%	37.6%
Nova Scotia	55,675	55.1%	9.2%	14.5%	21.2%
New Brunswick	33,810	51.0%	7.2%	14.2%	27.6%
Atlantic Canada	110,505	51.8%	8.2%	14.6%	25.5%
Total in Canada	7,540,830	12.3%	14.0%	16.1%	12.3%

Source: Table compiled by the authors using Statistics Canada, “[Immigration and Ethnocultural Diversity Highlight Tables](#),” 2016 Census, Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-402-X2016007, Ottawa, 2017.

This relatively smaller share of immigration to the region is also observed when comparing the number of newcomers to Atlantic Canada to Canada’s overall numbers. Table 4 shows that from 2006 to 2015, the number of immigrants arriving through federal immigration programs as permanent residents to Atlantic Canada slowly increases each year.

**Table 4 – Permanent Residents Admitted to Atlantic Canada
by Province from 2006 to 2015**

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Newfoundland and Labrador	508	546	627	606	715	685	732	834	899	1,122
Prince Edward Island	565	992	1,454	1,759	2,593	1,739	1,100	999	1,632	1,190
Nova Scotia	2,586	2,523	2,651	2,388	2,397	2,136	2,337	2,528	2,667	3,403
New Brunswick	1,646	1,643	1,856	1,914	2,125	1,968	2,212	2,020	2,837	2,578
Atlantic Canada	5,305	5,704	6,588	6,667	7,830	6,528	6,381	6,381	8,035	8,293
Total in Canada	251,649	236,762	247,261	252,218	280,730	248,732	257,809	259,039	260,282	271,847

Source: Table compiled by the authors using Government of Canada, “Canada - Permanent residents by province or territory and urban area”, [Facts & Figures 2015: Immigration Overview - Permanent Residents – Annual IRCC Updates](#).

According to the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the number of immigrants to the Atlantic region has increased mainly due to the “growth in numbers entering through the Provincial Nominee Programs”³⁷ of each Atlantic province, “whereby the provinces select and nominate potential immigrants who ... are approved by the federal government for permanent residency.”³⁸ For instance, in 2015, Atlantic Canada received 4,640 individuals through the Provincial Nominee Program³⁹ and 2,533 people through federal immigration

37 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, [Report Card: Immigration on the Rise in Atlantic Canada](#), January 2017.

38 Ibid.

39 More specifically, in 2015, New Brunswick received 1,765 nominees; Nova Scotia welcomed 1,395; followed by Prince Edward Island (950) and Newfoundland and Labrador (530). Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, [Report Card: Immigration on the Rise in Atlantic Canada](#), January 2017.



programs.⁴⁰ In 2015, the region also received about 1,110 refugees and other immigrants admitted on a humanitarian basis.⁴¹

Mr. Wadih Fares, President and Chief Executive Officer of W.M. Fares Group, outlined the strength of Nova Scotia's Provincial Nominee Program by highlighting that 2016 was a record year for immigration, with nearly 5,500 new immigrants.⁴² He also noted that "Nova Scotia welcomed over 1,500 Syrian refugees through government-assisted, private, and blended sponsorships. This is a significant increase compared with previous years in which our province typically resettled only about 200 refugees."⁴³ Recent census data shows that in 2016 "[e]ach of the Atlantic provinces received its largest number of new immigrants, which more than doubled the share of recent immigrants in this region in 15 years."⁴⁴

Nevertheless, in 2016, Atlantic Canada had an overall share of national immigration of 4.6%,⁴⁵ whereas the share for Quebec was 18%, Ontario was 37% and Western Canada was 40%.⁴⁶ Witnesses emphasized that Atlantic Canada is not getting its "fair share"⁴⁷ of immigration and without a larger base it "can't get the critical mass to attract more immigrants."⁴⁸

When retention rates of immigrants to Atlantic Canada (and perhaps any rural area of Canada) are factored in, the net benefit to Atlantic Canada is much less than the benefit enjoyed by the country as a whole, especially in urban areas. To be equitable and to

40 More specifically, 1,558 of all economic class immigrants to Canada settled in an Atlantic province, whereas 1,975 people settled through family reunification in 2015. Government of Canada, "[Section 3: Federal-Provincial/Territorial Partnerships](#)," *2016 Annual Report to Parliament on Immigration*, November 2016.

41 Ibid.

42 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1640 (Wadih Fares, President and Chief Executive Officer, W.M. Fares Group). He stated that this was the highest number of immigrants since the Second World War.

43 Ibid.

44 More specifically, "[i]n 2016, the Atlantic Provinces were home to 2.3% of all recent immigrants in Canada." Statistics Canada, "[Immigration and ethnocultural diversity: Key results from the 2016 Census](#)," *The Daily, News Release*, Ottawa, 10 October 2017.

45 It is interesting to note that in 2014 the rate of new immigrants to Atlantic Canada was 3.1%. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter).

46 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

47 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1540 (Hon. Frank McKenna, Deputy Chair, Corporate Office, TD Bank Group).

48 Ibid.; The comment about creating "a critical mass and [attracting] immigrants to the area specifically in consideration of larger centres such as Montreal, Toronto, or Vancouver" was also echoed by J.D. Irving Ltd. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0850 (Susan Wilson, Director, Human Resources, Sawmills and Woodlands Division, J.D. Irving, Limited).

address the current crisis, the immigration target for Atlantic Canada should take retention into account. Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 1

In light of the challenges in retention, that Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada work in collaboration with provincial governments to increase the share of newcomers to the Atlantic Provinces and to adequately fund the infrastructure needs and support services for the immigrant community in Atlantic Canada.

Recommendation 2

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with the Atlantic Provinces to ensure adequate provision of settlement services to attract and retain newcomers to these areas.

3. Regional disparities between rural areas and urban centres

The demographic challenges within the regions and provinces of Atlantic Canada are not all the same. Some regions in Atlantic Canada have relatively high population growth, mainly in urban centres such as Halifax (N.S), Moncton (N.B.), St. John's (N.L.) or Charlottetown (P.E.I.).⁴⁹ For example, between 2006 and 2016, Fredericton (N.B.) grew by 14.9%, Charlottetown by 12.5%, and Halifax by 8.3%.⁵⁰ However, Atlantic Canada still has a relatively higher proportion of its population in rural areas than the rest of Canada. Professor James Ted McDonald from University of New Brunswick pointed out that 48% of New Brunswick's population lives in rural areas, compared to 19% for Canada overall.⁵¹ To provide a better understanding of this regional disparity, he said that the "last time Ontario and Quebec were 48% rural was in 1921. Even Saskatchewan, with 33% of its population in rural areas, last had a 48% rural population in 1976."⁵²

Nevertheless, the Committee saw that the regions with declining populations are essentially in rural Atlantic Canada, as seen in Figure 1.⁵³ These decreases in most rural

49 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 1000 (Laurent Martel).

50 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1610 (James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics, University of New Brunswick).

51 Ibid.

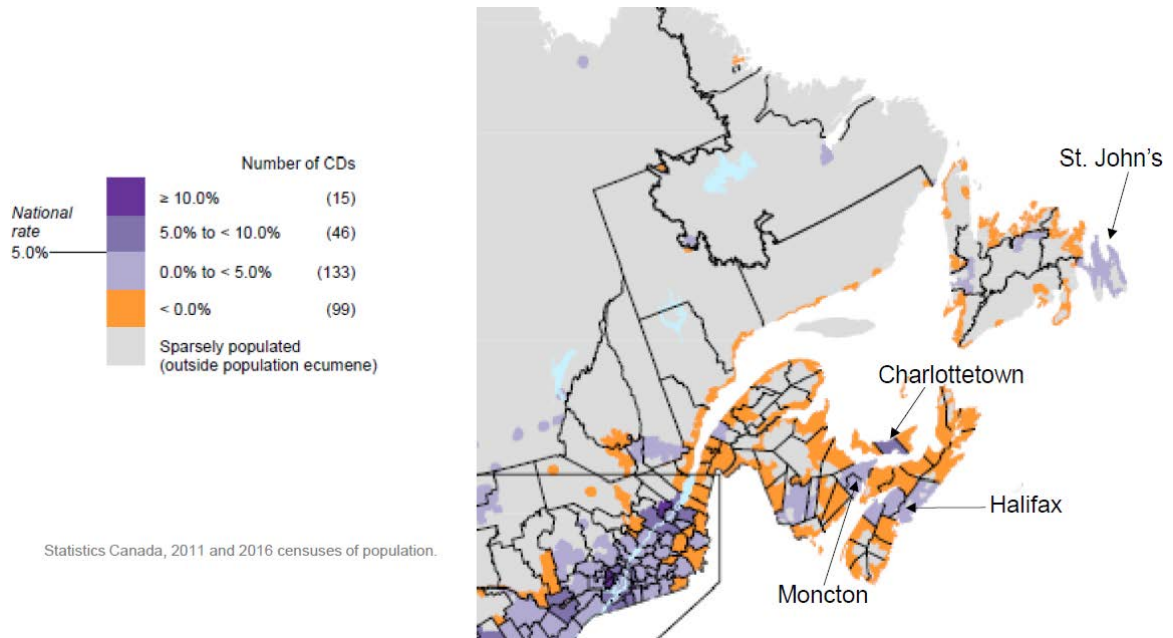
52 Ibid.

53 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 1000 (Laurent Martel); CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).



areas are due to outward migration to urban areas either in Atlantic Canada or elsewhere in the country.⁵⁴

Figure 1 – Population Growth in Atlantic Canada by Census Divisions (CDs) from 2011 to 2016



Source: Graphic submitted to the Committee by Laurent Martel, *Atlantic Canada: Key Demographic Challenges*.

Mr. Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, observed that, among Canada's provinces, Atlantic Canada has the highest unemployment rates, which are above 8%, and the lowest employment to population ratios overall.⁵⁵ However, others argued that cities in the Atlantic Provinces are doing well, with low unemployment rates.⁵⁶ As an example, Mr. MacDonald indicated that, “in May 2017, the unemployment rate in the Moncton, New Brunswick, census metropolitan area or CMA was 6.1%, and in Saint John 5.6%, compared with 6.7% in Peterborough and 5.6% in Abbotsford.”⁵⁷ Urban centres in the Atlantic region are also relatively successful in attracting immigrants compared to rural areas; in New Brunswick,

54 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1730 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

55 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 0905 (Finn Poschmann).

56 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 October 2017, 0905 (Howard Ramos, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University, As an Individual).

57 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1610 (James Ted McDonald).

80% of immigrants are choosing to reside in the main three cities.⁵⁸ On the other hand, rural areas in Atlantic Canada face high unemployment rates, which, according to Mr. McDonald, “arise from an older, less skilled workforce who have lost jobs in forestry and fisheries and whose skills are not readily transferred.”⁵⁹ For example, the unemployment rate is “11.8% in P.E.I. and 12.3% in New Brunswick. By way of contrast, the unemployment rate of rural Quebec is 5.4% as of May 2017.”⁶⁰ Witnesses remarked that immigration is difficult for recent immigrants in rural areas in Atlantic Canada⁶¹ because there is a lack of social infrastructure, such as high-quality and high-speed internet and public transit.⁶² As one witness concluded, “[t]he Atlantic Provinces are urbanizing, and immigration on its own will not solve the challenges of rural areas and small towns in these provinces.”⁶³

4. Labour shortages in a variety of sectors

The Committee also heard that labour shortages in the sectors of agriculture, construction, fisheries, hospitality, and transportation in Atlantic Canada are higher than the national average.⁶⁴ According to Mr. Reint-Jan Dykstra, Director at the Canadian Federation of Agriculture, the agri-food sector is constrained by chronic labour shortages, despite increasing wages and decreasing unemployment in the sector.⁶⁵ He clarified that this is a national issue with 59,000 vacancies across Canadian agriculture, with a job vacancy rate of 7%.⁶⁶ He warned that the vacancy rate will double by 2025 due to population aging.⁶⁷ According to a 2015 study conducted by the Canadian Agriculture Human Resource Council

58 Ibid. The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council’s *Report Card: Immigration on the Rise in Atlantic Canada*, January 2017, also made it clear that about 80% of new immigrants to the Atlantic region settle in the “leading urban centres – the four provincial capitals plus Moncton and Saint John.”

59 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1615 (James Ted McDonald).

60 Ibid., 1610.

61 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant); CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1715 (Hon. Donald Arseneault); CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 October 2017, 0905, (Howard Ramos).

62 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1740 (Craig Mackie, Executive Director, Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers to Canada).

63 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1610 (James Ted McDonald).

64 CIMM, *Evidence*, 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan); CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant); CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 0850 (Reint-Jan Dykstra), CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 June 2017, 1635 (Adam Mugridge); Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, *Written Submission*, p. 3.

65 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 0850 (Reint-Jan Dykstra).

66 Ibid.

67 Ibid.



cited by Mr. Dykstra, these vacancies result in \$1.5 billion in lost potential sales each year.⁶⁸ Mr. Adam Mugridge from Louisbourg Seafoods Ltd. echoed Mr. Dykstra's comments in relation to labour shortages due to an aging labour force. Indeed, the average age in Louisbourg Seafoods Ltd processing plants in Nova Scotia is 58 years old.⁶⁹ In Atlantic Canada, the rate of private sector job vacancies is around 3% in construction and hospitality, whereas the national rate is about 2.4%.⁷⁰ Ms. Juanita Ford from Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador also shared her projections: the tourism sector in Newfoundland and Labrador could reach a 15.2% job vacancy rate by 2035, leaving over 3,000 jobs unfilled.⁷¹ This would result in a "shortfall in revenue to the tourism sector in Canada by 2035 [that is] estimated at \$27.5 billion,"⁷² which will "hamper growth, decrease investment in the sector, cause higher operating costs, reduce profits, erode the sector's ability to compete, and cause inferior customer service."⁷³ Other witnesses stated that, in their industry, they need to fill some positions with immigrants in order to grow their company. Mr. Vaughn Hatcher from Day and Ross Transportation Group stated that he needed more people in his company to drive an extra 2,000 loads a year to the United States from Atlantic Canada.⁷⁴ Digital Nova Scotia projected a 3.5% growth in the information communications technology industry between 2017 and 2021, but the sector reported difficulty finding workers.⁷⁵ The financial sector in Nova Scotia described the same difficulty.⁷⁶ The province estimated that by 2021 there will be a need for "55,000 new workers due to a shrinking labour pool."⁷⁷

These labour shortages are caused by a retiring workforce and a difficulty in finding workers with the appropriate skills in the geographic region. According to Mr. Akbari, the population decline affecting mostly rural Atlantic Canada is of concern because most natural resource

68 Ibid.

69 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1635 (Adam Mugridge).

70 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan).

71 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1650 (Juanita Ford, Manager, Workforce and Industry Development, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador).

72 Ibid.

73 Ibid.

74 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1905 (Vaughn Hatcher, National Manager, Owner Operator Recruiting, Day and Ross Freight, Day and Ross Transportation Group). The Canadian Trucking Alliance estimates that by 2024 the industry will have a shortage of 34,000 to 48,000 drivers. Canadian Trucking Alliance, "[CTA Study: Truck Driver Shortage Accelerating](#)," News release, 14 June 2016.

75 Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, [Written Submission](#), p. 3.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

based industries in the region are located in rural areas.⁷⁸ In addition, Mr. Jordi Morgan from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business indicated that the shortage of qualified labour is a top priority issue for small and medium enterprises because it limits them from growing their business.⁷⁹ In a brief submitted to the Committee, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) suggested that labour shortage predictions could be factored into Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's immigration point system in order to address the shortage of qualified labour and incentivize industries in hiring immigrants.⁸⁰ As such, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 3

That the Government of Canada, in collaboration with Atlantic Provinces and stakeholders, consider predicted labour shortages in all skill levels when planning and delivering their immigration related policies and programs.

Recommendation 4

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in collaboration with the Atlantic Provinces, improve programs tailored to address francophone immigrant recruitment, including outreach campaigns specifically aimed toward countries with French as an official language; to develop strategies for integration and retention needs specific to the different contexts of francophone minority communities; to revise the applicant requirements for provinces so that the percentage of francophone or francophile applicants selected is targeted to the percentage of francophones in each provinces; and to develop an evaluation and accountability framework to measure progress achieved and ensure attainment of immigration objectives in these communities.

Recommendation 5

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada better ensure that funding is made available to settlement services and language training in French in the region to improve the sustainability of the region's French communities.

78 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 1915 (Ather Akbari, Professor, Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity, Saint Mary's University, As an Individual).

