Immigration, Repatriation and Retention: Population Strategies on Prince Edward Island and Comparable Jurisdictions

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Introduction

Linked as it is to the rest of Canada, Prince Edward Island (PEI) and its population are strongly impacted by nationwide population dynamics; yet, the province can also introduce specific measures that can influence its demographics. Ironically, while Canada as a whole is a very attractive destination for immigrants, with some 250,000 entries annually, less than 2% of these trickle to the Maritimes or specifically to PEI. Moreover, an exodus of young Islanders has been leaving the province in search of work and adventure in the rest of the country. And so, the decline in fertility levels and the increase in life expectancy that is affecting many developed economies (including the Canadian born population), would have serious impacts on the population of PEI, which is currently stable at around 138,000. Even with such a high immigrant influx, various job vacancies persist in the currently booming Canadian economy: in a nation-wide survey conducted by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB), “between 250,000 and 300,000 positions (approximately 4-7% of jobs in the small business sector) were vacant due to a shortage of qualified labour” (Maxwell, 2001). This suggests that the skill mix of immigrants entering the country may not be matched by the demand for jobs being created in the economy.

Meanwhile, PEI is one of some 110 sub-national island jurisdictions (SNIJs) that exist globally (www.islandstudies.ca/Jurisdiction-Project; Baldacchino, 2006a: 853). Although it is not a sovereign state, as a province PEI has significant powers over many jurisdictional areas. This report is a comparative examination of the policies regarding the free movement of persons in PEI, and how these may benefit from a discussion that explores comparable practices from other selected SNIJs.

Clearly, there are benefits to attracting immigrants to settle on PEI, thus mitigating the shortfall that would result from natural births and deaths in the province, the skill/brain loss to the booming provinces of the West, and the gaps that are emerging in its business sector. Already
Pulling Strings

in 2002, in a survey of businesses on PEI, 47.5% expressed concern over
the shortage of labour; 61% identified “lack of candidates with required
skills/education in my area” as the greatest sign for hiring difficulties
(Dulipovici, 2001: table 1 and figure 4). All in all, a naturally aging popu­
lation, youth out-migration, a falling birth rate below replacement rates,
and a lack of immigrants are contributing to a growing concern about
the demographics of PEI, a concern that benefits from such comparative
research as follows in this chapter.

After a general overview, this chapter divides its analysis of population
strategies in various comparable island jurisdictions in terms of three
key policy strands: attraction, retention and repatriation. The practices
of various island jurisdictions will be reviewed, therefore permitting an
analysis that may be of some usefulness to PEI as it determines its own
population strategies. By examining the strategies that PEI has adopted
compared to those of other SNIJs, such an island-to-island study should
provide new insights into the development of creative competitive ap­
proaches and governing arrangements in the field of demographics. This
is not an examination of island policies for their own sake, but an identi­
fication of policies that may inform local policy makers, with a view to
enhance PEI’s own development in this strategic area.

Overview

The term “immigrant” includes anyone settling in a region to which one
is not native, therefore encompassing refugees and inter-provincial im­
migrants, as well as the typically thought of, “foreigners from abroad”.

Canada’s immigration policy admits individuals on the basis of family
ties, a refugee process, and a point system that applies to various immi­
grant classes including business class, skilled worker, and assisted relative
class (Statistics Canada, 2006b). Canada’s net migration of some 6.5 mi­
grants per 1,000 population in the period 2000-2004 is among the highest
in the world. The country saw its native-born populace climb by a modest
400,000 persons between 2001 and 2006. It was the addition of 1.2 million
immigrants that helped push the country’s enumerated population total
to 31.6 million in the 2006 national census. Landed immigrants in 2006
comprised 22% of the national population (Statistics Canada, 2006a).

