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Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

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Honourable Derek Bennett, MHA

RESOURCE COMMITTEE

Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

Chair: Brian Warr, MHA

Vice-Chair: Jordan Brown, MHA

Members: Pleaman Forsey, MHA
Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA
Craig Pardy, MHA
Paul Pike, MHA
Lucy Stoyles, MHA

Clerk of the Committee: Kimberley Hammond

Appearing:

Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills

Hon. Gerry Byrne, MHA, Minister

Karen Stone, KC, Deputy Minister

Seamus Breen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services and Policy

Sharlene Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister, Employment and Labour Market Development

Katie Norman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Immigration and Population Growth

Steve French, Departmental Controller

John Tompkins, Director of Communications

Kerry Chaytor, Executive Assistant

Also Present

Hon. John Hogan, MHA, Minister of Justice and Public Safety

Hon. John Haggie, MHA, Minister of Education

Hon. Krista Lynn Howell, MHA, Minister of Municipal and Provincial Affairs

Jim Dinn, MHA

Joedy Wall, MHA

Paul Dinn, MHA

David Hamlyn, Government Members' Caucus

David Porter, Official Opposition Caucus

Steven Kent, Third Party Caucus

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Jim Dinn, MHA for St. John's Centre, substitutes for Jordan Brown, MHA for Labrador West.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Joedy Wall, MHA for Cape St. Francis, substitutes for Pleaman Forsey, MHA for Exploits.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, John Haggie, MHA for Gander, substitutes for Sherry Gambin-Walsh, MHA for Placentia - St. Mary's.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, Krista Lynn Howell, MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, substitutes for Lucy Stoyles, MHA for Mount Pearl North.

Pursuant to Standing Order 68, John Hogan, MHA for Windsor Lake, substitutes for Paul Pike, MHA for Burin - Grand Bank.

The Committee met at 6 p.m. in the House of Assembly Chamber.

CHAIR (Warr): Good evening, one and all.

Welcome to the Estimates of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. Before we start, I just want to announce the substitutions.

Substituting for the Member for Labrador West, MHA Brown, is MHA Dinn. Substituting for the Member for Burin - Grand Bank is MHA Hogan. Substituting for the Member for Exploits is MHA Wall. Substituting for the Member for Mount Pearl North is MHA Howell, and substituting for the Member for Placentia - St. Mary's is the MHA for Gander, MHA Haggie.

Before we get under way, I'm just looking for a mover and seconder for the adoption of the minutes of March 23, which were the Estimates of Environment and Climate Change.

So moved by Mr. Pardy; seconded by Ms. Howell.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: Motion passed.

On motion, minutes adopted as circulated.

CHAIR: I don't see any independents here this evening but if they do come, 10 minutes at the end? All Committee Members – MHA Dinn, are you okay with that?

J. DINN: Yes.

CHAIR: All right, thank you.

Before we move into our first set of subheads, again we are considering the Estimates of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills. I will get Committee Members, starting with MHA Howell, to introduce yourselves. Just wait for your tally light to come on and there you go.

K. HOWELL: Hi, my name is Krista Howell. I am the MHA for St. Barbe - L'Anse aux Meadows, and I am so happy to be here. I'm very interested to hear what Minister Byrne and his crew have to say tonight because I think they're up to some really good stuff over there. But he's got a lot of words too, so we'll hear what he says.

CHAIR: MHA Hogan.

J. HOGAN: John Hogan, MHA for Windsor Lake.

C. PARDY: Craig Pardy, MHA for the District of Bonavista.

J. HAGGIE: John Haggie, MHA for the scenic District of Gander.

D. HAMLYN: Dave Hamlyn, Government Members' Office.

P. DINN: Paul Dinn from the fabulous District of Topsail - Paradise.

S. KENT: Steven Kent, Sessional Assistant for the Third Party Caucus.

J. DINN: Jim Dinn, MHA for the beautiful District of St. John's Centre.

J. WALL: Joedy Wall, MHA for the beautiful District of Cape St. Francis.

D. PORTER: David Porter, Researcher, Official Opposition Office.

CHAIR: And if I could start with Karen?