79 CIMM, *Evidence*, 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan).

80 Written submission, UNHCR-OECD Business Dialogue Toronto, May 30, 2017: Canadian Business and Selecting Refugees as Economic Immigrants, [*Summary of afternoon discussions provided by the UNHCR.*](#)



5. Impact on the tax base

Witnesses warned the Committee that an aging and declining population results in fewer labour force participants, thereby leading to shrinking markets for goods and services which have an adverse impact on incentives for business investments and tax revenues.⁸¹ One particularly striking example was provided by Ms. Amanda McDougall, a municipal councillor for the Cape Breton Regional Municipality in Nova Scotia. She explained how the declining population challenge faced by her municipality influences the municipality's revenue streams. She emphasized that 1,500 people leave Cape Breton Island each year,⁸² which means a \$19 million loss in consumer spending,⁸³ not to mention taxable income. According to her, this demographic challenge will only increase in the coming years because, out of the 2,005 immigrants that chose Nova Scotia in 2015, only 92 people settled in Cape Breton Island.⁸⁴ She was also concerned that other rural regions in Nova Scotia welcomed among them a shared number of 10 people that same year.⁸⁵ For her, immigration is essential to get "more people in the area to contribute to [the] tax bases"⁸⁶ because immigration is connected to economic development.

6. Impact on social services

During the study, witnesses acknowledged another set of challenges: the impact of an aging and declining population on the social services provided by provincial and municipal governments. As summarized by Mr. Frank McKenna, Deputy Chair of the TD Bank Group, and former Premier of New Brunswick,

Aging populations cost more, the declining population base results in less equalization, fewer transfers for health and education, less money from income tax, less money raised from consumption tax, and then we have to care for an aging population, which is exponentially more expensive. The results are starkly visible: universities are struggling for students, our high schools are sometimes half full and, of course, everybody is fighting to keep their school full and we have bed-blockers in all our hospitals.⁸⁷

81 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1610 (James Ted McDonald); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1915 (Ather Akbari).

82 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1645 (Amanda McDougall, Councillor, Cape Breton Regional Municipality).

83 Ibid.

84 Ibid.

85 Ibid.

86 Ibid., 1715.

87 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1540 (Hon. Frank McKenna).

Member of Parliament Alaina Lockhart testified as sponsor of the private member's motion that her constituents in Fundy Royal, New Brunswick, are "concerned about their rural schools, the corner stores in their communities closing because of a lack of volume, and the dwindling memberships in organizations."⁸⁸ In fact, Ms. Heather Coulombe, owner of Farmer's Daughter Country Market, from Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia confirmed that there are schools and businesses that closed near her, mostly in rural areas.⁸⁹ Communities in Atlantic Canada, like those in other regions of the country, are beginning to understand the magnitude and impact of these challenges that will lead to the consolidation⁹⁰ or the loss of schools⁹¹ and other difficulties regarding infrastructure such as hospitals, mail and banking services.⁹²

Mr. Akbari also informed the Committee that the cost of public and private services does not adjust immediately when the population declines and that there is a point below which base costs cannot go regardless of population size.⁹³ Population decline also means a corresponding decline of some federal funds determined by population size such as social and health care transfers.⁹⁴ A vicious circle can be created because an aging population puts pressure on younger labour force participants to provide for the social programs for the elderly, but higher contribution to Canadian Pension Plan and high taxes combined with the closure of public and private services can further accelerate outmigration and rural population decline.⁹⁵

Mr. Marco Navarro-Génie, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, reminded the Committee that "theatres, parks, schools, hospitals and festivals"⁹⁶ are important to Atlantic Canadians, but that funds are required to sustain and maintain these services.⁹⁷ As a result of these regional differences and demographic challenges, Atlantic Canada's needs in terms of public services, social programs and infrastructure will vary more and more across the different regions of the four provinces.

88 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1535 (Alaina Lockhart, Fundy Royal, Lib.).

89 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 2005 (Heather Coulombe, Owner, Farmers Daughter Country Market).

90 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1915 (Ather Akbari).

91 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1600 (Roxanne Reeves, Author and Researcher, Intercultural Mentoring Specialist, University of New Brunswick, As an Individual).

92 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1915 (Ather Akbari).

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1700 (Marco Navarro-Génie).

97 Ibid.



B. Public and private initiatives for immigration

The Committee heard from a number of provincial officials and witnesses that have turned towards immigration to foster population and economic growth. Government officials recognize that immigration is important in supporting economic growth, while other witnesses spoke of employing foreign nationals and newcomers to Canada in order to grow their business and attract investments.

1. Provincial government initiatives

Over the years, each Atlantic province has developed specific initiatives to grow its immigration.

Since 2014, New Brunswick, as an official bilingual province, has had a strategy in place to attract Francophone immigrants,⁹⁸ as its immigration pattern does not currently reflect the demographic weight of both linguistic communities.⁹⁹ In 2017, the Government of New Brunswick hosted the first *Forum sur l'immigration francophone* to encourage francophone immigration outside Quebec¹⁰⁰ and its second Economic Opportunities Summit, which provided an opportunity for governmental and community organizations to share perspectives on immigration and population growth.¹⁰¹ The University of New Brunswick has also created an Economic Immigration Lab to work with employers to help create more effective channels for hiring skilled immigrants.¹⁰²

98 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1700 (Katherine d'Entremont, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick, Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick).

99 In 2011, the majority of recent immigrants to New Brunswick (81.1%) had English as their first official language and only 11.7% had French, whereas the linguistic composition of the provinces is two-thirds Anglophone and one-third Francophone. However, in 2016, New Brunswick had increased its intake francophone immigrants (24%) through the Provincial Nominee Program, but the francophone immigration objective for the province remains 33%. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1655 (Katherine d'Entremont); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault); Government of New Brunswick, [New Brunswick Francophone Immigration Action Plan 2014-2017](#). The objectives outlined in the Action Plan “are intended to complement interrelated priorities outlined in *Growing Together, New Brunswick’s Economic Development Action Plan 2012-2016* and the *New Brunswick Labour Force and Skills Development Strategy 2013-2016*.”

100 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

101 Government of New Brunswick, “[Second Economic Opportunities Summit on immigration held](#),” News release, 21 April 2017.

102 NouLAB, [Economic Immigration Lab](#).

The Nova Scotia Office of Immigration tabled its first annual report in 2015.¹⁰³ That same year, the province had expanded pathways available to immigration to Nova Scotia by targeting individuals with specific work experience or entrepreneurial skills under the Provincial Nominee Program.¹⁰⁴ In addition, it doubled its Provincial Nominee Program allocation from 600 nominees in 2013 to 1,350 in 2017 and it streamlined its immigration processing and service delivery.¹⁰⁵ The province has also increased its resources to focus on employer engagement to help them recruit skilled workers to Nova Scotia. The Nova Scotia Health Authority has also collaborated with Nova Scotia Immigration staff to recruit medical professionals at job fairs abroad.¹⁰⁶

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador's Immigration Action Plan, launched March 2017, lays out its priorities for the period 2017–2022. Key actions under the plan include improving immigration processing, supporting third party immigration organizations, the creation of a new website and web portal for immigrant applications, and education and training for employers.¹⁰⁷ In August 2017, the government of Newfoundland and Labrador issued a call for proposals to enhance immigrant settlement and recruitment. It has indicated that priority will be given to expanding or supporting English-as-a-Second-Language services.¹⁰⁸

In May 2017, the Government of Prince Edward Island announced “a new population action plan for P.E.I., focusing on recruitment, retention, repatriation, and rural economic development.”¹⁰⁹ The province also issued a request for proposals for “immigration agents” who will work to attract immigrants, particularly entrepreneurs, to live and work on the island. The agents’ main focus will be to make immigrants aware of economic opportunities in rural areas and to encourage them to purchase or invest in existing P.E.I. businesses.¹¹⁰ In August 2017, the government of P.E.I. announced the creation of four Regional Economic Advisory Councils, tasked with providing recommendations to Cabinet on economic

103 Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, [Annual Report 2015](#), 15 September 2016.

104 Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, [Written Submission](#), p. 3.

105 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

106 Government of Nova Scotia, [“Health Authority Teams Up With Immigration to Recruit Doctors,”](#) News release, 18 October 2017.

107 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, [The Way Forward on Immigration to Newfoundland and Labrador.](#)

108 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, [“Provincial Government Calls for Proposals to Enhance Immigrant Settlement and Integration,”](#) News release, 17 August 2017.

109 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

110 Government of Prince Edward Island, [“Immigration agents will help increase Island population,”](#) News release, 31 July 2017.



growth. Among other priorities, the councils are designed to “enhance population growth in each region, and specifically help in targeted population attraction drawn by employment and economic opportunities.”¹¹¹

2. Private sector employing foreign nationals

As stated previously, there are high labour shortages in multiple sectors in Atlantic Canada and a number of witnesses spoke about employing newcomers in order to meet the labour demand in their sector to fill gaps.¹¹² As Ms. Juanita Ford of Hospitality Newfoundland told the Committee,

the tourism sector has relied heavily on young people as a source of labour. However, the rate at which young people are entering the labour force is decreasing while competition to attract younger workers is intensifying from other sectors of the economy. The industry will experience a shortage of people, in general, to fill positions, and a much more pronounced deficiency in skilled workers to fill positions.¹¹³

She also noted that the hospitality industry, like others, has focused on integrating non-traditional labour pools, such as youth, Indigenous persons, and people with disabilities, into the workforce. However, these initiatives are not enough and immigration is needed to fill the labour demand. Indeed, almost a quarter of the 18,000 tourism workers in Newfoundland and Labrador are immigrants, including 40% of all chefs,¹¹⁴ however retention remains a problem. Mr. Bill Allen, Chairman of the Board of Restaurants Canada, owns six restaurants in P.E.I., Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. He told the Committee that for the last ten years he has hired “over 50 temporary foreign workers who have made their way through into the provincial nomination program, and then through to, in many cases, their PR [permanent residence].”¹¹⁵

Other industries, such as agriculture or fisheries also depend heavily on foreign nationals.¹¹⁶ For example, the Canadian Federation of Agriculture stated that farmers turn

111 Government of Prince Edward Island, *Regional Economic Advisory Councils*, 5 October 2017.

112 However, Mr. Fares informed the Committee that he has come across employers that did not know that immigration could provide a solution to labour market shortages. CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 June 2017, 1645 (Wadih Fares).

113 CIMM, *Evidence*, 31 May 2017, 1650 (Juanita Ford).

114 *Ibid.*, 1655 (Juanita Ford).

115 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 2015 (Bill Allen, Chairman of the Board, Restaurants Canada).

116 The Canadian Trucking Alliance states that immigrants make up about 20% (57,000 drivers) of the industry’s workforce; this percentage is smaller than it is for the Canadian workforce. Foreign nationals make up only 0.5% of the industry’s workforce, compared to the workforce as a whole at 1.1%. Canadian Trucking Alliance, “*CTA Study: Truck Driver Shortage Accelerating*,” News release, 14 June 2016.

to foreign workers for both seasonal and full time positions because of limited access to labour and experienced workers.¹¹⁷ Nationally, the agriculture industry brings in approximately 45,000 foreign nationals each year, which represent 12% of the industry's workforce.¹¹⁸ Mr. Mugridge also explained to the Committee how his company Louisbourg Seafoods Ltd. depends on foreign workers for a third of the workforce, which has 500 employees during its busiest periods.¹¹⁹ In this region, there is a high rate of unemployment, but also a labour shortage of persons with the required skills.

In P.E.I., Mr. Craig Mackie, from the Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers to Canada, noted that immigrants are working in almost all sectors of the economy, including the new areas of bioscience and aerospace, which require highly-skilled workers.¹²⁰

3. Need for capital investments

Professor Herb Emery, Vaughan Chair in Regional Economics at the University of New Brunswick, drew the Committee's attention to the need for private sector investment to increase labour demand and create opportunities for newcomers.¹²¹ He warned that economic growth is not just a question of adding more labour supply to the market. According to him, economic growth also requires investments, wage growth stimulation and higher labour productivity that will spur more interest in the market.¹²² He provided Saskatchewan as an example that reversed their population-aging trend and attracted immigrants through new investments in its resource projects and industries.¹²³

In his opinion, Professor Emery described the labour market as dysfunctional where wages and employment do not adjust adequately.¹²⁴ He stated that adding more people into a dysfunctional labour market might not resolve the problem, which potentially influences the outcome of immigration programs such as the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.¹²⁵

117 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 0850 (Reint-Jan Dykstra).

118 Canadian Agricultural Human Resource Council, *Strategic AgriWorkforce Plan Needed for High Growth Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food Sector*, 4 August 2017.

119 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 June 2017, 1635 (Adam Mugridge).

120 CIMM, *Evidence*, 14 June 2017, 1745 (Craig Mackie).

121 CIMM, *Evidence*, 16 October 2017, 1530 (Herb Emery, Vaughan Chair in Regional Economics, University of New Brunswick, As an Individual).

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.



Mr. Jeffrey Green, Director, Talent Acquisition, J.D. Irving Ltd., echoed the comments of Professor Emery and stated that capital investment is an important factor when forecasting labour and skills shortages. As an example, a quarter of J.D. Irving Ltd.'s forecast is influenced by growth, such as capital investments.¹²⁶

The Committee has identified that there are challenges in each stage of the immigration lifecycle, namely recruitment, processing, settlement and retention, and there are recommendations to be made to address perceived deficiencies. As such, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 6

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada take into consideration the other pillars of the Atlantic Growth Strategy, namely innovation, infrastructure, clean growth and climate change, and trade and investments, when implementing immigration policy under the Atlantic Growth Strategy in order to more effectively respond to labour demand in Atlantic Canada.

Recommendation 7

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada take the immigration lifecycle of recruitment, processing, settlement and retention, into consideration when implementing immigration policy and programs under the Atlantic Growth Strategy.

Part 2: Bringing Immigrants to Atlantic Canada

Part 2 provides a brief overview of the current programs and policies that attempt to bring newcomers and foreign nationals to Atlantic Canada. Witnesses identified a number of challenges to immigration with the programs and services as currently delivered. Some are within the department's processes, others are policy choices of IRCC and provincial governments.

The four Atlantic Provinces are making a concerted effort to work together to confront the region's demographic and labour market challenges. Collaborative initiatives in the field of immigration have included advocating for additional provincial nominee places and recruiting international students. The Atlantic Growth Strategy, which includes the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program, is the latest initiative developed in collaboration with the federal government.

126 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0925 (Jeffrey Green, Director, Talent Acquisition, J.D. Irving, Limited).

A. Atlantic Growth Strategy

The Atlantic Growth Strategy is a multi-pronged strategy to address long standing concerns regarding economic growth in the region, which has not kept pace with the national average. The first pillar of the Atlantic Growth Strategy focuses on immigration and a skilled work force, where the other pillars of growth are innovation, infrastructure, clean growth and climate change, and trade and investments.¹²⁷ The first initiative of the Strategy is the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.

The Atlantic Growth Strategy is led by a Leadership Committee comprised of the Premiers of the four Atlantic Provinces and members of the federal cabinet.¹²⁸ The Leadership Committee receives advice from the Atlantic Growth Advisory Group,¹²⁹ chaired by Mr. Henry Demone from High Liner Foods Inc., Nova Scotia. The Advisory Group was struck “to engage with Indigenous, business, academic, community and civil society leaders on ways to enhance regional growth.”¹³⁰

1. Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program

As of March 2017, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) started accepting permanent resident applications through the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program,¹³¹ which is a three-year immigration project which includes a specific stream for international graduates.

Officials from IRCC presented the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (AIPP) to the Committee. Ms. Laurie Hunter, Director of Economic Immigration Policy and Programs at IRCC, explained that the AIPP provides priority processing for permanent residence

127 Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, [Atlantic Growth Strategy](#).

128 At the time of writing this report, the [Leadership Committee](#) is comprised of the Atlantic Premiers Dwight Ball, Brian Gallant, Wade MacLauchlan and Stephen McNeil. The federal Ministers are Navdeep Bains (Innovation, Science and Economic Development and responsible for the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), Scott Brison (Treasury Board), Dominic LeBlanc (Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard), Lawrence MacAulay (Agriculture and Agri-food), Seamus O’Reagan (Veterans Affairs) and Ginette Petitpas Taylor (Health).