On PEI meanwhile, as with the rest of the Atlantic provinces, the
proportion of immigrants aged 25-54 in the local population remains at
less than 5% in 2006, compared to the national average of 22% (Zietsma,
2007: 10). This shortfall has driven the province to seek alternative in­
Institutional measures to attract — and hopefully retain — immigrants specifically to its territory. Notable amongst these measures are:

(a) **Provincial Nominee Program (PNP):** in April 2001, PEI embarked on a pilot partnership agreement with the federal government for a 5-year term (Governments of Canada/PEI, 2001). Although that term has lapsed, the program has not been terminated. Through this agreement, a Provincial Nominee Program was created. This is administered locally by Island Investment Development Inc., a crown corporation, while Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) act as overseers (www.gov.pe.ca/immigration);

(b) **Population Secretariat:** in 2004, the Government of PEI created the Population Secretariat in order to develop promotional strategies for potential immigrants to PEI, to consider population challenges, and to assist in addressing related inadequacies (as in the labour market) by proposing demographic solutions. The Population Secretariat has also supported research regarding the challenges being faced by immigrants in coming and settling on PEI;

(c) **PEI Population Network** was formed in December 2006 by some 20 of the participants at the Atlantic Forum on Rural Repopulation in Moncton, N.B., along with members of the PEI Rural Team. This Network is now the standing provincial clearinghouse for disseminating information about initiatives that deal with immigration, repatriation and retention in the province, with an overall view to support population growth (Prince Edward Island Population Network, 2007);

(d) **PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada (PEI-ANC),** incorporated in 1993, is mandated to aid with the short-term settlement services and long-term social inclusion and community integration programs for immigrants. As the only support agency for immigrants on PEI, it rightfully prioritizes cross-cultural awareness and public education programs. Its immigrant client base has been expanding fast and reached 842 in November 2007, of which 569 were beneficiaries of the PNP.
The PNP is now responsible for over 90% of immigrant landings on PEI. Applicants are able to apply directly to the PNP and, if the reviewed application and accompanying documents are approved, PEI submits the paperwork to the federal government for final approval. The waiting period for this process is around eight months, whereas an application for immigration through the conventional channels may take as long as three years.

Besides examining the application for fraudulent documentation and the financial requirements, the provincial criteria focus on four main initiatives: increased business and economic development; the supply of skilled workers; increased population; and achievement of provincial demographic, social and cultural objectives (www.gov.pe.ca). The PEI PNP presently has four categories: Professional and Skilled Worker; Immigrant Entrepreneur; Immigrant Partner; and Immigrant Connections. Up to 2006, 873 immigrants have been nominated by PEI and approved by the federal government. The Immigrant Connections category, instituted in April 2006, had already received 59 nominees by the end of that year (PEINP, 2006). Approximately 35-40 applications are received per week. CIC has reported that all the Atlantic Provinces, except Newfoundland and Labrador, had achieved higher levels of immigration in 2005 and landings reflected the flows of provincial nominees. For PEI, almost two in three immigrants were provincial nominees then; and the proportion has since increased (CIC, 2005b).

PEI also receives another category of immigrant, which is administered directly through the federal government with the cooperation of the province. This consists in refugees. Between 1981 and 1991, Canada admitted 279,000 people as permanent residents on humanitarian grounds. Of these, 30% were UN convention refugees and 70% were members of designated groups (Boyd, 1994). In the past 10 years, PEI has received a yearly average of 60 to 70 refugees, who would be registered with the PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada. Freedom of mobility within Canada inhibits an accurate figure of how many refugees remain on PEI in the medium to long-term. However, the PEI-ANC staff has estimated that 75% of all refugees coming to PEI leave before their second year in the province (Baldacchino, 2006b: 16). This observation alerts us to the crucial issue of immigrant retention.

Evidently, not all immigrants who come decide to stay. Nationwide, newcomers to Canada from the USA and Hong Kong had the highest likelihood of leaving Canada, with about half of them leaving within 10 years after arrival, as indicated by their tax-filing behaviour. Newcomers
from Europe or the Caribbean, in contrast, were about half as likely to leave. Refugee claimants had the lowest out-migration rates (about 2 in 10) (Statistics Canada, 2006b).

Retention of incoming migrants is an even greater challenge on PEI. National data from 2005 suggested that PEI has the second lowest retention rate of immigrants in the country (51%), after Newfoundland & Labrador (36%): the national average was 82%. Although the documentation regarding retention is limited, an informal 2006 survey of Provincial Nominees indicates that retention is low, particularly amongst Immigrant Partners. Reportedly, 60% of Skilled Workers and Immigrant Entrepreneur immigrants are no longer on the island twelve months after their arrival to PEI.