K. STONE: Karen Stone, Deputy Minister, Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

G. BYRNE: Gerry Byrne, MHA for the beautiful and historic District of Corner Brook and Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

S. JONES: Sharlene Jones, Assistant Deputy Minister of Employment and Labour Market Development.

K. NORMAN: Good evening, everyone. Katie Norman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

S. FRENCH: Steve French, Departmental Controller for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

S. BREEN: Seamus Breen, Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services and Policy.

J. TOMPKINS: John Tompkins, Director of Communications.

K. CHAYTOR: Kerry Chaytor, Executive Assistant to Minister Byrne.

CHAIR: Okay. My name is Brian Warr, MHA for the District of Baie Verte - Green Bay and joining me at the table tonight is Kim Hammond.

So before we get under way, if the minister is directing one of his staff members to

speak, just raise your hand and the Broadcast Centre will notice you and your tally light will light up.

I guess we'll get under way and I'll get the Clerk to call the first set of subheads, please.

CLERK (Hammond): 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive, Executive and Support Services.

CHAIR: Shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 carry?

Minister, some opening remarks from you, please.

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, colleagues, for the opportunity to come before you and talk a little bit about what has been an incredibly exciting year and effective year for Immigration, Population Growth and Skills and the positive effect it has on Newfoundland and Labrador and on the public good for each and every one of us.

I want to begin simply by referring to some elements of the Estimates which are somewhat pro forma, are somewhat repetitive and may be of good value to sort of clear the air on a couple of things that I anticipate will be repeated in some of the questions and some of the answers as we proceed through the subheads.

One of the things, of course, you will probably note the variations in salary allotments within the various subheads. Just a quick comment on that, to be able to provide the necessary context, because it will be somewhat repetitive. As we know, in November of 2022, NAPE and the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador reached a four-year collective agreement that included a 2 per cent wage increase in each of the next four years for union members.

This agreement also includes a one-time recognition bonus payment of \$2,000. So, in December of 2022, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador announced it would go through the same wage increases and bonuses for management and non-management, non-union employees. The wage increases for NAPE employees were retroactive to April 1 of 2022 and wage increases for management and non-management, non-bargaining were retroactive to July 1 of 2022.

The bottom line is this results in changes to the overall staffing envelope within various subheads, but collectively, in the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, it results in \$578,000 in bonuses paid out to IPGS employees. It also includes \$363,000 in salary increases paid to all IPGS employees from the retroactive period, and it also includes, from the point of view of the coming fiscal year in '23-'24, IPGS expects to pay out approximately \$459,000 to cover salary increases.

So many of your questions may target what are the variances or the deltas that are experienced in some of the subheads under salary. That will be probably potential a repetitive answer but it will be a correct answer.

The second thing I want to draw your attention to is, as you are already undoubtedly aware, much of the funding for the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, IPGS, does have a federal source. The Labour Market Transfer Agreements, the LMTAs, which are made up primarily of the Labour Market Development Agreement, the LMDA, and the Workforce Development Agreement, WDA, that is a primary source of much of our program spending within the department. We do have, of course, our own provincial government-sourced funds, but the significant amount of funds are from the LMTAs.

The history of this is very prosperous for our province, for our government, for the department, but it still has its occasional wrinkles. We have always been blessed by a very positive formula. The nature of the federal funding formula has always blessed Newfoundland and Labrador with what some may argue to be a disproportionate amount of funding to our province. This formula is across all provinces and the program itself is across all provinces. But Newfoundland and Labrador has been able to position itself very, very well within the federation. That has been helpful.

In 2017, there was a decision by the federal government to offer a top-up to the LMTAs. That was a five-year agreement which now has basically effectively sunsetted – I'll speak more about that later – but there was also some COVID money. The federal government added additional funds under the COVID supports that are now sunsetted. While there has been a significant amount of activity, money extremely well spent, from these additional funds, it has created – and this is a national circumstance, it's not an issue dealt with only by Newfoundland and Labrador. Every province from British Columbia to Newfoundland and Labrador, including the territories, are affected by this. It has meant that we will see a bit of a difference of some variations.