129 The [Atlantic Growth Advisory Group](#) has nine members. In addition to the Chair, there are [two members from each province](#): Zita Cobb, Shorefast Foundation; Glenn Cooke, Cooke Aquaculture Inc.; Esther Dockendorff, P.E.I. Mussel King Inc; Pernille Fischer Boulter, Kisserup International Trade Roots Canada Inc.; Chief Brian Francis, Abegweit First Nation; Anne Hébert, Bingham Law ; Dean MacDonald, Tuckamore Capital; Robert Niven, CarbonCure Technologies.

130 Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, [“Government of Canada and Atlantic Provinces Establish the Atlantic Growth Advisory Group,”](#) News Release, 28 April 2017.

131 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Atlantic Immigration Pilot](#).



applications in the intermediate-skilled, high-skilled and international graduate programs.¹³² Unlike some other programs, employers are not required to obtain a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) for jobs offered in the context of this pilot project. However, a unique aspect of the pilot project is the requirement for employers to provide an individualized settlement plan to support each of the newcomers' integration into the community. The goal for 2017 was to process 2,000 applications (principal applicants and family members) through the pilot project.¹³³

By way of example, a quota of 646 families was allocated to New Brunswick under the AIPP for the first year.¹³⁴ The provincial government allocated additional funding to assist settlement services and to reach out to employers, hoping to raise the province's immigrant retention rate¹³⁵ of 72% to 80%.¹³⁶ Outreach to individual businesses has led to significant interest and participation in the program. Jobs have been identified in various sectors including IT, business service centres, contact centres, transportation, aquaculture, seafood processing, agriculture, forestry, food manufacturing, manufacturing, home care, hospitality and food services, administration, and finance.¹³⁷ Mr. Charles Ayles, a senior official from the Government of New Brunswick, stated that teams overseas are having success in recruiting qualified immigrants.¹³⁸

Prince Edward Island has a quota of 120 families under the AIPP, although these may be redistributed amongst the other provinces in the region if that target is not met. Deputy Minister Neil Stewart testified that P.E.I. was cautious about requesting higher levels of immigrants through the pilot program, stating "[w]e want to see our retention rates before we seek higher levels".¹³⁹

Mr. Morgan from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business saw a number of positive elements in the AIPP; such as the elimination of the LMIA, the improved speed of

132 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter).

133 Ibid.

134 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

135 According to Penny Walsh McGuire retention of newcomers has been defined as remaining in the destination province for five years. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1635 (Penny Walsh McGuire, Executive Director, Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce).

136 Ibid.

137 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1700 (Charles Ayles, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Population Growth Division, Government of New Brunswick).

138 Ibid.

139 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1710 (Neil Stewart, Deputy Minister, Workforce and Advanced Learning, Government of Prince Edward Island).

processing and the inclusion of intermediate skilled jobs, while most federal programs for permanent residence target high skilled workers. He was cautious about the capacity of small and medium-sized businesses to develop and deliver individualised settlement plans.¹⁴⁰

Ms. Gerry Mills, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, informed the Committee that her organization had developed 123 settlement plans to date, assisting employers across the four provinces, especially small and medium-sized businesses that did not have the expertise nor the resources to respond to the settlement plan needs of their employees.¹⁴¹

While the program is in its first year, a number of witnesses have already experienced difficulties with the AIPP. Ms. Angelique Reddy-Kalala of the City of Moncton told the Committee that having settlement plans by designated organizations, of which none were located in New Brunswick, was problematic.¹⁴²

For Mr. Allen, of Restaurant Canada, the entire process was difficult. After eight months, they were ready to submit a potential employee's application for review that consisted of a 55 page document.¹⁴³ He qualified the processing as proceeding "at a snail's pace"¹⁴⁴ and inefficient because "there are 15 steps before you can make the application."¹⁴⁵ He also expressed frustration with the lack of information and knowledge that he received when asking the same question to IRCC offices, claiming to have received three different answers on three different days.¹⁴⁶ For those reasons, Mr. Luc Erjavec, of Restaurants Canada, suggested a digitized process through an online portal.¹⁴⁷

Mr. Dave Tisdale hired a long-haul trucker through the AIPP, but he said it had been a complicated process even though the foreign national was already in Canada.¹⁴⁸

140 CIMM, *Evidence*, 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan).

141 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 June 2017, 1655 (Gerry Mills, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia).

142 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 October 2017, 0940 (Angelique Reddy-Kalala, Immigration Strategy Officer, City of Moncton).

143 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 2020 (Bill Allen).

144 *Ibid.*, 2015.

145 *Ibid.*, 2050.

146 *Ibid.*, 2025.

147 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 2035 (Luc Erjavec, Vice-President, Atlantic Canada, Restaurants Canada).

148 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 1935 (Dave Tisdale, Owner, Tisdale Trucking).



Furthermore, few students are aware of their eligibility for the specific stream designed for international graduates.¹⁴⁹

Some committee members were taken aback to hear how difficult the AIPP process was and the delays involved for some employers, as expedited processing had been one of the priorities underlined by IRCC officials. The Committee was concerned to hear conflicting evidence on the complexity of the process for employers in different Atlantic Provinces. Some members of the committee question whether the complexity of the AIPP arose out of IRCC or provincial complications. The Committee recommends:

Recommendation 8

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, with the Atlantic Provinces, annually evaluate the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program; ensure that the process is harmonized, simplified and expedited for Atlantic Canadian business applicants; and provide the Committee with details of the new process.

Recommendation 9

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada digitize the application process for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.

B. Provincial Nominee Program

Each province in Atlantic Canada has negotiated an agreement with the federal government for a Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).¹⁵⁰ The PNP allows provincial governments to develop their own economic immigration streams in order to meet regional priorities.

The New Brunswick Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, the Hon. Donald Arseneault, stated that historically, the NBPNP has been used to retain skilled and business immigrants.¹⁵¹ It now has a stream incorporated into Express Entry, a system which will be further detailed below.¹⁵² In 2016, New Brunswick exceeded its objective in welcoming francophone immigrants through the PNP.¹⁵³ The Prince Edward Island Minister

149 Association of Atlantic Universities, [2017 International Graduate Study: The Graduate Experience – One Year later slide 30](#).

150 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, [Provincial Nominees](#).

151 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

152 Government of New Brunswick, Immigration and Settlement in New Brunswick, [New Brunswick Provincial Nominee Program \(NBPNP\)](#).

153 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

of Workforce and Advanced Learning, the Hon. Sonny Gallant, confirmed that immigrants settled in P.E.I. mainly through the PNP.¹⁵⁴ The P.E.I. PNP includes streams for businesses as well as for entrepreneurs.¹⁵⁵

The Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program has a stream for skilled workers, a stream for skilled workers in Express Entry and a stream for international graduates.¹⁵⁶ The Nova Scotia Nominee Program has three streams targeting entrepreneurs, international graduate entrepreneurs and skilled workers and two streams incorporated into Express Entry, one for high skilled individuals (Nova Scotia Demand: Express Entry) and one for those who already have one year of experience working in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia Experience: Express Entry).¹⁵⁷

The federal government assigns each participating province a certain limit of PNP applications for a given year. Table 5 below shows how many permanent residents were admitted to each Atlantic province from the years 2010 to 2015. According to the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, the region was assigned 2,325 principal applicant nominees for 2016, including family members.¹⁵⁸

Table 5 – Permanent Residents Admitted through the Provincial Nominee Program

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Newfoundland and Labrador	217	274	365	440	454	533
Prince Edward Island	2,419	1,565	896	775	1,432	953
Nova Scotia	638	779	957	1,202	1,399	1,394
New Brunswick	1,352	1,230	1,580	1,330	2,107	1,765

Source: Table compiled by the authors using the annual reports to Parliament on immigration published by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada from 2011–2016.

154 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

155 Government of Prince Edward Island, Office of Immigration, [“PEI Business Owners”](#) and [“Immigrate to PEI as an Entrepreneur.”](#)

156 Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, [Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program](#).

157 Government of Nova Scotia, Nova Scotia Immigration, [“Move here.”](#)

158 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, [Report Card: Immigration on the Rise in Atlantic Canada](#), January 2017.



Ms. Gerry Mills of the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, told the Committee that “[m]ost of our immigrants to Nova Scotia come through the PNP stream. If the federal government is truly interested in increasing immigration to the Atlantic, raise or eliminate the caps.”¹⁵⁹

Some witnesses stated that there appears to be reluctance on the part of some provinces or businesses to move from the Provincial Nominee Program (in which government evaluates labour market needs without a settlement plan) to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program (with specific settlement obligations and a designation requirement without a government assessment of labour market needs). Moreover, some witnesses also noted that the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, as proposed by the Minister, takes the Labour Market Impact Assessment out of the hands of the government and puts it into the hands of designated industry employers who can more efficiently know the labour market demands. As such, the Committee is hesitant to recommend changes to the Provincial Nominee Program before the Pilot Program has been properly assessed.

C. Express Entry for high-skilled immigration

Since January 2015, IRCC’s Express Entry¹⁶⁰ is a two-step application management system for key economic immigration programs. Individuals create an online profile that puts them in a pool where they are ranked using the Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS). Through ministerial instructions issued regularly, top ranking candidates’ expressions of interest are pulled from the pool and they are invited to complete an immigration application. The economic immigration programs covered by Express Entry include the Canadian Experience Class, the Federal Skilled Worker Program, the Federal Skilled Trades Program and a portion of the Provincial Nominee Program.

Ms. Laurie Hunter described recent changes to Express Entry that in her opinion would have a positive impact on the Atlantic region. For example, more points are now awarded to post-secondary graduates from Canadian institutions and more points to candidates with strong French language skills. High-skilled workers whose application is exempt from Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) no longer require their job offer to be supported by an LMIA to receive additional points in Express Entry.¹⁶¹

159 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 1655 (Gerry Mills).

160 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [How Express Entry works](#).

161 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter).

1. Objective: faster processing

Express Entry is the program that currently offers the fastest processing time from the date the applicant submits a complete application and receives her or his permanent resident visa: IRCC's service standards indicate this is done in six months or less (80% of the cases).¹⁶² As stated in the UNHCR-OECD summary of the Business Dialogue held in Toronto, six months "is a long time for a company to wait when they have an immediate labour need."¹⁶³ The Atlantic Provinces Economic Council indicated in a written submission that

[L]engthy processing times are a barrier to greater use of immigration by the business community.... The federal government needs to ensure it has sufficient resources to process all economic applications in a timely manner, including the new Atlantic Immigration Pilot and all provincial nominees.¹⁶⁴

In this context, Mr. Fares recognized that to process all applications in a timely manner the federal government had to have sufficient resources.¹⁶⁵ Taking these comments into consideration, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 10

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada model the service level standards, including processing times, for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program on those currently existing for Express Entry, for which expected processing times now stand at less than six months.

D. International students

International students make up 20% of full-time enrolment in universities in the Atlantic region.¹⁶⁶ In 2009-2010, they contributed \$565 million to the economy across the region.¹⁶⁷

In 2016, a survey conducted amongst the university and college graduates in the region indicated that 75% of respondents intended to remain in the region. A 2017 follow-up

162 The comparison of the different economic streams for permanent residence is available in the UNHCR written submission. UNHCR-OECD Business Dialogue Toronto, May 30, 2017: Canadian Business and Selecting Refugees as Economic Immigrants, [Summary of afternoon discussions provided by the UNHCR](#).

163 Ibid., p. 3.

164 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, [Written Submission](#), p. 2.

165 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1650 (Wadih Fares).

166 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1700 (Peter Halpin, Executive Director, Association of Atlantic Universities).

167 Ibid.



survey¹⁶⁸ showed that 64% had remained, and 26% indicated that they had left because of the lack of employment opportunities in their field of study.

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador has identified international students as a source of potential immigrants and has a designated staff person at the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism to assist students with labour market and immigration advice.¹⁶⁹ The province also plans to partner with employers to create internships for international students as well as to pilot a program called “My First Newfoundland and Labrador Job”.¹⁷⁰ Students who wish to work after graduation in Canada can obtain a Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP),¹⁷¹ however its length is dependent on the number of years of study. The current trend of one year masters degrees means that PGWPs valid for one year are common.

Ms. Sofia Descalzi, Chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students-Newfoundland and Labrador, shared her experience of being an international student with the Committee.¹⁷² A recruiter from Memorial University visited her high school in Ecuador and she eventually received a scholarship for one year’s tuition. She then experienced difficulty finding part-time work off campus, discovering that employers were reluctant to hire a foreign national. She said that not having constant health-care coverage (as it is tied to full-time study) had also given her much concern. She informed the Committee that international students were frequent users of campus food banks.¹⁷³ She suggested that, in order for international students to remain in Canada, they need better pathways to citizenship and job opportunities.

Ms. McDougall also stated that the lack of front-line immigration services was a major deterrent in keeping international students on Cape Breton Island.¹⁷⁴

168 Association of Atlantic Universities, [2017 International Graduate Study: The Graduate Experience – One Year later](#).

169 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1715 (Natasha Clark, International Student Advisor, Memorial University of Newfoundland).

170 Ibid.

171 The [post-graduate work permit program](#) must be applied for within 90 days of completing full-time studies. Employers do not require a Labour Market Impact Analysis before hiring international graduates.

172 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1705 (Sofia Descalzi, Chairperson, Canadian Federation of Students - Newfoundland and Labrador).

173 Ibid., 1725.

174 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1645 (Amanda McDougall).

The Committee understands that international students have been identified as potential immigrants to Atlantic Canada. For international students to transition to permanent residents, they need more support.

Recommendation 11

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, allow international students in the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and those who have been recruited by a designated employer under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program to access settlement services once they have started the permanent residency application process.

1. Flexibility for international students to remain and work in Atlantic Canada

Professor Natasha Clark of Memorial University testified that, in her experience, it was difficult for international students to become permanent residents with Express Entry, as their scores were not high enough to be competitive. She explained that “even with new changes to the comprehensive ranking system, an international graduate with a bachelor's degree and one year of work experience in Canada does not necessarily score highly enough to be competitive in the Express Entry pool.”¹⁷⁵ She informed the Committee that international students lack labour market opportunities and face “challenges to entering the labour market”.¹⁷⁶ Ms. Penny Walsh McGuire, of the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce, also spoke of the need to give international students work experience before they graduate, and yet international students were not eligible for the Canada Summer Jobs Program, and co-op study permits were difficult to obtain in a timely fashion.¹⁷⁷ She suggested that post graduate work permits be valid for five years regardless of the program of study.¹⁷⁸

The Committee heard that an international student accepted in a co-op program would have difficulties, not in finding placement, but in the strict application of issuance of work permits. Further, seeing that Post Graduate Work Program are the key to permanent residence through Express Entry (Canadian Experience Class) it seems that in Atlantic Canada it would be useful to guarantee a length to this type of work permit.

175 CIMM, *Evidence*, 7 June 2017, 1715 (Natasha Clark).

176 Ibid.

177 CIMM, *Evidence*, 16 October 2017, 1635 (Penny Walsh McGuire).

178 Ibid., 1725.



The Committee observed that in order for recent graduates to have a reasonable opportunity to succeed in the Canadian workforce, they must first gain valuable Canadian work experience so that employers are more likely to recruit them and assist them in securing permanent residency under an existing program or the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program. The Committee recommends:

Recommendation 12

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, work with relevant stakeholders to issue work permits to students that are valid throughout their study program in Atlantic Canada, including co-op terms, and issue post graduate work permits valid for five years in Atlantic Canada.

E. Temporary foreign workers and Labour Market Impact Assessment

Temporary foreign workers (TFWs) are hired for periods not exceeding eight months, on the basis that no qualified permanent resident or Canadian is available to do the work. This involves job postings and obtaining for a fee a Labour Market Impact Assessment from Employment and Social Development Canada.¹⁷⁹ A closed work permit is then issued after the worker's application is reviewed abroad. In 2014, caps were introduced to limit the number of temporary foreign workers an employer could hire.¹⁸⁰ Eventually, an exemption was provided to seasonal industries waiving the cap on TFWs in place until the end of 2017.¹⁸¹

A report by the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council states that the use of TFWs tripled in the Atlantic region between 2005 and 2012, from 3,499 TFWs to 10,913 foreign nationals.¹⁸² Despite this rapid growth, TFWs in 2012 represented only 1% of total employment in the Atlantic region, compared with 1.9% nationally. Temporary foreign workers primarily filled labour shortages in lower paying, lower skill occupations such as fish plant and food service workers.