In addition to the issues plaguing the exodus of immigrants are the concerns surrounding the retention and repatriation of born Islanders. This, however, is not a recent phenomenon: the movement of youth in search of work, education or just wider experiences has been a key historical characteristic of Atlantic Canada. The trend has picked up of late given the booming resource-based economies of the West. There is, however, evidence that islanders who leave PEI are inclined to come back if the right employment opportunity presents itself, when they are thinking of starting a family, or in considering a location for retirement. The phenomenon of the circulation of Islanders to and from places like Ontario, Alberta and British Colombia remains largely undocumented, as are the benefits associated with such a movement: including the transfer of remittances to the province and the transfer of ideas gleaned from “away” into local entrepreneurship and investment.

**Comparisons with other Sub-National Island Jurisdictions**

A number of sub-national island jurisdictions around the world are noted for their specific immigration strategies. A non-exhaustive description of such strategies is being offered here for comparative purposes. The range of examples is most diverse. There are islands such as Bermuda that are noted for their immigration restrictions that favour only narrow population segments. Other islands are essentially population exporters and are recipients of aid and remittances, such as Ascension and Socotra. Various warm water island destinations that attract large numbers of tourists — such as Sicily, the Canary Islands and the Balearic Islands — are also at the border between Europe and the developing world, and thus find themselves as target destinations for immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. While Madeira, Isle of Man, Guernsey and Jersey
are exemplary in their prominence as offshore banking centres, they seek to attract relevant, professional personnel (Gartland, 1996). Another category deals with islands that have restrictive land policies: in the Åland Islands, non-Ålanders are not allowed to purchase land and can only become residents if they satisfy strict time and cultural requisites. Such measures allow these islanders to maintain control and prevent both demographic imbalances as well as a potential inflation of housing costs (Baldacchino, 2006a: 858).

Attracting Immigrants
While there are islands that are less valuable from our narrow research perspective, there are some that hold gems worthy of comparison to PEI. These involve diverse policy measures that have been found helpful in boosting migration inflows to island regions of larger countries. They include provisional regional visas, fast tracking qualified applicants, the appeal to exclusivity, and a desire to develop retirement communities.

Tasmania
Located 240 km south of eastern Australia and that country’s only island province, Tasmania has a Skilled Independent Regional (Provisional) (SIR) visa that should be of interest to PEI. Applicants who meet the pass mark for the skilled occupation point system, which is lower than the pass mark for the other general skilled migration visa categories, are granted a three-year temporary visa. After two years of meeting those requirements, the immigrant can apply for permanent residency. SIR visa holders are required to live in regional Australia or a low population growth metropolitan area: not in Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, the New South Wales Central Coast, Brisbane, the Gold Coast, Perth, or Melbourne (Synchronicity One, 2006).

Bermuda
Bermuda is an overseas independent island territory of the United Kingdom in the northwest Atlantic Ocean. It limits immigration by maintaining strict regulations on work permits and housing. According to the Bermuda Immigration and Protection Act 1956, “a non-Bermudian, not being married to a Bermudian, must obtain a work permit, and this will only be granted if there is no suitably qualified Bermudian.” Work permits are granted only after positions are locally advertised, and typically only for a year period, and only to people with less than three children (Low Tax: Bermuda, 2005b).
Property ownership is another means of restricting immigration to a highly selective class of wealthy immigrants. In Bermuda, “Foreigners are more or less unable to buy land or property, other than houses with an Annual Rental Value (ARV) in excess of US$43,800, equivalent to a sale price of, say, US$500,000. Currently only 312 houses qualify.” Furthermore, when non-Bermudians purchase homes, they are required to purchase a license from the Minister and to pay a fee of 22% of the value of the property (Low Tax: Bermuda, 2005b). “Bermuda’s GNP in 2003 was over US$2.3 billion, giving a GNP per head of more than US$37,000, the fourth highest in the world. Growth in 2004 rose to 3%.” (Low Tax: Bermuda, 2005a). Clearly, Bermuda is financially successful and it has seemingly equal success with its immigration policies by reaping the benefits of having citizenship in the United Kingdom and limiting foreigners on its own shores.