Some of the COVID, the top-up funding, I'll just give you by way of flavour to all of this, we did provide the College of the North Atlantic with funding to assist in the recruitment of additional health care spots, including primary care, paramedicine, practical nursing, personal care attendant and medical laboratory assistant. This funding also went to support the development of specialized electrical vehicle training as a trade. There is other funding, such as the film school. We funded techNL's tech talent strategy, retaining local workers. We've also funded Trades NL; supported the Labrador Aboriginal Training Partnership to augment the Labrador Indigenous Training Office and bring that to

the Island portion of the province; econext, the environmental industry association has been supported with some funds; and the Federation of Agriculture.

We've been able to use that funding very successfully. One of the things that I want to report to all Committee Members is that this past year, through nothing short of extremely hard work, dedicated effort and insatiable demand for accountability and for making sure that every dollar is spent and spent well, there is not – I will argue or I will say with maybe a small margin of error one way or the other, but a miniscule amount if indeed it does exist, we spent every penny of the tens of millions of dollars on Newfoundlanders and Labradorians to assist them in the labour market.

In past years, I know, for example, in 2015, when I was a former minister of this department, of AESL, the year before that there had been significant money that had been dropped in the tens of millions of dollars. So we worked very, very hard to make sure that we spent every dollar that was available to us. One of things that we were able to do, as well, we were able to negotiate with the federal government to be able to transfer monies that were provided in the COVID era from one fiscal year to the next.

So bottom line, that money is now sunsetted and we're kind of back to normal. Basically, that will be reflected in some of the subheads, but that is the cause.

For full disclosure, the federal government has indicated, as you may have noticed – you may have paid attention to in the federal budget – there was some additional funding for the LMTAs to provinces and territories, the details of which – that was for a one-year basis only to be able to extend beyond the original six-year pilot or six year top-up. So they have indicated that they will continue that but they have not yet provided us with full details as to how that will work out. If I were to say and say honestly, I don't

know or I don't think that it may be extended beyond this year. It all depends on a national negotiation.

So with that said, I also want to highlight, and I have no intentions of hogging the time. I'm available for questions as long as it takes, but I also do want to highlight some of the things which I think are just incredible, which the team behind me and to the side of me can take the lion's share, the bulk of credit and have done the work that has been necessary to see this through.

Newfoundland and Labrador's employment and unemployment rates: well, I am very pleased to be able to remind and inform that Newfoundland and Labrador's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is at 9.9, which is not where we wanted to be. We wanted to be lower, but this is indeed, it would be factual to say, this is our second lowest unemployment rate since data collection began in 1976.

There are less people unemployed. There are more people in the labour force. So while our unemployment rate has been steadily decreasing, our employment rate has been steadily increasing. The number of individuals in the labour market itself has been increasing. When the number of individuals increases in the labour market, you often find a parallel or consequential action of the unemployment rate goes up because if you provide information that yes, I'm interested in finding work but I haven't found it yet, then that normally would drive up the unemployment rate. The unemployment rate is based on those who are actively seeking work but who cannot find it.

So the numbers who have actively been seeking work and who have found it are increasing. The number of people who are actively seeking work and cannot find it is steadily decreasing. We are at the second lowest level since 1976. That's pretty remarkable.

In combination with that, we have been able to target efforts to offset our historic population decline. After years of population decline, our province's population is now growing. I can say that officially and formally and with confidence because it has been occurring over a consecutive period for a period of time. In fact, we have had seven consecutive quarters according to Statistics Canada. We have had seven consecutive quarters of population growth, and in just that two years, that seven consecutive quarters from January 2021 to December 2022, our population grew by over 12,000 people. It's quite remarkable in many respects because it is driven largely by immigration – in-migration and immigration.

The total immigration levels in the past two years, we've attracted over 4,000 people from other provinces and more than triple that, we've attracted 12,000 people from outside of Canada from international sources to settle here in Newfoundland and Labrador. People are choosing our province as their place to live from all over the world.

So 2022 was an all-time best for Newfoundland and Labrador in terms of immigration. By way of comparison or just to put it in context, in 2018, Newfoundland and Labrador nominated 979 individuals for permanent residency. In 2022, we nominated 3,518, an increase of some 260 per cent in just five years.