179 Employment and Social Development Canada, [Hire a temporary worker through the Temporary foreign worker program.](#)

180 Employment and Social Development Canada, [Overhauling the Temporary Foreign Worker Program: Putting Canadians First.](#)

181 Employment and Social Development Canada, *The path forward plan for the Temporary Foreign Worker Program and the International Mobility program*, "Promoting jobs for Canadians and permanent residents." See also: cbcnews, New Brunswick, "[Seasonal employers relieved about temporary foreign worker changes](#)," 18 March 2016.

182 Atlantic Provinces Economic Council, [The Growing Role of Temporary Foreign Workers in Atlantic Canada](#), 21 May 2014.

Mr. McKenna stated that the Temporary Foreign Worker Program was integral to the labour market, and informed the Committee that hundreds of jobs had been shifted out of the region following the reforms to the program in 2014.¹⁸³ He suggested that a pathway to permanent residency for TFWs should be established.¹⁸⁴

Mr. Mugridge spoke of the seasonal work in the fishery industry that employs, at its annual peak, 500 employees in coastal communities of Nova Scotia.¹⁸⁵ He explained that TFWs comprise a third of his workforce.¹⁸⁶ Mr. Mugridge said they were trying to develop new seafood products that would translate into full-time jobs for these workers.¹⁸⁷

Mr. Kevin Lacey, Director, Atlantic, Canadian Taxpayers Federation, told the Committee that TFWs are hired to respond to labour shortages although there are high unemployment rates in the region, a situation that keeps wages down.¹⁸⁸ Mr. Morgan explained that employers sought TFWs at great cost,¹⁸⁹ but access to the program had assisted them to expand their businesses and to continue to employ Canadian workers. He provided the Committee with a survey that showed the main reasons businesses used TFWs, as seen in Figure 2.

183 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1540 (Hon. Frank McKenna). The reforms included caps on the number of temporary foreign workers an employer could hire and a new fee for LMIA.

184 Ibid., 1550.

185 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1635 (Adam Mugridge).

186 Ibid., 1640.

187 Ibid.

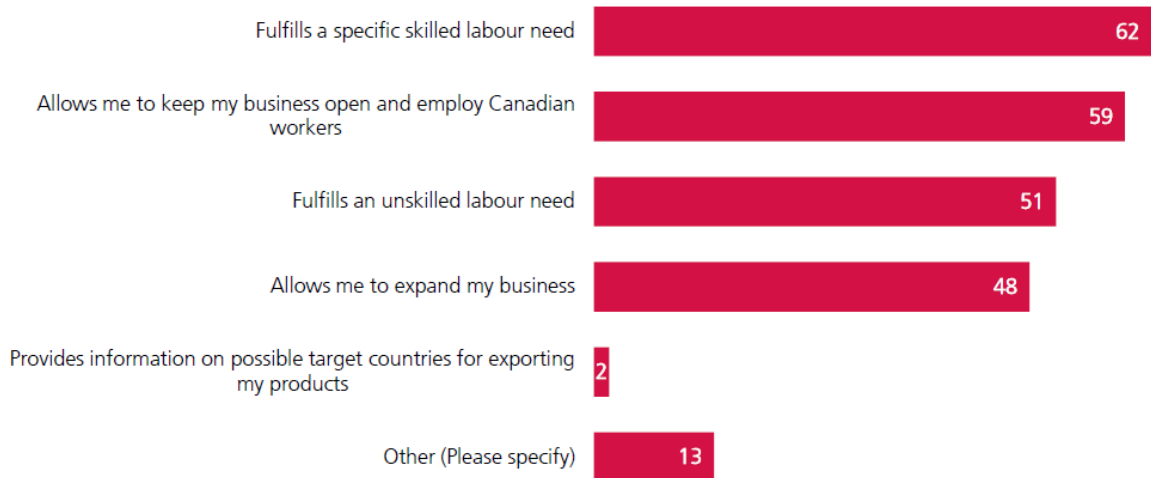
188 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1615 (Kevin Lacey, Director, Atlantic, Canadian Taxpayers Federation).

189 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1645 (Jordi Morgan).



Figure 2 – Small Businesses’ Top Reasons to Hire Temporary Foreign Workers

How does hiring a TFW benefit your business?



Source: CFIB, Shortage of Qualified Labour and TFWP Survey, Sept-Oct 2013, n=667

Source: Graphic submitted to Committee by Jordi Morgan, *Small Business Views on Foreign Labour and Immigration*.

Unlike the Temporary Foreign Workers Program, the International Mobility Program (IMP) allows employers to hire foreign nationals without the need to obtain a Labour Market Impact Assessment. In 2015, the Atlantic region welcomed 5,940 workers through the IMP and in 2016 that number rose to 7,640.¹⁹⁰ The majority of individuals were issued a work permit without an LMIA as it was determined that the specific circumstances showed it would benefit Canadian interests.¹⁹¹ Within the temporary foreign worker program for LMIA-exempt positions (the International Mobility Program), IRCC has reinstated a stream called *Mobilité francophone*.¹⁹² Ms. Sarah Parisio of the *Fédération des francophones de*

190 Government of Canada, “[Canada – International Mobility Program work permit holders by province/territory of intended destination, program and year in which permit\(s\) became effective,](#)” *Temporary Residents: Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) and International Mobility Program (IMP) Work Permit Holders – Quarterly IRCC Updates*, 31 January 2017.

191 Canadian interests are provided for at section 205(a) of the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Regulations* and are explained in IRCC’s policy guidelines “[International Mobility Program: Canadian interests – Significant benefit general guidelines.](#)”

192 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter).

Terre-Neuve et du Labrador indicated that this temporary worker stream was restored to support immigration to francophone communities.¹⁹³

The Committee was told that a two-step migration, where a person moves from a temporary status (student or worker) to a permanent status, has certainly been increasingly important in the region. However, Mr. Allen, of Restaurants Canada, explained that formerly, the TFWs they hired became permanent residents through the PNP.¹⁹⁴ He used the past tense because there have been many modifications to each step. For example, although the caps on the number of TFWs were waived for fisheries, they were not for other industry sectors in the Atlantic region. Further, LMIA now cost \$1000 per foreign national, making the process of hiring a TFW even more expensive.¹⁹⁵ Finally, the PNPs have changed, and are no longer programs open to the low-skill labour they require.

The Committee heard from many witnesses about the desirability of creating a pathway to permanent residence for temporary foreign workers, however, the only specific model proposed seemed unfeasible given the current design of Provincial Nominee Programs.

Recommendation 13

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with the provinces to streamline their processes to facilitate the transition from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program to become permanent residents.

F. Entrepreneurs

The Federal Immigrant Investor and Entrepreneurs program was terminated in 2014.¹⁹⁶ The Entrepreneur portion of the program was replaced with the Start-up Visa Program.¹⁹⁷ An applicant for this program needs business experience and must find a designated organization to support the concept for a business that he or she puts forward.

193 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1730 (Sarah Parisio, Coordinator, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador).

194 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 2015 (Bill Allen).

195 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 2050 (Luc Erjavec).

196 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Investors](#). A new program called the [Immigrant Investor Venture Capital Pilot Program](#) was launched in January 2015. In broad terms, to apply, an individual needs a net worth of ten million dollars and be ready to invest at-risk in a fund two million dollars for 15 years. There are official language requirements and post-secondary educational requirements. This program was not discussed during the study.

197 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Start-up Visa Program](#).



These government-approved organizations are designated venture capital funds, designated angel investor groups or designated business incubators.

Professor Roxanne Reeves of the University of New Brunswick described the Business Immigrant Mentorship Program that was developed in New Brunswick. It pairs immigrants with local business mentors who often become community hosts. The Business Immigrant Mentorship program offers networking opportunities and professional support.¹⁹⁸

As one example of an immigrant entrepreneur, Ms. Shuo Sherry Huang of Sunrise Group Ltd described how she and her husband had developed seven companies in the decade following their arrival in Prince Edward Island.¹⁹⁹ They purchased a language school; they negotiated a franchisee agreement with PEI's COWS Ice cream and they now have several stores in China selling that brand. Their companies have built bridges between Canada and China, and continue to require a multinational workforce.

G. Resettled Refugees

Ministers from the governments of New Brunswick and P.E.I. spoke positively about the resettlement of Syrian refugees in their provinces in 2015-2016.²⁰⁰ The Atlantic region, in general, has been very supportive of the federal government's Syrian refugee initiative²⁰¹ and welcomed 11.5% of the Syrian refugees that came to Canada between 4 November 2015 and 30 September 2016.²⁰² Specifically, the Atlantic Provinces received 570 Syrian refugees through the Blended Visa Office–Referred Program, 2,760 through the Government-Assisted Refugee Program and 515 through the Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program.

Mr. Alex LeBlanc, from the New Brunswick Multicultural Council stated that New Brunswick, had resettled over 1,600 Syrian refugees and that so far 90% of them are reportedly still in the province. He indicated that the efforts of the broader community led to a greater sense of belonging for them and better integration.²⁰³ Ms. Mills from Nova

198 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1540 (Roxanne Reeves).

199 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1910 (Shuo (Sherry) Huang, CEO, Sunrise Group Ltd).

200 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

201 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [#WelcomeRefugees: Key Figures](#).

202 Government of Canada, "[Admissions of Resettled Refugees by PT, CMA of Intended Destination and Immigration Category, November 4th, 20015 – September 30th, 2016](#)," *Resettled Refugees – Ad Hoc IRCC (Specialized Dataset)*, 31 October 2016.

203 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1725 (Alex LeBlanc, Executive Director, New Brunswick Multicultural Council).

Scotia informed the Committee that the Syrian refugees are asking how to sponsor their family members, underscoring the importance of family in retention.²⁰⁴

A brief submitted by the UNHCR to the Committee describes a program called the Talent Beyond Boundaries Initiative that is working to connect the Syrian refugee talent pool with businesses where their skills may be in demand.²⁰⁵ Refugees with skills face some of the same challenges as other immigrants, such as the recognition of their foreign credentials or language barriers; the biggest difference is that they often lack the financial resources to put forward an economic application. It was suggested to continue bringing them to Canada with the protections refugees have, but for their profiles to be recognized in the Express Entry system adapting the current scoring system to give additional points to a candidate's profile if she or he is a Convention Refugee. Additionally, it was suggested that IRCC recognize the work performed in the country of first asylum.²⁰⁶

In keeping with the desire to grow the population and to respond to labour demands, the Committee recognizes that further steps to the Syrian initiative could be applied to the Atlantic region and recommends:

Recommendation 14

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada consider under its Refugee Resettlement Program ways to bring extended family members of currently settled refugees with skill sets in demand for immediate resettlement to the Atlantic region.

H. Concerns for all immigration programs

Mr. Jose Rivera, of the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council in St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, told the Committee that immigrants often struggle to have their previous work experience, as well as their educational credentials, recognized.²⁰⁷ He stated that the process of having qualifications recognized appears to be slow and information is difficult to obtain. This leaves professionals discouraged. In view of the dire labour situation in the Atlantic Provinces, the Committee acknowledges that the recognition of foreign qualifications must be a priority.

204 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 June 2017, 1655 (Gerry Mills).

205 UNHCR-OECD Business Dialogue Toronto, May 30, 2017: Canadian Business and Selecting Refugees as Economic Immigrants, *Summary of afternoon discussions provided by the UNHCR*.

206 Ibid., p. 4.

207 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 0950 (Jose Rivera, Executive Director, Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council).



Recommendation 15

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada work alongside the Atlantic Provinces, regulatory agencies and trade unions to simplify recognition of foreign qualifications in the region.

Furthermore, it appears that gaps in the workforce can be predicted and identified. Mr. Karl Flecker of the KEYS Job Centre urged the Committee to rethink where jobs currently are and where they will be in the future. Using Dr. Akbari's research, he said, by 2018, there will be more than 56,000 job opportunities in Atlantic Canada with the bulk being unskilled and lower-skilled jobs, intermediate skill-level and technical skills level jobs.²⁰⁸ He argued that there must be immigration programs that help build this workforce. The current immigration programs use the National Occupational Code²⁰⁹ that divides the labour market into subsets of skills and programs for permanent residence are designed to attract a skilled and highly skilled workforce (NOC A, B or O). As Ms. Juanita Ford of Hospitality Newfoundland told the Committee:

Many occupations fall into the NOC C and D categories and are therefore considered unskilled.... For example, hotels require managers and marketing specialists, but cannot successfully operate without cleaners, servers and maintenance workers.²¹⁰

Mr. Erjavec also spoke to the issue of needing programs that bring workers of all skill levels.²¹¹

Recommendation 16

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada and Employment and Social Development Canada adapt current programs to make room for candidates with job skills classified as National Occupational Classification C or D to address the needs of Atlantic Canada including sectors such as agriculture, construction, fisheries, hospitality and transportation.

208 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1540 (Karl Flecker, Immigrant Employment Specialist, KEYS Job Centre).

209 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Find your NOC](#). Skill Type 0 are for management jobs, Skill Level A for professional jobs that usually call for a degree from a university, Skill Level B for technical jobs and skilled trades that usually call for a college diploma or training as an apprentice, Skill Level C for intermediate jobs that usually call for high school and/or job-specific training and Skill Level D for labour jobs.

210 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 31 May 2017, 1655 (Juanita Ford).

211 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 2010 (Luc Erjavec).

Part 3: Attracting and Integrating Newcomers to Atlantic Canada

Part 3 discusses what the Committee heard about how Atlantic Canada could be promoted to successfully attract candidates that will settle in the region permanently, as well as the features that appear to appeal to immigrants, including the importance of better integrating immigrants in the region through the workforce and communities.²¹² The report then provides an overview of the three sectors that must work together in order to better integrate newcomers in Atlantic Canada, namely the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

A. Create awareness abroad of Atlantic Canada as a place to call home

In the shadow of the big three cities in Canada that attract the most immigrants, witnesses have suggested to the Committee that potential immigrants need to be informed about the benefits of life in the Atlantic Provinces.

Mr. Howard Ramos and Ms. Yoko Yoshida told the Committee that recent cohorts of economic immigrants, who file taxes, in Atlantic Canada outperform the national average in terms of rates of employment and earnings. This should be promoted widely in attempt to attract immigrants to the region.²¹³

The Conference Board of Canada recommended that the Atlantic Provinces promote certain benefits offered by and in the region like being “tight-knit communities”, the fact that the wage gap between Canadian-born and immigrants is small and that the cost of living is more affordable than in larger Canadian cities. The Conference Board’s submission also cited the quality of higher education and the possibility for personalized settlement support services in the region.²¹⁴

The Committee heard from some witnesses about features of Atlantic Canada appealing to immigrants. One of the employees hired at Farmers Daughter Country Market is from the Philippines and had previously worked in various cities across Canada. She told Ms. Coulombe that by settling in a rural community of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia, she finally had a sense of belonging.²¹⁵

212 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1640 (Wadih Fares); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1705 (Adam Mugridge); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1535 (Ray Ivany); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1650 (Gerry Mills).

213 Yoko Yoshida and Howard Ramos, [Written submission](#), p. 4.

214 The Conference Board of Canada, [Motion M-39: Immigration to Atlantic Canada, Submission to the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration](#), 26 September 2017, p. 4.

215 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 2010 (Heather Coulombe).



In a survey conducted by the Association of Atlantic Universities, international students listed the top three reasons why they would like to stay in Atlantic Canada: the low cost of living, that it is a great place to raise a family and for the general quality of life.²¹⁶

Providing one personal example of a promotional campaign that had worked, Ms. Coulombe came up with a novel idea that generated 300,000 emails from around the world to work for her family-owned business.²¹⁷ She posted an advertisement on social media explaining the reality of Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia; its beauty, its rural environment, low wages, hard winters and limited Internet capabilities. She offered two acres of land to those who would work five years for her business. She told the Committee that her labour needs were driven by tourism from summer through to December, and while it was easy to hire up to 50 students in the summer, staffing the rest of the year was difficult. In hiring, her major concern was the “right fit”: people desiring a sustainable rural lifestyle who are community-minded. She told the Committee that her advertisement had inspired three families to come and start their own businesses, as well as interest in the region from international businesses in the tourism sector from England, South Africa and Sweden.

Ultimately, the Committee heard that raising awareness about Atlantic Canada can create an interest that translates into migration to the region. In light of this, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 17

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work with Innovation, Science and Economic Development and Global Affairs Canada to finance a recruitment campaign to attract immigration to the Atlantic Provinces, and evaluate on a regular basis if the campaign is successful.

216 Association of Atlantic Universities, [*2017 International Graduate Study: The Graduate Experience – One Year later*](#), slide 14.