**Turks and Caicos Islands**
The Turks and Caicos Islands (TCI), another United Kingdom Overseas Territory, this time in the Caribbean region, maintains, since 2002, six categories of residency that fall into these main headings: Temporary Residence Permits, Residence Permits and Permanent Resident Permits (PRCs). Of importance here is the PRC category. These holders are divided further into those with the right to work and those without that right. This latter option is called the Retirement Investment Category. The PRCs last for the duration of the life of the holder and extend to the holder’s spouse and dependents until the age of majority when they can apply for their own PRC. The Immigration Regulations were amended on July 5, 2002, but the ability to apply for permanent residence is dependent upon five consecutive years holding a work permit, and/or a large investment, or has otherwise “become assimilated into the life and affairs of the Islands” (Dempsey and Company, 2006).

To be eligible for the Retirement Category without the right to work, one needs to provide an investment of not less than US$500,000 in a home, business or approved enterprise in Providenciales; or a similar investment of not less than US$125,000 in the rest of the jurisdiction; or a more modest investment of US$50,000 in an authorized investment on any one of Grand Turk, Salt Cay, South Middle or North Caicos on the strength of an undertaking from the Governor (ibid.).

In order to apply for citizenship, a person must have held a PRC for at least twelve months and have been a resident on the Islands for at least five years (J-Project, 2006: Turks and Caicos Islands). TCI is able
to secure investment funds from retiring individuals through this Retirement Category.

According to the J-Project Database, the TCI Government is promoting inward investment through its immigration policies by easily granting work permits to those qualified persons wishing to establish business enterprises or undertake employment in the islands. And yet, the Government “regularly publishes a list of reserved activities to ensure the employment of local islanders as much as possible” (ibid.). In 1994, to further enhance sustainable economic growth by attracting new offshore financiers and to encourage an entrepreneurial spirit among the local population, the Government established the Turks and Caicos Investment Agency (TCInvest). By streamlining the business licensing system, offering a variety of duty exemptions, in some cases permitting access to crown land, providing debt financing, and negotiating joint ventures, the TCI Government is demonstrating its desire to promote growth and welcome immigrants (ibid.).

**Balearic Islands**
The Balearic Islands, which are part of Spain and therefore part of the European Union, are located in the western Mediterranean Sea. They are inundated with migratory flows from North Africa, as well as by retiring North Europeans: the salubrious climate and the economic advantages are very attractive to both such immigrant groups (Salvà-Tomàs, 2006). This “residential migration phenomenon” began in the 1970s and grew until the 1990s as a predominantly “retirement migration phenomenon” (ibid.). Of consequence here is that one fourth of these migrants constitute a population over the age of sixty. Specific retirement immigration presents its own specific set of challenges, including higher demands for health care and related services, and appropriate accommodation.

**Retirement Immigration to PEI**
Meanwhile, PEI is entertaining its own retirement project: underway in the community of Alberton is a project led by a private business to develop that area as a retirement destination. Surveys, reports and presentations have been made in an attempt to develop the necessary information and to source funding in order to see this plan to fruition. The desire to increase the retirement community concept beyond the scope of Alberton is clearly reflected by the steering committee’s acknowledgment that the name be broadened from “The Alberton Project” to “Project Come Home, to PEI” (Haslam, 2006: 4). In a report by the PEI Population Strategy ’99 Panel, the following recommendation is given:
An in-depth study should be undertaken of the costs and benefits of an economic development strategy to attract retirees with independent means, particularly former Islanders to retire in Prince Edward Island, drawing on the experience of other jurisdictions (Institute of Island Studies, 2000: vii).

According to this same report, in 1999, some 47,000 people born on PEI lived in other Canadian provinces. This breaks down roughly as: 40% in Ontario; 25% each in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick; and with much smaller concentrations in Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec (ibid.: 61). PEI experienced an out-migration between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005 of 3,197 individuals, predominantly to Ontario (818) followed by Alberta (572), Nova Scotia (555), and New Brunswick (530); during that same time, PEI experienced an inter-provincial in-migration of about 2,975 persons (PEI Provincial Treasury, 2005: 36). It is problematic to declare a figure of potential retirees, but certainly they exist and PEI would prefer them to ‘come back home’. Moreover, the level of inter-provincial (other Canadian) migration to provinces like PEI vastly exceeds the level of immigrant (non-Canadian) flows.