2022 was also the first year all of our economic immigration spaces for the Provincial Nominee Program, the PNP, and the Atlantic Immigration Program, the AIP, were completely filled. We filled them in October of 2022. It is for this reason, we sought out and negotiated with the federal government an increase in our nomination numbers. We are very much on target to meet our goal of welcoming 5,100 newcomers annually by 2026 and with this progress itself, we may just be in a position where we revise that date to much sooner.

By way of other comparison or just by way of context, in January 2023, this past January, we welcomed 1,085 new permanent residents in January. The same number we welcomed between all of October and December of 2022. Our trajectory is strong, it is upwards and it is about growth.

We continue to set records in that regard. Quite frankly, I think with our Ukrainian initiative, with our welcoming of refugees, with our welcoming of asylum seekers, with our welcoming of economic newcomers, both from the provincial scope and from federal streams, we are very much on track to exceed any and all targets.

So with that said, there is more to say, I could talk a little bit about skilled trades and our performance in terms of our Red Seal performance in exams and in the level exams, which exceeds the national average. I'll be able to provide you with those statistics, should you ask me.

I could also talk a little bit more about other elements of the department, but let's get to the questioning, Mr. Chair, because that is really what the Estimates are all about.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for your words.

Before we get into the line item questions, Minister, I do have some general questions.

G. BYRNE: Indeed.

J. WALL: First of all, can we obtain a copy of your briefing binder?

G. BYRNE: You can indeed; I believe we have it for you in an electronic format.

J. WALL: Marvellous.

G. BYRNE: We will submit that to all Members of the Committee participating here tonight by way of USB drive.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Minister, are there any errors in the published Estimates book?

G. BYRNE: There are no errors in the published Estimates books, which I am aware of.

J. WALL: Okay.

How many people are employed in your department, Minister?

G. BYRNE: I'll leave some of the granular answers to my deputy minister and her colleagues, but at this point in time, the number of employees at the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills is 312; 19 per cent are of management and 81 per cent are unionized.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Any retirements occur in this past year?

G. BYRNE: There were 10 retirements that occurred during '22-'23.

J. WALL: Any unfilled vacancies within your department?

G. BYRNE: There are unfilled vacancies, and I'll ask either Deputy Minister Karen or assistant deputy minister – yes, go ahead, Karen.

K. STONE: There are 55 vacancies as of March 31.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Any positions been eliminated, Minister? If so, which positions were they?

G. BYRNE: Madam Deputy.

K. STONE: There were positions eliminated. There were eight positions abolished during '22-'23. They were a senior advisor, a management analyst, a regional career information resource officer, a career development specialist, a client services officer and three contractual positions.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Any new hires taken place in the last year?

G. BYRNE: There were 33 new positions that were created. You may recall in budget '22-'23, the Legislature did authorize, through budget, the creation of several new positions, especially in the Immigration and Multiculturalism branch. Those 33 positions included a financial and general operations clerk IV and a strategic policy, planning and research analyst. In regional services, there was one clerk IV, two contractual positions and three policy, planning and research analysts.

I'm believe I'm saying this correctly, Madam Deputy, correct me if I'm incorrect, I do not want to provide incorrect information to our colleagues.

Employment and Training, there was one departmental program coordinator position, with another contractual. In the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism, there was one departmental program coordinator; there were 10 immigration program development specialists, which is the core of our program; two senior policy, planning and research analysts; there was one senior policy, planning and research analyst; and six contractual positions. In Executive Support, there was one senior advisor and one special advisor related to Immigration. Then in Apprenticeship and Trades Certification, there was one clerk typist III. That's it.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Do you have any employees working from home or in remote arrangements?

G. BYRNE: Madam Deputy.

K. STONE: We have 33 employees currently working from home, 18 of those are on a Treasury Board approved work from home pilot and we have 15 people working from home on medical accommodations.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Minister, I'll get into some questions on our Ukrainian friends who are now here.