217 CIMM, [*Evidence*](#), 17 October 2017, 2005 (Heather Coulombe).

B. Working together to integrate newcomers in Atlantic Canada

1. Business engagement

Mr. Fares, a business man and an immigrant himself, spoke about the importance of the business community in integrating immigrants:

At the end of the day, for any immigration program to work, the business community will have to be part of it and will have to be the main one pushing for it. Employers are the business community.²¹⁸

Governments need to plan, develop and promote their programs according to the needs of its local business community, because employers “know they have gaps or ... shortages, but they don't know what's available to them”²¹⁹ to reduce those gaps. For that reason, in 2014, Nova Scotia established an advisory council on immigration mandating Mr. Fares and his co-chair, Dr. Colin Dodds to promote the province, its opportunities and its immigration programs. Mr. Fares said that they “have at least two or three meetings a month”²²⁰ with stakeholders and different business groups to provide information and support. He argues that there has been a “success rate from the business community using the immigration programs.”²²¹

New Brunswick also has seen a strong engagement from the business community in regards to immigration. The province has business immigrant mentorship programs and has started “a succession connect program in Fredericton that will connect business immigrants with businesses for sale in New Brunswick.”²²²

The benefit of “matching the immigrant investor to potential business succession opportunities” was also raised by Mr. David Campbell, President of Jupia Consultants Inc. and former chief economist with the New Brunswick Jobs Board Secretariat. He suggested implementing “a mechanism where the potential buyer of a new business can shadow the current owner and take part in the business for a while to see if there’s a fit.”²²³

218 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1700 (Wadih Fares).

219 Ibid.

220 Ibid.

221 Ibid.

222 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

223 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0940 (David Campbell, President, Jupia Consultants Inc., As an Individual).



According to witnesses, the relative success of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program is due mainly to the involvement of the business community in the process.²²⁴ Mr. Fares agrees that an application to be a designated employer²²⁵ can take “a lot of research and assessment,”²²⁶ but he stressed the importance of the program relying on good employers that will “give good jobs and take care of the newcomers and the foreign workers.”²²⁷

2. Settlement services and integration support

Witnesses told the Committee that settlement programming was instrumental in welcoming and integrating immigrants.²²⁸ New Brunswick has “13 service provider organizations” across the province to ensure that newcomers have access to settlement services in communities.²²⁹ According to IRCC data, Nova Scotia has six service provider organizations, whereas P.E.I. has five and Newfoundland and Labrador has three²³⁰ service provider organizations.²³¹

The Committee also heard that a “one-size-fits-all approach has not worked and will not work”²³² for settlement services in Atlantic Canada, especially in regards to settlement

224 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1655 (Hon. Donald Arseneault); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1650 (Hon. Sonny Gallant); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0900 (Yoko Yoshida, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University, As an Individual).

225 As explained by Ms. Laurie Hunter,

Employers, before they can even become designated to recruit employees under the program, have to make a firm commitment in writing that they will partner with a settlement agency and undertake to link people to those settlement supports, etc., and then look at how they are creating the most welcoming workplace possible to try to get at that retention element.

CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1535 (Laurie Hunter).

226 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1700 (Wadih Fares).

227 Ibid.

228 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1640 (Wadih Fares); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1715 (Craig Mackie); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1725 (Alex LeBlanc).

229 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault). Minister Arseneault remarked that New Brunswick allocated an additional \$2.5 million to support increased employer engagement and settlement services. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

230 According to Mr. Rivera, the three service provider organizations are the Association for New Canadians, which is federally funded; the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council; and the Multicultural Women's Organization of Newfoundland and Labrador. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1030 (Jose Rivera).

231 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, [Map of destination communities and service provider organizations](#).

232 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1720 (Alex LeBlanc).

funding as well as selecting and integrating immigrants. Settlement service providers stressed that the current funding model has affected their ability to deliver services in the region.²³³ Currently, “settlement agencies funded by IRCC are on a three-year rolling average of landings.”²³⁴ This presents a problem in smaller regions. Mr. Mackie noted that, “where numbers may vary, we can go through a couple of years of low landings and then have a big year,”²³⁵ but resources are no longer available to accommodate the higher number of newcomers. He pointed out his organization had its funding cut “in 2015 by 17% — a quarter of a million dollars for this organization — after two years of low arrivals. Then in 2016 we had huge numbers, but we [currently] don't have the staff to support them.”²³⁶ Ms. Parisio also warned the Committee that if settlement organizations cannot “count on the funding of the services we need to help them, we lose”²³⁷ most of the newcomers in the smaller communities.²³⁸ Mr. Jose Rivera, Executive Director of the Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council, noted that his organization does not receive core funding from IRCC to be able to help newcomers integrate into the community.²³⁹

Mr. Leblanc also highlighted the need for “more flexible options to [be available for] provinces and cities to select the immigrants who match their economic, demographic, and linguistic realities”²⁴⁰ because integration takes place locally. This is especially true when welcoming and integrating newcomers into minority language communities as highlighted by Ms. Parisio. She remarked that in Newfoundland and Labrador the francophone settlement organization focuses on “a service that would facilitate community

233 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1715 (Craig Mackie); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1730 (Sarah Parisio); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1645 (Amanda McDougall).

234 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1715 (Craig Mackie).

235 Ibid.

236 Ibid.

237 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1750 (Sarah Parisio).

238 Ibid.

239 Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council has been providing its services thanks to donations and grants and cannot access the federal funding because they are a small organization that falls outside of the mandate of the federally funded immigration services. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0950 (Jose Rivera, Executive Director, Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council).

240 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1720 (Alex LeBlanc).



integration”²⁴¹ because “immigration has become detrimental to our francophone communities”.²⁴² However, due to funding cuts and geographical remoteness,²⁴³

language assessment and French-language courses for newcomers are non-existent in [Newfoundland and Labrador]. As a result, we see that francophone newcomers go to the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon, to a foreign country, to take the French test required to obtain Canadian citizenship.²⁴⁴

Ms. Corinne Prince of IRCC spoke about ensuring that service providers have the ability to offer localized and regional sorts of assistance “so that immigrants arriving in Canada are able to find settlement and integration services in French.”²⁴⁵

Ms. McDougall pointed out that immigration services and supports tend to stay in the provincial capitals, which negatively affects regions further out in the province.²⁴⁶ On the other hand, Professor Howard Ramos of the Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University argued that settlement service providers in the “hub” urban centres are very successful by offering a full complement of services and could support smaller communities.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless, that is not a reality for a community such as Sydney, Nova Scotia, that is approximately five and a half hours from Halifax, which is where settlement services are located.²⁴⁸ Ms. McDougall did note that the province does provide settlement services on Cape Breton Island, but that it was restricted to permanent residents. Therefore, international students cannot access settlement services on Cape Breton Island and, if they are no longer enrolled at the university, they have to seek help in Halifax.²⁴⁹

241 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1750 (Sarah Parisio).

242 Ibid., 1750.

243 The Newfoundland and Labrador francophone community, established 500 years ago, is distributed in three remote regions, which prevents francophone newcomers to have access to the same services as other immigrants. CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1730 (Sarah Parisio).

244 Ibid., 1735.

245 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Corinne Prince, Director General, Integration and Foreign Credentials Referral Office, Department of Citizenship and Immigration).

246 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1645 (Amanda McDougall).

247 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0930 (Howard Ramos, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University, As an Individual).

248 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1730 (Amanda McDougall).

249 Ibid.

Another set of concerns was the integration support provided to family members. Ms. Reddy-Kalala highlighted the importance of every family member enrolling in language classes, but that it is currently difficult because there is a need for child-minding available on-site.²⁵⁰ Mr. Rivera remarked that immigrants, especially youth that are in the education system, need a strong support network to better integrate in the community.²⁵¹ He also pressed the importance of mental health services to help individuals with the difficulties of arriving in a new community.²⁵²

Considering the variety of settlement and integration services, P.E.I. Minister Gallant called for a coordinated settlement strategy among all levels of government to ensure a better offer of services that focuses on proactive engagement and expanding growth in rural Atlantic Canada.²⁵³ The Committee therefore recommends:

Recommendation 18

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada work in partnership with its provincial counterparts, municipal partners, settlement service providers, multi-ethnic organizations, employers and other stakeholders to develop and implement a coordinated settlement strategy for Atlantic Canada.

a. Settlement plans under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program

In order to ensure better integration, the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program requires a settlement plan in the application process to connect newcomers to “the services known to support successful integration.”²⁵⁴ However, witnesses expressed concern about relying on the five federal government designated settlement agencies located in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver²⁵⁵ to develop these settlement plans.²⁵⁶ Witnesses suggested that local settlement agencies should be the ones to prepare the settlement plans for immigrants under the AIPP.²⁵⁷ These local settlement agencies are more suited to design the plans than

250 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0940 (Angelique Reddy-Kalala).

251 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1025 (Jose Rivera).

252 Ibid., 0950.

253 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1650 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

254 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1530 (Laurie Hunter).

255 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1910 (Vaughn Hatcher).

256 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0935 (Michael Haan); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0940 (Angelique Reddy-Kalala).

257 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 1950 (Vaughn Hatcher); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0940 (Angelique Reddy-Kalala).



ones outside the Atlantic region as they offer the integration services needed for the local communities welcoming the newcomers.²⁵⁸ By working with local settlement agencies on plans designed by them, immigrants would be able to be better prepared prior to their arrival in the new community which facilitates integration and retention.²⁵⁹

Mr. Allen also noted that, under the AIPP, the settlement plan “is very complex for someone to complete and go through the consultation” and reminded the Committee that the temporary foreign worker program does not have that requirement. He felt that he was already welcoming and integrating temporary foreign workers by greeting them at the airport upon arrival, spending “a week getting them settled, finding a spot, and helping them get some accommodations and some furniture, whatever the case was.”²⁶⁰

The complexity of settlement plans led Ms. Susan Wilson, Director of Human Resources at J.D. Irving Ltd., to call for “an integrated access for employers to settlement services” or “a one-stop shop to assist employers with where to seek out and best utilize the settlement resources that are available to us.”²⁶¹ Consequently, the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 19

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada facilitate access by employers of best practices in settlement services and recognize the ability of local settlement agencies to provide settlement plans to employers within the framework developed for the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.

Part 4: Ensuring Permanent Residents Remain in Atlantic Canada

As the Committee heard, retention of newcomers to Atlantic Canada is an important issue for the region. The low level of retention undermines the region’s efforts in attracting immigrants and growing communities. Part 4 of the report discusses retention rates in Atlantic Canada, including the retention efforts to ensure Atlantic Canada grows. It also emphasizes the importance of social infrastructure and community acceptance.

258 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 October 2017, 0855 (Charles Leger, Deputy Mayor, City of Moncton).

259 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 1950 (Crystal Delong, Owner Operator Recruiter, Day and Ross Transportation Group).

260 CIMM, *Evidence*, 17 October 2017, 2045 (Bill Allen).

261 CIMM, *Evidence*, 19 October 2017, 0850 (Susan Wilson).

A. Retaining permanent residents and Atlantic Canadians

Officials from IRCC informed the Committee that interprovincial mobility, or retention of immigrants, is calculated based on the intended destination province declared at arrival and the province declared as residence five years after arrival.²⁶² Retention rates vary by program and province, but, overall, in Atlantic Canada,

we have a range starting from about 30% for P.E.I. all the way to 75% for Nova Scotia. Newfoundland and Labrador will be 65%. Other provinces will definitely have higher retention rates when we look at the full program. In other programs such as the Canadian experience class there are much higher retention rates for the Atlantic. I know the numbers are small but retention is very high. Family class will have a much higher retention rate ranging between 85% and 74%. That is the family class, and you might also anticipate why the rootedness and whatnot are a factor.²⁶³

...

the retention rates of privately sponsored refugees are much higher. Again, that's pointing in the direction of family involvement and the welcoming nature of the community, if you will. They all contribute towards the retention rates.²⁶⁴

New Brunswick has a retention rate of 72% and the province aims to increase it “to 80% with concentrated integration and retention efforts.”²⁶⁵

Ms. Penny Walsh McGuire from the Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce commented on P.E.I.'s low retention rate, which she situated at 38%. According to her, many newcomers leave P.E.I. just two years after completing their PNP requirements, which she qualified not as a pathway to P.E.I., but “more of a pathway to Canada”.²⁶⁶ Ms. Walsh McGuire informed the Committee that P.E.I.'s action plan for population growth includes a focus on retention for immigrants and youth. Minister Gallant stated that P.E.I. is engaging its communities to improve retention rates, which also means working more closely with francophone organizations to grow P.E.I.'s francophone community.²⁶⁷

262 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1535 (Ümit Kiziltan, Director General, Research and Evaluation, Department of Citizenship and Immigration).

263 *Ibid.*, 1535.

264 *Ibid.*, 1540.

265 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

266 CIMM, *Evidence*, 16 October 2017, 1635 (Penny Walsh McGuire).

267 CIMM, *Evidence*, 29 May 2017, 1650 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).



Based on data from 2014, the Nova Scotia Office of Immigration indicated that 73% of newcomers to the province between 2009 and 2013 stayed, whereas in the early 2000s it was only 50%. Mr. Fares argued that settlement programming was instrumental in improving retention rates in Nova Scotia.²⁶⁸

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Ms. Parisio informed the Committee that retention of immigrants in Francophone minority communities “is high because it is easy for them to integrate into small groups and small communities.”²⁶⁹ However, Mr. Rivera observed that Newfoundland and Labrador has an overall low retention rate that he believes it is due mainly to lack of information and access to services. He recommended that funding be provided so that an information portal can be developed to access all types of services.²⁷⁰ Mr. Rivera also reminded the Committee that three elements are essential for retention: employment, information, and transportation.

Professor Emery also considered employment and wages as important retention elements, not just for newcomers but for all Atlantic Canadians.²⁷¹ He mentioned a study that looked at “return migrants to New Brunswick”²⁷² and he noted that of all the New Brunswickers who left and returned to the province about half came back within 10 years of their departure.²⁷³ However, of that half, very few remained in the province for more than one or two years after they had returned because the labour demand was small.²⁷⁴ Professor Emery considers business opportunities and private sector investment as a driver for labour demand and high retention rates.²⁷⁵

Mr. Flecker offered a specific suggestion to increase retention. He suggested that governments at all levels should establish “social procurement strategies” that provides extra points when assessing proposals from companies that have the most diverse workforce.²⁷⁶

268 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1640 (Wadih Fares).

269 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1750 (Sarah Parisio).

270 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0950 (Jose Rivera).

271 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1530 (Herb Emery).

272 Ibid.

273 Ibid., 1600.

274 Ibid.

275 Ibid.

276 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1605 (Karl Flecker).

Most witnesses underlined the importance of family links and community roots as key elements to retention. As stated by Professor Yoshida, immigrants' "decision making is based on household well-being rather than individual well-being."²⁷⁷ She emphasized the importance of family settlement, noting that family-sponsored spouses and partners have better employment outcomes and higher earnings in Atlantic Canada compared to the national average.²⁷⁸

As such the Committee recommends:

Recommendation 20

That the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada continue to allocate additional immigration to Atlantic Canada, as proposed by the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, in order to create conditions in which Atlantic Canada can enjoy population growth at the national average.

1. Access to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada offices

In 2012, Prince Edward Island became the only province with no Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada office.²⁷⁹ Mr. Mackie suggested that newcomers would benefit from being able to access services in the province, such as retrieving permanent resident cards and attending interviews for spousal sponsorship.²⁸⁰ Requiring newcomers to go to Halifax places a financial burden on them.²⁸¹ Following up on this point, Mr. Leger emphasized that an IRCC office is a key to retention, because immigrants generally move to large centers in order to have easy access to an IRCC office.²⁸²

In addition to the office closure, the Committee heard that there were office consolidations in New Brunswick and staff reductions in Halifax and St. John's. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada may require additional staff to meet the administration requirement of delivering the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and should look to Atlantic Canada as the preferred location for expanding its footprint to meet the requirement of immigration to Atlantic Canada. Consequently, the Committee recommends:

277 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0920 (Yoko Yoshida).

278 Ibid., 0905.

279 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1650 (Hon. Sonny Gallant).

280 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1720 and 1735 (Craig Mackie).

281 Ibid.

282 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0855 (Charles Leger).



Recommendation 21

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada reopen and re-staff the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship offices in Atlantic Canada, which were closed or downsized on June 1st, 2012, and look to Atlantic Canada as a preferred location for future increases to the department’s footprint.