**Francophone Immigration to PEI**

Although it has been difficult to determine comparable examples from other islands for the next two categories, their consideration is certainly warranted. First considered is Francophone immigration, and, second, student immigration.

There has been considerable promotion of the intention to settle more French-speakers in areas outside of Quebec. For example, in March 2002, a Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee was set up by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) to develop policies for increasing the number of French-speaking immigrants in Francophone minority communities and to facilitate their reception and integration.

Subsequently, the Steering Committee composed the *Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities*, which was released on November 3, 2003 (Integration-Net, 2007). This document contains five objectives, including the determination to increase the number of French-speaking immigrants who settle outside of Quebec from 3.1% in 2001 to 4.4% by 2008 (CIC, 2003). In 2004, representatives of the Government of Canada, Francophone and Acadian minority communities, and provincial governments scheduled visits to the African cities of Tunis (Tunisia) and Yaoundé (Cameroon) in order to promote Francophone immigration (www.canada-law.com/news/0418.htm). Yet another document (CIC, 2005c) contains initiatives for providing a framework for fashioning a successful Francophone immigration
and integration experience. Additional visits abroad by CIC representatives and community partners for the purpose of promoting Canada as a destination for French language speakers are a means of targeting potentially suitable immigrants.

According to the 2005 Immigration Overview (CIC, 2005b), “12,065 migrants to Canada whose mother tongue was not French declared a knowledge of French and another 22,995 reported a knowledge of both French and English, bringing the total number of other French-speaking immigrants in 2005 to 35,060 (13%)”. How many of these immigrants to Canada were living on PEI? The CIC Facts and Figures, 2005 indicate only seven individuals on PEI claimed to have French only speaking abilities. The same source indicates that, for immigrants claiming both French and English language abilities, the figure in 2005 was 14 immigrants; while that for 2004 was 31 individuals (CIC, 2006b).

International Student Immigration

International students studying on PEI have been given more freedom to work while on the Island. This is in the light that such students may be attracted to pursue permanent residency if given the chance, following the conclusion of their formal education. Having already spent a year or more here as students, they may be more likely to stay.

In the Legislative Assembly sitting of September 22, 2005, a guest speaker, Blake Doyle, referred to this student immigration policy possibility and the progress that other provinces were making (www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/leg_09-22-05_1.pdf). The Off-Campus Work Permit Program for international students had been signed with specific provinces (e.g. CIC, 2005a). On April 27, 2006, the Canadian Minister of Citizenship and Immigration announced this policy as a Canada-wide opportunity for foreign students, allowing eligible students the opportunity to work off-campus for up to 20 hours a week during the school year and full-time during study breaks (Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP, 2006; www.cic.gc.ca/eng/press/06/0601-e.html).

In addition, the Post-Graduate Work Permit Program has been expanded, therefore allowing post-graduate students in Canada the option of working for up to two years, instead of one, after their graduation (CIC, 2006a). This can prove significant because, in 2005, post-secondary institutions in Canada admitted 50,000 new foreign students, with a total of more than 152,000 foreign students then studying in Canada. These figures represent another category of in-migration possibilities, now that the appropriate policies are in place (www.cic.gc.ca/eng/
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press/06/0601-e.html). PEI had 323 foreign students during 2006, mainly at UPEI and Holland College, a figure that has increased steadily since 1996 (CIC, 2006b).

**Temporary Foreign Worker Immigration**

Just as temporary foreign students may be considered a potential target for immigration policy, so may temporary workers. In June 2006, a community function was held in Souris to welcome approximately 40 Russian workers who had arrived to work at the Ocean Choice International fish plant. At that time, the fish plant employed approximately 240 workers, mainly from off island: Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Russia (Thompson, 2006). Although the PNP is not involved in bringing in temporary workers, it is not unlikely that these individuals, and others like them, may consider more permanent ties to PEI. While reiterating concern over labour shortages, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business recommended that Government could make it easier for temporary foreign workers to become permanent residents (CFIB, 2006).