B. Strengthening Atlantic Canada’s social infrastructure

During the course of the study, a few witnesses suggested to the Committee that the existing social infrastructure in Atlantic Canada, such as schools, universities and community groups, should be fully utilized to retain immigrants in the region. Mr. Campbell pointed out that the school, community college and university systems are natural conduits for new immigrants to integrate into the community²⁸³ and become active members of the community. He believed that

In a perfect world every immigrant would come through the post-secondary system, either college or the university system because they would then be accredited with a Canadian degree or diploma. They would have had the time to put up with our winters for two, three or four years. They'd really understand if they wanted to settle down for their life in Atlantic Canada.²⁸⁴

Mr. Poschmann also emphasized the important role that neighbourhoods with a particular ethnic focus have,²⁸⁵ especially in rural settings. Mr. Campbell pointed out that “churches and other groups ... are [already] catering to specific ethnic communities”²⁸⁶ throughout Atlantic Canada.

Two other witnesses raised the importance of ethnocultural associations, places of faith and welcoming neighbourhoods as retention factors. For example, Mr. Leger asked for funding “for ethnocultural associations and places of faith”²⁸⁷ to support immigrant populations in Moncton, New Brunswick. He emphasized the need to build connections between ethnocultural groups within communities which can support newcomers when they arrive in Atlantic Canada. This extra level of support, in addition to settlement agencies and municipalities, is important to create a link to the local community.²⁸⁸

283 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0910 (David Campbell).

284 Ibid., 0940.

285 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0925 (Finn Poschmann).

286 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0910 (David Campbell).

287 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0855 (Charles Leger).

288 Ibid., 0925.

Mr. Rivera also highlighted the need for multicultural organizations and ethnocultural associations in Newfoundland and Labrador.²⁸⁹

C. Welcoming communities in Atlantic Canada

Minister Arseneault also emphasized the value and benefits of a diverse and multicultural society and the importance of community.

We believe in inclusive communities, support for all New Brunswick families, and investing in culture. Recent public opinion research produced by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada shows that residents of Atlantic Canada express more positive views on immigration and refugees compared to other regions of Canada.²⁹⁰

He also spoke of maintaining the momentum of the federal government's Syrian refugee initiative, which saw more than 350 communities throughout Canada welcoming refugees, “to continue to create welcoming communities for all newcomers, and to increase the number of new immigrants coming to New Brunswick.”²⁹¹

Ms. Mills explained that IRCC has a settlement program called Community Connections that connects newcomers to the community. The program tries to foster connections through volunteering: “people engaged in community gardens, volunteering in the community, that sort of work.”²⁹² Professor Reeves supported the principle of creating community connections, because newcomers need a sense of belonging.²⁹³ “Cultivating relationships with local residents assists in anchoring immigrants in their community.”²⁹⁴

Several witnesses stated that Atlantic Canada has the willingness and capacity to welcome, engage and integrate immigrants into communities.²⁹⁵ The sentiment was echoed by Ms. Mills who stated:

A few years ago, my phone was ringing off the hook with people asking me, “Come and speak to us about immigrants and why we need immigrants.” That's not what we're

289 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 17 October 2017, 0950 (Jose Rivera).

290 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1640 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

291 Ibid.

292 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1725 (Gerry Mills).

293 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1540 (Roxanne Reeves); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0850 (Susan Wilson).

294 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1545 (Roxanne Reeves).

295 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0945 (Yoko Yoshida); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0950 (Susan Wilson); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0950 (Charles Leger).



talking about right now. My phone is ringing off the hook with people saying, “What can we do? What can I do? What can I do personally, as an employer, as a community?” Communities are absolutely ready in Nova Scotia.²⁹⁶

Nevertheless, Mr. Flecker cited research done by Professors Dechief, Oreopoulos, Ramos and Yoshida and argued that immigrants sometimes leave Atlantic Canada because of experiences of discrimination.²⁹⁷ He, as well as several other witnesses, underlined the need for public campaigns that promote the benefits of immigration and diversity.²⁹⁸ These awareness campaigns should be built on partnerships with the local communities and main stakeholders such as municipalities, settlement agencies, unions, employers, and faith-based groups.²⁹⁹ In this context, Minister Arseneault noted that New Brunswick does have a public awareness campaign named “We are all NB”, which aims “to educate all New Brunswickers on our current demographic and skilled labour challenges, and on the benefits of immigration and creating welcoming communities to alleviate this situation.”³⁰⁰

The Fredericton Chamber of Commerce also suggested increasing intercultural awareness and sensitivity to address the “level of distrust” immigrant investors may have experienced from locals, pointing out that training and workshops should be offered to government representatives and “business professionals, especially those working in the areas of talent acquisition, consulting and banking – all of which are major points of first contact for immigrants.”³⁰¹

Mr. Mackie stated that reduced funding for settlement service providers had an impact in P.E.I. on the delivery of cultural sensitivity training and diversity education that supports inclusion.³⁰² For example, the Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers to Canada “no longer deliver[s] multicultural education to public schools.”³⁰³

296 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 June 2017, 1725 (Gerry Mills).

297 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1535 (Karl Flecker).

298 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1535 (Karl Flecker); CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1550 (Roxanne Reeves); Nova Scotia Office of Immigration, [Written Submission](#), p. 3.

299 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1535 (Karl Flecker).

300 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1645 (Hon. Donald Arseneault).

301 Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, [Written submission](#), p. 8.

302 *Ibid.*, 1720.

303 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 14 June 2017, 1720 (Craig Mackie).

Recommendation 22

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, in cooperation with Canadian Heritage, review the funding model for service provider organizations to include diversity education that supports inclusion.

Part 5: Evaluating and Moving Forward

On 11 July 2017, the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship provided an update on the status of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program.³⁰⁴ Four months after the launch of the pilot program, 634 employers had applied for designation and 412 had been designated. A total of 282 skilled immigrants and recent international graduates had been recruited and 214 were ready to apply as permanent residents. Since applicants are expected to come with their families, the pilot project alone, as of July 2017, has brought in approximately 400 to 500 individuals in addition to pre-existing programs.

Despite this update, the Committee heard about the need to evaluate the program and its results, including retention rates. Ms. Hunter has stated that IRCC will be

looking at different elements of the pilot as it rolls out, and we definitely need to evaluate the results as we go. Looking at the unique settlement component and the components focused on retention, as well as the fact that there are the rural areas that have different needs than urban areas do, that certainly is a possibility.³⁰⁵

Nevertheless, Professor Ramos stressed the need for researchers to have access to open data to better study the successes of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and immigration in the region more generally.³⁰⁶

Mr. Ivany observed that the “demographic pattern in Atlantic Canada ... is a bit of a precursor to what will happen in other areas of Canada, that kind of age weighting will fundamentally change everything.”³⁰⁷ For that reason, Mrs. Walsh McGuire stated that the program has best practices that can be applied elsewhere in Canada in regions with similar

304 This was in the context of a press conference to announce the publication of [Reporting to Atlantic Canadians on the Atlantic Growth Strategy](#).

305 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 29 May 2017, 1625 (Laurie Hunter).

306 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 19 October 2017, 0905 (Howard Ramos).

307 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 7 June 2017, 1535 (Ray Ivany).



demographic challenges.³⁰⁸ Mr. Flecker also said that the program has the potential to be expanded.³⁰⁹

Recommendation 23

That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada perform a gender-based analysis of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program and develop targets to set a standard for gender equality.

Recommendation 24

That a committee of the House of Commons conduct a formal review of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program after March 2020, to assess whether retention and immigration levels to the Atlantic region improved under the Atlantic Immigration Pilot Program, and whether the pilot should be offered as a new immigration program nationally.

308 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1640 (Penny Walsh McGuire).

309 CIMM, [Evidence](#), 16 October 2017, 1535 (Karl Flecker).

APPENDIX A LIST OF WITNESSES

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Department of Citizenship and Immigration</p> <p>Laurie Hunter, Director, Economic Immigration Policy and Programs</p> <p>Ümit Kiziltan, Director General, Research and Evaluation</p> <p>Corinne Prince, Director General, Integration and Foreign Credentials Referral Office</p>	2017/05/29	62
<p>Government of New Brunswick</p> <p>Hon. Donald Arseneault, Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour</p> <p>Charles Ayles, Assistant Deputy Minister, Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Population Growth Division</p>		
<p>Government of Prince Edward Island</p> <p>Hon. Sonny Gallant, Minister of Workforce and Advanced Learning</p> <p>Abbey MacPherson, Director and Senior Operations Manager, Office of Immigration</p> <p>Neil Stewart, Deputy Minister, Workforce and Advanced Learning</p>		
<p>Atlantic Institute for Market Studies</p> <p>Marco Navarro-Génie, President and Chief Executive Office</p>	2017/05/31	63
<p>Atlantic Provinces Economic Council</p> <p>Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer</p>		
<p>Canadian Federation of Independent Business</p> <p>Jordi Morgan, Vice-President, Atlantic Canada</p>		
<p>Cape Breton Regional Municipality</p> <p>Amanda McDougall, Councillor</p>		
<p>Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador</p> <p>Juanita Ford, Manager, Workforce and Industry Development</p>		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
KEYS Job Centre Karl Flecker, Immigrant Employment Specialist Alaina Lockhart, M.P., Fundy Royal	2017/06/07	65
Acadia University Ray Ivany, President and Vice-Chancellor		
Association of Atlantic Universities Peter Halpin, Executive Director		
Canadian Federation of Students - Newfoundland and Labrador Sofia Descalzi, Chairperson		
Memorial University of Newfoundland Natasha Clark, International Student Advisor		
TD Bank Group Hon. Frank McKenna, Deputy Chair, Corporate Office		
Canadian Taxpayers Federation Kevin Lacey, Director, Atlantic	2017/06/14	67
Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador Sarah Parisio, Coordinator		
New Brunswick Multicultural Council Alex LeBlanc, Executive Director		
Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers to Canada Craig Mackie, Executive Director		
University of New Brunswick James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics		
Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia Gerry Mills, Executive Director	2017/06/19	68
Louisbourg Seafoods Ltd. Adam Mugridge, Product Development Manager		
Nova Scotia Office of Immigration Suzanne Ley, Executive Director		

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
W.M. Fares Group Wadih Fares, President and Chief Executive Officer	2017/06/19	68
As an individual Herb Emery, Vaughan Chair in Regional Economics, University of New Brunswick Roxanne Reeves, Author and Researcher, Intercultural Mentoring Specialist, University of New Brunswick	2017/10/16	74
Cape Breton Regional Municipality Amanda McDougall, Councillor		
Greater Charlottetown Area Chamber of Commerce Penny Walsh McGuire, Executive Director		
KEYS Job Centre Karl Flecker, Immigrant Employment Specialist		
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick Katherine d'Entremont, Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick		
As an individual David Campbell, President, Jupia Consultants Inc.	2017/10/17	75
Atlantic Provinces Economic Council Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer		
Canadian Federation of Agriculture Reint-Jan Dykstra, Director		
Refugee and Immigrant Advisory Council Jose Rivera, Executive Director		
Statistics Canada Laurent Martel, Director, Demography Division		
As an individual Ather Akbari, Professor, Atlantic Research Group on Economics of Immigration, Aging and Diversity, Saint Mary's University	2017/10/17	76

Organizations and Individuals	Date	Meeting
<p>Day & Ross Transportation Group</p> <p>Crystal DeLong, Owner Operator Recruiter</p> <p>Vaughn Hatcher, National Manager, Owner Operator Recruiting, Day & Ross Freight</p> <p>Restaurants Canada</p> <p>Bill Allen, Chairman of the Board</p> <p>Luc Erjavec, Vice-President, Atlantic Canada</p> <p>Sunrise Group of Companies</p> <p>Shuo (Sherry) Huang, Chief Executive Officer</p> <p>The Farmer's Daughter Country Market</p> <p>Heather Coulombe, Owner</p> <p>Tisdale Trucking Ltd.</p> <p>Dave Tisdale, Owner</p>	2017/10/17	76
<p>As individuals</p> <p>Michael Haan, Canada Research Chair in Migration and Ethnic Relations, Department of Sociology, Western University</p> <p>Howard Ramos, Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University</p> <p>Yoko Yoshida, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology, Dalhousie University</p> <p>City of Moncton</p> <p>Charles Leger, Deputy Mayo</p> <p>Angelique Reddy-Kalala, Immigration Strategy Officer</p> <p>J.D. Irving, Limited</p> <p>Jeffrey Green, Director, Talent Acquisition</p> <p>Susan Wilson, Director, Human Resources, Sawmills and Woodlands Division</p>	2017/10/19	77

APPENDIX B LIST OF BRIEFS

Organizations and Individuals

Akbari, Ather

Atlantic Provinces Economic Council

Canadian Federation of Agriculture

Fredericton Chamber of Commerce

Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador

KEYS Job Centre

Nova Scotia Office of Immigration

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Ramos, Howard

The Conference Board of Canada

Yoshida, Yoko

REQUEST FOR GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Committee requests that the government table a comprehensive response to this Report.

A copy of the relevant Minutes of Proceedings ([Meetings Nos. 62, 63, 65, 67, 68, 74, 75, 76, 77, 79, 80 and 81](#)) is tabled.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Oliphant
Chair

**Dissenting Report of Her Majesty's Official Opposition
The Conservative Party of Canada**

M-39, Immigration to Atlantic Canada

*Michelle Rempel, Member of Parliament for Calgary Nose Hill
Bob Saroya, Member of Parliament for Markham – Unionville
Larry Maguire, Member of Parliament for Brandon – Souris*

BACKGROUND

The Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration considered the issue of Immigration to Atlantic Canada during the Spring and Fall of 2017. In particular, it studied the aging population and shrinking base of residents in the region, issues pertaining to retention of newcomers and analysis of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program.

The Atlantic Immigration Pilot program (AIP) is a three-year project that seeks to bring 2,000 immigrants and their accompanying families to the region starting in 2017¹. It also aims to address the unique labour market of Atlantic Canada by attracting skilled newcomers via this pilot program. Specifically, this initiative is “for skilled workers and international student graduates who want to permanently live in one of the four Atlantic Provinces”².

Witnesses were quick to point out that in order to meet the objectives of this program, retention issues and problems with other federal programs that are related to immigration first need to be resolved. There were concerns raised regarding the overly bureaucratic process that employers must go through to access the program, leading Luc Erjavec to speculate that the program may not even be renewed because so many employers gave up on the process.³

Several testimonies also addressed the recent Auditor General Report, which clearly identify the need for improvement within the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP). This is particularly concerning, considering that the Auditor General Report shows that “80% of fish processors are laying off workers at the same time as they're using workers from the temporary foreign worker program.”⁴ Such actions demonstrate that domestic employees are being harmed by this program and that reforms are needed.

Additionally, many who appeared before the Committee addressed the need for economic prosperity and job opportunities in Atlantic Canada to retain and attract immigrants to the region. Witnesses stated that viable employment is one of the most important reasons an immigrant stays in a given region. Evidence also indicates that the rural regions of Atlantic Canada are particularly suffering in

¹ Library of Parliament, Briefing Note on Immigration to Atlantic Canada, [Briefing](#), p. 1.

² Library of Parliament, Briefing Note on Immigration to Atlantic Canada, [Briefing](#), p. 1.

³ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, (Luc Erjavec, Restaurants Canada)

⁴ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1625, (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer's Federation)

terms of unemployment⁵. Therefore, it is vital for the government to create the right economic conditions for job creators to grow in the region, or retention of immigrants will suffer.

The Provincial Nominee Program was also discussed as a means of combatting the population challenges facing the Atlantic provinces. This program allows for targeted economic immigration to the region and allocations of nominees to the Atlantic provinces have been increasing over the past decade. This program plays an important role in increasing population in the region while also bringing economic migrants to Atlantic Canada. Some witnesses stated that it must be increased to reflect the needs of the region.

A strong and economically viable Atlantic Canada is necessary for our country to prosper. Increased immigration is helpful, but on its own will not stop the demographic challenges facing the region. Instead, the government must meet increased levels of newcomers by creating the economic conditions for the private sector to grow and ensure prosperity in the provinces.

REASONS FOR A DISSENTING REPORT

It is the opinion of the Conservative Members that the recommendations in the report tabled by this Committee had numerous deficiencies. Throughout the study witnesses at the Committee made it clear that the federal government can play a significant role in shaping immigrant retention and economic opportunities. The report tabled by the Committee does not entirely address the needs of Atlantic Canadians.