**Population Retention**

Like most of Atlantic Canada, the PEI immigrant population is being attracted to the Canadian provinces in the West for three main reasons: their large cities, large multi-cultural populations, and significant well-paying employment opportunities, all of which are lacking in the Atlantic region.

It is important to recognize that, in order for it to retain its immigrants, PEI must be able to facilitate better the integration of islanders with newcomers, and vice versa. The long-time residents of PEI need to be more welcoming to immigrants on a regular and comprehensive basis, in all aspects of island life; otherwise, retention of newcomers will remain problematic. Islander friendliness is widely renowned: but these immigrants are often desperate to form deeper and more intimate bonds: “It is not enough to open the door and let immigrants into our house; we have to invite them to sit down at the table” (Standing Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development, 2005).

The people who are fully engaged in immigration understand this issue for the significance that it has. Various documents confirm this concern: Prince Edward Islanders may benefit from exhortations to go beyond a courteous friendly attitude in order to become friends with immigrants (ibid.; Baldacchino, 2006b; Govt. of Canada, 2005a: sec. 4.1). The success of retaining immigrants on PEI is directly related to the
degree to which they are welcomed and integrated into Island communities and Island life.

Moreover, the voice of Islanders that consider immigrants to be stealing jobs from Islanders is inaccurate. Most immigrants are taking up jobs that are unwanted by Islanders or for which Islanders are not sufficiently or appropriately skilled or trained. A recent Canadian Federation for Independent Business survey revealed that 61% of businesses deemed “lack of candidates with required skills/education in my area” as the highest category for “Signs of Hiring Difficulties”; and another 34% indicated that there were “too few people in my local area looking for work” (CFIB, 2006: Figure 4). When businesses were asked about ways that small and medium-sized enterprises could help reduce the shortage of labour, 16% identified the sponsorship of immigrants as a possible solution (CFIB, 2006: Figure 8). This data reflects that the paramount labour market issue facing PEI is skill shortages. The pace of economic growth, coupled with demographic and other trends, is choking the provincial labour market (www.gov.pe.ca/popsec/).

Jeannita Bernard, a representative of the Acadian community of PEI, thus addressed the PEI Legislature: “The Government of PEI would have a responsibility to ensure public awareness because, without community support and community buy-in, we believe that immigration recruitment initiatives would be bound to fail” (PEILA, 2005: 14) This argument applies just as well to retention. There is little point in bringing immigrants to PEI if the social and cultural support system to help them integrate and succeed is lacking. The document that emanated from The Atlantic Forum on Rural Repopulation held in December 2005 argues thus: “Prince Edward Island society is very unified, and its strong community spirit is an asset, but may be a barrier to integrating newcomers” (Govt. of Canada, 2005b: sec. 5.1).

**Foreign Qualification Recognition**

In the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (LSIC), conducted by Statistics Canada and CIC, 70% of newcomers who tried to enter Canada’s work force identified the “transferability of foreign qualifications, lack of contacts, and language barriers” as one of the foremost challenges. Moreover, the report identified that six in ten immigrants did not work in the same occupational field as they did before coming to Canada. According to the same survey:
Men and women who were working some six months after coming to Canada were most often employed in sales and service and in processing and manufacturing occupations ... Prior to coming to Canada, the two most common occupational groups for men were natural and applied sciences and management; for women, they were business, finance and administration, as well as social science, education, government services and religious occupations (Statistics Canada, 2003).

While some immigrants may have been in transitory positions, it is not beneficial for Canada to admit such capable people and then not provide the means for their credentials to be recognized. If foreign nationals are unable to enter the work force in their chosen specialties, it may exacerbate the issue of retention. In a report by the Standing Committee on Community Affairs and Economic Development of the PEI Legislature (2005: 7, Section c), this problem was addressed:

There are as many as 400 self-regulated professional and trades regulatory bodies sprinkled across the country responsible for granting work licenses or certification. They are the gate-keepers for jobs, ranging from accounting to nursing to tool-and-die making. They set training and entry requirements for their professions, determine standards of practice and competence and decide what information they need to assess the qualifications and credentials of applicants. Therefore, your Committee is recommending that the province work with regulatory bodies to come up with “bridging programs” to establish prior learning experiences, and help newcomers upgrade skills or obtain the Canadian work experience they need to apply for a license in their profession. Specific aspects designed to increase access to professions and trades might include mentoring, job shadowing, counseling and occupationally-based training programs.