This dissenting report therefore provides recommendations to address the deficiencies in the report tabled by the Committee. In particular, we would like to emphasize the following themes:

- Population retention
- Economic growth and prosperity
- Increasing the Provincial Nominee Program
- Reforming the Temporary Foreign Worker Program
- Demand for integration services

Population Retention

Many witnesses argued in favour of increased economic immigration in Atlantic Canada through opportunities like the AIP. However, witnesses were quick to point to the issue of low retention rates of both immigrants and native-born Atlantic Canadians in the region. The Fredericton Chamber of Commerce noted in their briefing that with increased immigration to the Atlantic provinces, it is important to “capitalize on this momentum of net immigration” with regards to retention rates⁶. However, with the federal government’s high tax policies and lack of job opportunities, the Atlantic region will have a hard time capitalizing on this program. As Mr. Karl Flecker from KEYS Job Centre

⁵ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1610, (Professor James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics, University of New Brunswick)

⁶ CIMM, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, [Written Submission](#), p. 4.

discussed in his briefing, “with little prospect for employment, people move out of the region”⁷. Therefore, the federal government must first address economic barriers to retention if they want Atlantic Canada to see long-term success with this pilot program.

The AIP attempts to address the retention problem by mandating that employers develop a settlement plan for newcomers which they hire through the program.⁸ This is based on the assumption that the best way to increase retention is the added responsibilities on the employers. What we heard at committee was that typically employers hire settlement agencies to write this plan. For instance we heard from Gerry Mills, who said that his organization, the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia, “has developed 123 settlement plans to date, 109 outside Canada for all the four provinces.”⁹ There are only a few settlement agencies that are approved by Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada, which has resulted in long wait times for the settlement plans. Mr. Vaughn Hatcher, National Manager, Owner Operator Recruiting, Day and Ross Freight, Day and Ross Transportation Group, stated:

“when it comes to settlement agencies, we are having to use five settlement agencies that were indicated we have to use out of Halifax, I believe Toronto, Montreal, and Vancouver, or whatever. We have a local settlement agency here that works with people that are already in Canada. If we could use them, it would be so much easier than using one of the five approved settlement agencies. The one here is a multicultural association of New Brunswick. They know the area, they know the challenges people will have coming here, and it's good to work with that.”¹⁰

While this additional work is being done to develop a settlement plan, it is not clear that this is the missing piece to address retention. Witnesses and briefings often pointed out that the lack of economic growth, high taxation policies and prosperity for job creators are significant barriers to retaining of newcomers and current residents of the Atlantic Provinces. For example, the Fredericton Chamber of Commerce cited “removing barriers to doing business in New Brunswick” as one mechanism for improving retention rates to the region¹¹. This briefing noted that cumbersome regulations pose a problem for newcomers¹². Without retention, there is limited ability for the AIP to succeed in aiding population and demographic challenges in the region.

Given that the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program is not addressing retention rates in the region, we recommend:

⁷ CIMM, Karl Flecker, KEYS Job Centre, [Written Submission](#), p. 4.

⁸ Library of Parliament, Briefing Note on Immigration to Atlantic Canada, [Briefing](#), p. 5.

⁹ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 1655, (Gerry Mills, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia)

¹⁰ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 1015, (Vaughn Hatcher, National Manager, Owner Operator Recruiting, Day and Ross Freight, Day and Ross Transportation Group)

¹¹ CIMM, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, [Written Submission](#), p. 5.

¹² CIMM, Fredericton Chamber of Commerce, [Written Submission](#), p. 3.

- 1. That Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) work with other relevant departments to create a whole of government plan that reduces regulatory barriers to retention in the Atlantic Provinces.**

Economic Growth and Prosperity for Job Creators

Furthermore, witnesses at the Committee made it clear that population decline in the Atlantic region cannot simply be remedied with increased immigration alone. Instead, testimony demonstrated that economic prosperity is necessary to address the demographical challenges of these provinces. This sentiment was clearly demonstrated by Mr. Kevin Lacey when he said:

“[Atlantic Canada’s] population has declined; we are aging, and the cost to provide public services is becoming unaffordable. The solution that many have put forward is to find ways to bring as many new immigrants to the region as possible. This is a laudable goal, but it won't work in isolation from other changes.”¹³

Witnesses made clear that fixing the Atlantic Canadian economy would ensure immigration and population retention in the region. As Mr. Kevin Lacey stated, “fix the economy and we can attract thousands home, as well as others from around the world.”¹⁴ Therefore, a large part of a solution to increase retention of immigrants and the population of the Atlantic provinces relies on strong and stable economic policy. However, policies in Atlantic Canada have not allowed for substantive economic improvement and success. This was made clear when a witness stated:

“It's all about the economy, and the Atlantic economy is failing under high taxes, excessive regulations, a failure to explore our natural resources, and costly bureaucracy.”¹⁵

The problem of high taxation has contributed to stagnation in the local economies of Atlantic Canada and has hindered economic prosperity. Mr. Marco Navarro-Genie, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, pointed out that “the region's economies are the most taxed jurisdictions in the country.”¹⁶ Increased taxes under the federal Liberal Government, including the federal imposition of a carbon tax and planned increase in proposed taxes, contribute to the economic challenges.

These failed economic policies deter prosperity in Atlantic Canada and affect the ability to retain newcomers to the region. If the federal government seeks to continue or expand the Atlantic Immigration Pilot program, its imposition of high taxes and growth of the debt burden will need to change. If not, retention levels will continue to pose a challenge to the region. The government will need

¹³ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1615, (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer’s Federation)

¹⁴ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1615, (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer’s Federation)

¹⁵ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1615, (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer’s Federation)

¹⁶ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 31 May 2017, 1700, (Marco Navarro-Génie, President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Institute for Market Studies)

to address the economic challenges in the both the rural and urban regions in order to successfully retain newcomers to Atlantic Canada.

High unemployment rates facing Atlantic Canadians also contribute to the experience of newcomers. As Professor James Ted McDonald stated, “high provincial unemployment rates arise from high rural unemployment rates in Atlantic Canada.”¹⁷ Regulatory barriers that halt construction of projects, like Energy East, were also identified as challenges facing the Atlantic region. Mr. Finn Poschmann identified regulatory barriers as a challenge that faced the Energy East pipeline decision¹⁸. He also pointed out that the cancellation of this project was “unfortunate for the province of New Brunswick”¹⁹. The federal government should be encouraging job growth if they wish to increase immigrant retention and not set-up onerous regulatory barriers that threaten investment.

Due to these factors and challenging economic conditions for job creators, retaining immigrants to Atlantic Canada faces a serious challenge. This is because, as many witnesses stated, an indisputable factor in immigrant retention is the availability of employment²⁰. Economic growth should be the government’s main priority if they wish to find tangible solutions to the aging demographic and population challenges facing the Atlantic region. Without meaningful economic growth, retention of newcomers to Atlantic Canada will suffer and locals will continue to leave.

Given that economic prosperity and job opportunities are essential to retention of immigrants, we recommend:

- 1. That IRCC collaborate with Employment and Social Development Canada to examine strategies to retain immigrants in the rural regions of Atlantic Canada.**
- 2. That the government immediately reverse their imposition of a carbon tax on the provinces and abandon their increased payroll taxes on employees.**
- 3. That the government take immediate measures to reduce regulatory barriers that have led to the termination of the Energy East project and could lead to others.**

Increasing the Provincial Nominee Program

Witnesses also highlighted the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP) and its positive impact on addressing population challenges in the Atlantic Provinces. Mr. Alex LeBlanc, the Executive Director of the New Brunswick Multicultural Council described the “promising results over the last decade with the

¹⁷ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1610, (Professor James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics, University of New Brunswick)

¹⁸ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 0925, (Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Provinces Economic Council)

¹⁹ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 0925, (Finn Poschmann, President and Chief Executive Officer, Atlantic Provinces Economic Council)

²⁰ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1610, (Professor James Ted McDonald, Professor of Economics, University of New Brunswick)

provincial nominee program.”²¹ He emphasized the need for a targeted approach to economic immigration in the region.

Additionally, Ms. Laurie Hunter from the Department of Citizenship and Immigration highlighted the increase in new Canadians through the PNP under the previous Conservative government. This is demonstrated by Ms. Hunter’s quote:

For example, in 2005, only 1.5% of new immigrants to Canada were destined for any of the Atlantic Provinces. By 2014, that percentage had more than doubled to 3.1%.”²²

Witnesses pointed to options to expand the provincial nominee program. Mr. LeBlanc suggested the possibility of creating a municipal program, while the Hon. Donald Arseneault discussed the increases to francophone immigrants in New Brunswick through their PNP.²³ Regardless of proposal, witnesses were generally supportive of the program and expansion of the amount of provincial nominees for Atlantic Provinces.

Gerry Mills, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia added to this by saying:

“Most of our immigrants to Nova Scotia come through the PNP stream. If the federal government is truly interested in increasing immigration to the Atlantic, raise or eliminate the caps.”²⁴

Given the discrepancy in population size and PNP designation, as well as the positive economic benefits of the program, we recommend:

- 4. That the government increases the number of provincial nominees designated to the Atlantic provinces so that the total allotment is more representative of Canada’s population make-up.**
- 5. That IRCC examine different options to adapt the provincial nominee program to meet the specific needs of the various Atlantic Provinces.**

Needed Reforms to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program

A reoccurring issue that was addressed during this study was the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. One witness in particular made clear that the reliance on the program was negatively impacting the retention of Atlantic Canadians to the region. Mr. Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director of the Canadian Taxpayer’s Federation addressed this problem when he stated:

²¹ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1720, (Alex LeBlanc, Executive Director, New Brunswick Multicultural Council)

²² CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 29 May 2017, 1530, (Laurie Hunter, Director, Economic Immigration Policy and Programs, Department of Citizenship and Immigration)

²³ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 29 May 2017, 1640, (Hon. Donald Arseneault, Minister of Post-Secondary Education Training and Labour, Government of New Brunswick)

²⁴ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 1655, (Gerry Mills, Executive Director, Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia)

“At any one time, we have almost 100,000 people collecting employment insurance cheques, yet in this region, we are bringing temporary foreign workers into areas that already have lots of people without work.”²⁵

One witness alluded to the fact that some requested changes to the TFWP actually just indicate a need for more economic immigrants²⁶. This point must be considered if the government makes changes to the TFWP and when planning for future immigration levels.

Finally, the way in which the TFWP drives down wages for Atlantic Canadians was also identified as an issue of concern for retention of newcomers and the local populations more broadly. As referenced by Mr. Lacey, this Auditor General Report found that “80% of fish processors are laying off workers at the same time as they're using workers from the temporary foreign worker program, which is why there needs to be reform.”²⁷ These findings demonstrate problems within the TFWP, especially if zealously used as part of one's business model.

Given these realities, we recommend:

- 6. That the government reform the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to adequately address the issues identified by the Auditor General's Report in 2017**
 - a. That these reforms include measures that necessitate the use of government data on labour markets to corroborate the validity of an employer's application.**
 - b. That these reforms include increased measures to ensure all options within the domestic workforce have been exhausted prior to seeking temporary foreign workers.**
 - c. That the government study the possible depression of wages caused by the TFWP**
- 7. That IRCC examine whether industries in the Atlantic region have created a business model based off of the TFWP and investigate possible mechanisms to stop such actions.**

Demand for Integration Services

Several witnesses were also concerned with the lack of integration support for newcomers, which make it less attractive for immigrants to stay in the Atlantic region. Ms. Sarah Parisio, a Coordinator for the Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador, described how a lack of available French language training services for newcomers serves as a major challenge, particularly in terms of retention²⁸. She noted that funds had been cut to local French programming. This was referenced by the quote:

²⁵ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1615 (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer's Federation)

²⁶ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 19 October 2017, 0935 (Dr. Yoko Yoshida)

²⁷ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1625, (Kevin Lacey, Atlantic Director, Canadian Taxpayer's Federation)

²⁸ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1730, (Sarah Parisio, Coordinator, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador)

“In terms of French-language services in Newfoundland and Labrador, this is the first year that the annual funding for the provincial francophone immigration network has been significantly reduced.”²⁹

This lack of integration support services is especially problematic in the rural areas of the Atlantic Provinces. This sentiment was expressed by Ms. Parisio when she said, “as we well know, cuts always have disproportionate impacts on areas remote from major centres.”³⁰ For newcomers to experience a successful transition into Canadian life, settlement services and integration support is needed.

Witnesses also addressed the need for local community engagement in the settlement process, in order to help integrate newcomers to the Atlantic region. Mr. Alex LeBlanc expressed this sentiment to the Committee when he stated that “broader community involvement in [the case of Syrian refugees] has led to better integration, a greater sense of belonging, and I expect improved retention.”³¹ This example demonstrates the importance of engagement with the local community in settlement of newcomers, which should ultimately lead to higher rates of retention in Atlantic Canada.

Given the importance of settlement services and encouraging community engagement, we recommend:

- 8. That IRCC works with its non-profit partners in the region to most efficiently deliver the settlement services that help increase retention rates, particularly in rural parts of Atlantic Canada.**

Conclusion

The AIP has added additional bureaucratic mechanisms to existing immigration streams and does very little to address the issue of retention. Programs such as the PNP already provide a path to matching immigrants to labour needs on a provincial level. At the same time, it has been demonstrated that temporary band-aid fixes such as the TFWP should be reduced as much as possible. While settlement and cultural services are an important aspect of integration, ultimately the evidence suggests that both newcomers and current residents will be incentivized to move to provinces where they have access to better economic mobility.

²⁹ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1730, (Sarah Parisio, Coordinator, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador)

³⁰ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1730, (Sarah Parisio, Coordinator, Fédération des francophones de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador)

³¹ CIMM, Evidence, 1st Session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 1725, (Alex LeBlanc, Executive Director, New Brunswick Multicultural Council)

Recommendations

1. That IRCC work with other relevant departments to create a whole of government plan that reduces economic barriers to retention in the Atlantic Provinces.
2. That the government immediately reverse their imposition of a carbon tax on the provinces and abandon their increased payroll taxes on employees and employers through Canadian Pension Plan hikes.
3. That the government take immediate measures to reduce regulatory barriers that have halted the Energy East project.
4. That IRCC collaborate with Employment and Social Development Canada to examine strategies to retain immigrants in rural regions of Atlantic Canada.
5. That the government increases the number of provincial nominees designated to the Atlantic Provinces so that the total allotment is more representative of Canada's population make-up.
6. That IRCC examine different options to adapt the provincial nominee program to meet the specific needs of the various Atlantic Provinces.
7. That the government reform the Temporary Foreign Worker Program to adequately address the issues identified by the Auditor General's Report in 2017
 - a. That these reforms include measures that necessitate the use of government data on labour markets to corroborate the validity of an employer's application.
 - b. That these reforms include increased measures to ensure all options within the domestic workforce have been exhausted prior to seeking temporary foreign workers.
 - c. That the government study the possible depression of wages caused by the TFWP
8. That IRCC examine whether industries in the Atlantic region have created a business model based off of the TFWP and investigate possible mechanisms to stop such actions.
9. That IRCC works with its non-profit partners in the region to most efficiently deliver the settlement services that help increase retention rates, particularly in rural parts of Atlantic Canada.

Supplementary Report by the New Democratic Party

At the outset, it is important to note that parties wishing to offer additional opinions that deviated from the majority of the government members on CIMM were given less than 24 hours to produce a supplemental or dissenting report. As such, it is under such time constraints that this report has been reproduced.

M-39 states:

That the Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration be instructed to undertake a study on immigration to Atlantic Canada, to consider, among other things, (i) the challenges associated with an aging population and shrinking population base, (ii) retention of current residents and the challenges of retaining new immigrants, (iii) possible recommendations on how to increase immigration to the region, (iv) analysis of the Atlantic Immigration Pilot initiatives associated with the Atlantic Growth Strategy; and that the Committee report its findings to the House within one year of the adoption of this motion.

The member of Fundy Royal, the mover of the motion, has touched on something important with the scope of motion. That is, increasing the economic and social wellbeing of Atlantic Canada is not possible simply by just sending people there. It requires a holistic approach that examines how situations are interacting with each other, and comprehensive solutions.

As the motion states, it's not just about sending more newcomers to the Atlantic region, it's about building the region up so that more people will not only go there, but stay there and thrive.

The NDP has been clear about our support to take a holistic approach to both retain those born in the region and to attract newcomers to Atlantic Canada, and to Canada as a whole to address economic and demographic challenges Canada is currently and expected to face.