Professional qualifications now cover one out of every six jobs, and so foreign credential recognition (FCR) is a key labour market priority. FCR Assessment Centres are being set up across the country. These are tasked to facilitate the determination of the appropriate linguistic, training and experiential competencies and bridging pathways that may be required by each and every regulated profession in order to facilitate labour market access to those who are internationally educated.

The CFIB survey did identify “difficulty assessing credentials/experience” and “difficulty recognizing standards for out-of-province candidates” as problematic categories identified by employers in hiring internationally educated job applicants (CFIB, 2006: Figure 4).
Population Repatriation

Although retention has a two-pronged influence on immigrants and Islanders, the final focus of this report addresses the need for PEI to repatriate Canadians, particularly former Islanders, for the sake of sustainable population growth.

Newfoundland and Labrador

According to a survey of expatriate Newfoundlanders and Labradorians launched in 2002 by the Cormack-Grenfell Steering Committee in Western Newfoundland, “the majority of expatriates would like to return to Newfoundland to settle; but the lack of employment opportunities appears to be the main reason for leaving and the main barrier for returning” (Govt. of Canada, 2005b: sec. 6.2). While two thirds of expatriates claim that they would return to Newfoundland and Labrador if full-time employment existed, 53% indicated that, besides lack of employment opportunities, they also hesitated to return due to aspirations of wanting to live and work in larger centres and the isolation and small size of their hometowns. The greatest attraction drawing Newfoundlanders and Labradorians home continues to be family, mingled with personal reasons (ibid.: sec. 6.2).

During the Atlantic Forum on Rural Repopulation in 2005, the delegates in attendance proposed five courses of action with this objective in mind: 1) develop promotional and marketing strategies; 2) produce information guides and promotional materials; 3) identify target groups; 4) organize national promotional tours and fairs; and 5) stay in touch with expatriates by means of databases, mailing lists, and alumni associations (ibid.: sec. 4.3.2). These ideas can be activated by proposing such initiatives as secondary and post secondary exit surveys, email tracking systems, and homecoming events.

Acadian Region, PEI

The Programme Entrepreneuriat: Régional, Communautaire et Économique (PERCÉ), has focused on repatriating Acadian and Francophone youth, primarily in the final two years of university education. The project matches students who are studying outside PEI with a Francophone employer based on PEI for 10-12 weeks; once on the island, these youths are assisted in developing much wider networks with the local community. Some 8-10 youth have enjoyed this opportunity each year since the program was started in 2003. An employment database is also being developed, which should further enhance the repatriation efforts in the Acadian Region of PEI (Govt. of Canada, 2005b: sec. 4.2).

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Conclusion
Canada is a relatively wealthy, spacious country and remains very attractive to immigrants. Prince Edward Island may also have much to offer immigrants and to Islanders who may wish to return home. The policy of free movement of persons is driven by more than just generosity, however. In the PEI Legislative sitting held on September 22, 2005, following a presentation by Patricia Diaz, the Honourable Philip Brown stated: “... immigration is not charity. Immigration is business. It’s about allowing people mobility.”

Immigration, retention, and repatriation: these were the items addressed in this report. By examining particular policies on islands such as Tasmania, Bermuda, the Balearics, and Turks and Caicos, there is potential to glean and appreciate jurisdictional strategies through a unique, island-to-island perspective. While this article is thorough yet limited in scope, it is by no means exhaustive. Its mandate is essentially exploratory, providing ideas that, if found of interest, can then be pursued in the appropriate detail.

International students, temporary foreign workers, and Francophone immigrants are three target groups that have been identified for immigration purposes. Identifying other target groups may also prove to be a successful strategy. PEI may make a case for measures which would support immigrants who choose to come and settle beyond the country’s major cities. Moreover, if appropriate policies and strategies are developed, Prince Edward Island has the potential to receive many immigrants and returning Islanders which will help alleviate looming demographic stresses. As population matures with time into a major policy issue, it is likely that PEI will identify other specific groups of potential immigrants who may need to be targeted appropriately, as well as develop a better understanding of how to try and keep them here once they arrive.

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