As well, New Democrats have also been clear from the outset of this study that to address the challenges of the aging demographics and shrinking population of the Atlantic Provinces means more than just enhancing the temporary foreign workers program to Atlantic Canada. New Democrats believe that the immigration system is about nation building. It is based on the principle that if you are good enough to work/study here, you are good enough to stay. As well, we must also recognize that the freedom of mobility means that every Canadian and permanent residents of Canada has the right to "...to move to and take up residence in any province; and to pursue the gaining of a livelihood in any province."ⁱ Therefore, in order to tackle the challenges of attracting and retaining newcomers who immigrate to the Atlantic Provinces, we must be willing to adopt a bold and comprehensive approach.

It is the opinion of New Democrats that the government majority at CIMM failed to look at the broader picture facing the Atlantic region and lacked the courage to make the necessary recommendations that may not necessary align with the existing government policies and direction.

The areas in which bold action are required include:

1. Increasing immigration levels plan numbers
2. Retaining newcomers to Atlantic Canada
3. Transition from a reliance on the temporary to the welcoming permanency.

Increasing Immigration to Atlantic Canada

The Canadian population is aging and this phenomenon is more acute in the Atlantic region. Statistics Canada demographer Laurent Martel explained to the Committee that, “In Atlantic Canada, for example, there might be greater challenges than elsewhere relating to the labour force and care and services for seniors, who will account for a larger share of the population than elsewhere.”ⁱⁱ

Part of the driver of this is that in the Atlantic region, deaths have now outnumbered births on an annual basis. Mr. Martel explained just how significant this is for the region:

“In the Atlantic provinces, it’s happening for the first time in Canadian history. That’s a very important aspect, which means that for the first time, deaths are now outnumbering births and the trend, or the gap, will increase in coming years.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Low fertility rates, elevated death rates, and an increasingly aging population means that Atlantic Canada will require other sources to stabilize and growth its population. Immigration will therefore provide an important piece of the overall solution.

These issues are established facts. Additionally, while the Atlantic region is experiencing this situation more acutely than other areas, this is a national issue. As such, it is the opinion of New Democrats that while pilot programs are welcomed in order to test out ideas and new approaches, ultimately whether the Atlantic Immigration Pilot is a resounding success or not, the acute demographic issues facing the Atlantic region cannot be meaningfully addressed by this pilot alone, and acting now is important. As well, we must be mindful that actions taken to support the growth of newcomers to the Atlantic do not unduly or inadvertently negatively impact the rest of the country.

The President and CEO of W.M Fares Group, Mr. Wadih Fares supported the notion of increased immigration and advocated specifically for this do be done through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP), stating “I definitely believe that we should increase the number of

immigrants allowed to come into Nova Scotia under the nominee program. We always call for the cap to be lifted...^{iv}

Ms. Gerry Mills immediately echoed this call, citing the Immigrant Services Association of Nova Scotia's *2020 Vision*, which, "calls for a significant increase in immigration numbers."^v

As well, the Hon. Frank McKenna, former Premier of New Brunswick, current Deputy Chair of Corporate Office TD Bank Group, in response to questions regarding increase in immigration levels stated: "...I think increased immigration would be good for our country."^{vi}

Finally, Mr. Finn Poschmann, President and CEO of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council stated, "It's only in recent years that the Atlantic Provinces have woken up to the need for immigration. It's good to see some improvement, but we have a very long way to go. Ramping up to 450,000 nationally in the short term would be a challenge, but if we could do it that would be great."^{vii}

New Democrats therefore recommend that the government:

1) Increase the annual immigration levels plan with a clear plan to reach 450,000 annually over 5 years

Canada's immigration levels plans provide a framework of targets for all classes of immigration. The predominant focus on Canada's immigration system for some time has been on economic classes. However, the Committee heard from witnesses the importance keeping families together as it relates to retention.

Mr. Umit Kiziltan, Director General, Research and Evaluation, Department of Citizenship and Immigration stated, "Family class will have a much higher retention rate ranging between 85% and 74%."^{viii}

Ms. Mills suggested that family was one of the three key components to keep newcomers in Atlantic Canada. "If they have family there, that's going to attract them there and keep them there."^{ix}

It is also important to recognize that family-class immigrants are often of working age, or will eventually become working age, and are therefore going to be able to contribute to the economy and the community. Being a family class immigrant does not mean you aren't an economically beneficial newcomer. Dr. Yoko Yoshida, Associate Professor of sociology at Dalhousie University, provided the Committee with information on the positive impacts of family class immigrants on the Atlantic economy, stating:

“The story is slightly different for recent family-sponsored spouses and partners. They have better employment outcomes in Atlantic Canada compared to the national average. This happens all across the Atlantic Provinces. They also have higher earnings than the Canadian national average in equivalent categories.”^x

With this in mind, New Democrats recommend that the government:

2) Dedicate a larger percentage of immigration levels toward family reunification streams

Further to Canada’s immigration levels, humanitarian obligations such as the resettlement of refugees are planned for. Ms. Mills spoke to successes the Atlantic region has had in the resettlement of refugees, primarily through the Syrian refugee initiative.

“Refugees are just PRs [permanent residents] who came through a different immigration stream. They’re having a significant impact on our communities right across the Atlantic, and ISANS is an organization supporting increased numbers of refugees, both government assisted and private sponsorships. We know that means increased investment up front, but immigration needs a long-term vision. We’re growing a province, and we’re growing our communities, not just responding to labour market shortages. If we want to increase the number of immigrant into our province, we need to look at all immigration streams.”^{xi}

Provinces in Atlantic Canada stepped up in a very large way during the Syrian initiative. Nova Scotia for example highlighted Canada’s humanitarian spirit, as Mr. Fares explained, “Nova Scotia welcomed over 1,500 Syrian refugees... This is a significant increase compared with previous years in which our province typically resettled only about 200 refugees.”^{xii} This was equally true with New Brunswick, as Mr. Kiziltan explained to the Committee that, “In 2016, we had 1,680 resettled refugees.”^{xiii}

New Democrats have stated since the Syrian refugee initiative began winding down that scaling back on refugee resettlement too much, especially regarding private sponsorships (PSRs) would squander the outpouring of humanitarian effort undertaken by Canadians from coast to coast to coast. With this in mind, and with the increased capacity for resettlement that the Atlantic region built up during the Syrian refugee initiative, New Democrats recommend that the government:

3) Increase refugee resettlement to the Atlantic region

Finally, regarding increasing overall immigration levels, it was brought to the Committee’s attention on several occasions that newcomers of all skill levels were needed to create a more

sustainable and prosperous Atlantic Canada. Increasingly, for what is considered 'low-skill' work, employers have been turning to the Temporary Foreign Workers Program (TFWP), as often newcomers who fill these positions lack the points under the current iteration of the Express Entry (EE) system, which favours higher-skilled applicants. While some provinces both within and outside the Atlantic region have undertaken initiatives to utilize the PNP to address EE's shortcomings in this respect, it was clear leadership at the federal level on this is required.

Ms. Juanita Ford, Manager, Workforce and Industry Development, Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador pointed to the tourism industry as an example. "In 2016, research conducted by Tourism HR Canada and the Conference Board of Canada projected that by 2035 potential labour shortages in the tourism sector in Newfoundland and Labrador could reach 15.2%, leaving over 3,000 jobs unfilled." She went on to say, "We know that if nothing is done to increase labour supply, the shortfall in revenue to the tourism sector in Canada by 2035 will be an estimated \$27.5 billion."^{xiv}

Ms. Natasha Clark, International Student Advisor at Memorial University of Newfoundland explained the impact that EE has had on the former Canada Experience Class (CEC) and international students hoping to make Atlantic Canada their permanent home. "When the Canadian Experience Class was introduced, it existed outside express entry. Then with the addition of express entry and the requirement that an applicant have more than 480 points to get in, it was really difficult."^{xv}

In order to address the broader economic needs of the Atlantic region, and Canada nationally, New Democrats recommend that the government:

4) Re-establish the Canada Experience Class for all skill levels

Former Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship the Hon. John McCallum often stated that international students were a group that was a particular target of the Canadian government, and for good reason. International students spend years in Canada living, working, and studying. They learn, or already know the language. They are young. Upon completion of their studies, they have Canadian credentials.

While the government increased the points available through EE for international students, the increase was marginal at best and has not meaningfully impacted the ability for international students to stay in Canada after graduation. Additionally, while some provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador have made a concentrated effort to ensure post-secondary education is accessible and affordable – including for international students, in most provinces international students pay very high tuition and ancillary fees. This often leads to high levels of student debt which can make it difficult for international students to remain in Canada or take

entrepreneurial risks. As well, it makes it more difficult for international students to come to Canada in the first place.

Ms. Sofia Descalzi, Chairperson of the Canadian Federation of Students for Newfoundland and Labrador stated,

“At the provincial level, we must end discriminatory practices in overseas recruitment, tuition fees, public health care coverage, and employment standards. If we treat international students with respect, and not as cash cows for budget cuts, they can help Atlantic Canada meet the challenges of our aging society.”^{xvi}

Ms. Clark spoke to difficulties international students have qualifying through the EE system, stating, “I also feel that it’s insufficient. The changes certainly have helped, but they don’t go far enough towards helping international student and more pathways for permanent residency are needed.”^{xvii}

New Democrats are strong supporters of affordable and accessible post-secondary education for all students. New Democrats also agree with the former Minister that international students are uniquely situated to be ideal newcomers to Canada, and support measures to make that transition smoother. Therefore, New Democrats recommend that the government:

5) Provide clearer and more accessible pathways to permanence for international students

and

6) Modify the Canada Experience Class to include all occupations and to count the work that students undertake while studying as Canadian experience

Retaining Newcomers in the Atlantic Region:

As stated in the introduction, it doesn’t matter how many people you bring to a region, you need to give them a reason to stay. This will require above and beyond investments by the federal government to put the supports and opportunities in place for newcomers to succeed in Atlantic Canada and want to stay. Dr. Roxanne Reeves from the University of New Brunswick highlighted the more rural area nature of the province as making retention more difficult.^{xviii} The highlighting the rural nature of much of the region, was underscored by other witnesses. It was clear that additional supports are required to help retain newcomers in rural areas, and that these additional supports must be accessible to those rural areas.

New Democrats recommend that the government:

7) Ensure that there are resettlement services earmarked for rural areas

As retention is an issue, it is important that this earmarking of resettlement service funding to rural areas does not negatively impact overall resettlement services funding for the region. Additionally, it needs to be noted that this study is about increasing newcomers to the region, and increasing the rate at which they stay. Improving these two aspects will require an improvement in funding from the status-quo. Therefore, New Democrats recommend that the government:

8) Increase funding from the government of Canada for resettlement services in the region

Mr. Karl Flecker, immigration Employment Specialist, noted the importance of not just the pre-arrival and arrival services, but also of the aspects of community that allow newcomers to settle, feel welcome, and make their new place their home. Many witnesses referred to this as ‘social infrastructure’ and Mr. Flecker stressed its importance,

“The second point is to have those kinds of infrastructure in the community, the social, cultural, political infrastructure that helps people feel welcome. I’m talking about everything from the food, fashion, fun festivals that allow people to dance in ethno cultural racial garb and sample different foods, but something also a bit more sophisticated than that, that shows genuine appreciation for different people’s cultures and experiences.”^{xix}

New Democrats are strong supporters of Canada’s multicultural fabric and therefore strongly support improving this social infrastructure both to attract and retain newcomers in Atlantic Canada, and to highlight our multicultural society. Therefore, New Democrats recommend the government:

9) Increase funding to provide additional newcomer infrastructure projects in the area

An aspect of resettlement services that is often overlooked is access to childcare. A lack of accessible, affordable childcare in resettlement services predominantly impacts newcomer women and their ability to successfully integrate into society. Professor James McDonald on childcare and other supports specifically in the rural areas said, “if there isn’t the steady ongoing employment prospects for themselves and their families, and the social networks and the support networks, they’re not going to stay.”^{xx}

With this in mind with increasing resettlement services funding, New Democrats recommend that the government:

10) Increase language training funding for new arrivals and ensure that there is accessible, affordable childcare for families

Given the current demographic and economic trends, it is the opinion of New Democrats that analyzing the impacts, successes, and missteps of the AIP upon its completion before taking additional measures or changing course does not fully acknowledge the need for action. The Atlantic region requires a flexible and versatile approach that should allow for communities and organizations to collaborate with government to adjust the course as needed to ensure the AIP is a success.

Therefore, New Democrats recommend that the government:

11) Undertake an interim review of the AIP to determine if and what needs to be changed or improved on; and for this review to be completed and made public by September 2018.

Transition from a reliance on the temporary to the welcoming permanency:

Throughout this study, there has been significant debate around the temporary foreign workers program (TFWP). The TFWP has always been a controversial program and a range of opinions was expressed on the level of need, the lack of pathways to permanence, and the impact the growing reliance on this program has on the Atlantic economy and the broader Canadian economy. Mr. Flecker stated quite clearly,

“On the temporary foreign worker, this has been a disastrous program dating back to 2006 and then just shy of 10 years of ramping up the program with inadequate compliance, monitoring and enforcement measures. Getting to your question, we now have a situation where the government has issued 635,000 temporary work permits under the two streams of the program. It far outstrips the number of permanent residents we accept, and yet 22% of the people who are on temporary foreign work permits actually gravitate toward PR status. You can’t help but look at this and say something awry.”^{xxi}

New Democrats have long held the position that if someone is good enough to work or study here, they should be good enough to stay here if they so choose. These sentiments were echoed by a number of witnesses appearing before the Committee. Mr. Vaughn Hatcher of Day and Ross Transport stated in response to a question if it would be beneficial for the Atlantic provinces and for his businesses if the government were to look at revamping its immigration policy so that, when these temporary foreign workers come to Canada, right off the top they come as permanent residents stated:

“Oh, it would most definitely be beneficial to a company like Day and Ross Transport. That would mean that a foreign worker coming in or a foreign worker who has permanent residency could start his own business right away and be an owner-operator for us. That would be an ideal situation for Day and Ross Transport.” Mr. Vaughn

Hatcher further explained that: “The revenue that an owner-operator generates would be a phenomenal amount of money for some of these foreign workers who are coming in. It's one of the better-paying jobs that someone can get in Atlantic Canada. We're more than happy to bring in as many permanent residents as we can right off the bat.”^{xxii}

Similarly, Mr. Luc Erjavec of Restaurants Canada, in response to the same question stated: “Oh, absolutely. It's a pathway to citizenship. We want the people to come to our communities and work in our communities and —stay in our communities. We want their families. Bill has families who have been reunited. They love it. We have a great country and a great region.”^{xxiii}

Given that the focus of this study is on increasing immigration to, and newcomer retention in, Atlantic Canada, New Democrats recommend that the government:

12) Ensure that Canada’s immigration policy reflect the principle that if you are good enough to work, you are good enough to stay – by shifting immigration policy away from a reliance on temporary streams and towards permanent resident streams.

The situation facing Atlantic Canada regarding its demographic and economic needs require a holistic approach to create long term, sustainable solutions. This study has shown committee members that increased immigration is a necessary and vital component to creating a prosperous Atlantic Canada. While the Atlantic Immigration Pilot provides an opportunity to experiment with methods to increase immigration and retention, concrete actions need to be taken immediately to address the needs of today and tomorrow in the region. Experts are clear that there are known successful approaches and initiatives that can be undertaken immediately to start the region on this path to increased immigration and retention, and this study has made that clear. It is with this urgency in mind that New Democrats submit the recommendations included in this report.

ⁱ Section 6, Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

ⁱⁱ CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 10:05

ⁱⁱⁱ CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 10:16

^{iv} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 17:15

^v Ibid.,

^{vi} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 7 June 2017, 16:05

^{vii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 9:30

^{viii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 29 May 2017, 15:35

^{ix} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 17:10

^x CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 October 2017, 9:00

^{xi} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 16:55

^{xii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 19 June 2017, 16:40

^{xiii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 29 May 2017, 15:40

^{xiv} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 31 May 2017, 16:50

^{xv} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 7 June 2017, 17:35

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- ^{xvi} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 7 June 2017, 17:05
- ^{xvii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 7 June 2017, 17:35
- ^{xviii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 16 October 2017, 15:40
- ^{xix} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 16 October 2017, 16:05
- ^{xx} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 14 June 2017, 16:20
- ^{xxi} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 16 October 2017, 16:10
- ^{xxii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 19:45
- ^{xxiii} CIMM, Evidence, 1st session, 42nd Parliament, 17 October 2017, 20:40