G. BYRNE: Fantastic.

J. WALL: Can you please advise us how many Ukrainians are now living in our province?

G. BYRNE: There's an interesting phenomenon underway, which is the arrival of Ukrainians, it's happening at a very quickened pace. As of March 27, 2023, we are aware of, IPGS, through information data collected through our partner, the Association for New Canadians, who we have partnered with on many of the logistics and projects related to this addition of, IPGS is aware of 2,608 Ukrainians currently in Newfoundland and Labrador: 910 are adult female, 880 are adult male and 656 are children. Only 29 per cent of these individuals arrived by way of our special airlift.

We brought in 704 Ukrainians by way of our airlift, on four separate airlifts you may recall, but we now have 2,606 Ukrainians. The delta, the 1,900 difference, these are Ukrainians that have chosen very deliberately and conscientiously to move specifically to Newfoundland and Labrador without any inducement whatsoever in terms of logistics or travel provided by us. That's a testament to the welcome that Newfoundland and Labrador has provided. We have a disproportionate chair. If we look

at our population as compared to the rest of Canada versus the population, the number of Ukrainians that have chosen Newfoundland and Labrador, this is a preferred destination for Ukrainians. There is no doubt about that.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

What percentage of overall immigration does this represent for our Ukrainian friends?

G. BYRNE: Well, in fact, one of the issues that's interesting about this is the numbers that I recited about permanent residency and permanent residency completions, the Ukrainians don't measure large in that factor at all. That will come in time.

One of the things about permanent residency applications under the federal requirements is that full-time employment has to be secured and retained and the full-time contracts have to be obtained. Then the process begins for permanent residency under the Provincial Nominee Program and the Atlantic Immigration Program.

So while the Ukrainians are definitely amongst us, we can anticipate that our permanent residency numbers will escalate significantly in the future when they become qualified under the federal rules to seek out permanent residency. But I can say to you with extreme confidence, Ukrainians who are here want to stay here.

J. WALL: Minister, what's the expected arrival rate moving into 2024 and beyond?

G. BYRNE: That's a very, very good question. If the modelling holds true at this point in time, we could potentially see as many as 3,500 Ukrainians in Newfoundland and Labrador by as early as Canada Day. Again, this is not by our hand, per se; this is Ukrainians choosing Newfoundland and Labrador as their future home, themselves.

J. WALL: So I'll ask about retention rates, Minister. Since the beginning of the program, what are the retention rates or do families stay here for a period of time and then choose to move elsewhere in our country?

G. BYRNE: Well, I'll say and say it uncomfortably, we would like to do better with our retention rates when it comes to refugees. One of the things about our retention of refugees, which I do not characterize or categorize Ukrainians as a traditional refugee within the context of federally government assisted and designated refugees – Ukrainians are refugees, but they're not federally designated as refugees.

We would like to do better retaining federally government-assisted refugees. One of the issues, of course, is creating a community within a community. A number of our refugees being members of the Syrian or Afghan communities, it is often, as some might say, the stickiness of Newfoundland and Labrador is not as strong as what it could be with communities in other parts of the country, so they often move in that particular direction. But when it comes to Ukrainians, there is significant stickiness. Less than 5 per cent of Ukrainians who have arrived here have left, with, on average, 100 more new Ukrainians arriving here each and every week.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

How many of our Ukrainian friends have found permanent housing in our province?

G. BYRNE: The vast bulk – actually, we've done exceptionally well. One of the things that I will say is that right now our temporary accommodations are somewhat full. One of the reasons for that is that we've seen a surge in Ukrainian arrivals in the last several weeks and recent months. When there was uncertainty as to whether or not the federal government would extend the CUAET, Canada-Ukraine Authorization for

Emergency Travel, the Ukrainian visa and work permit, when the federal government had signalled that it may not be extending that CUAET beyond March 31, we saw a significant volume of Ukrainians sort of take a behaviour, a decision, to move quickly to Canada generally and to Newfoundland and Labrador as well, as part of that.

So we have had a number of arrivals in the last short while and that has sort of caused a bit of a surge in our temporary accommodations, and I'll ask Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman if she can point out to us the number. As of right now, there are 1,236 Ukrainians in temporary accommodations of the 2,600 Ukrainians that are here. We expect that to drop down remarkably in the next while.

J. WALL: I know this question is based on the geography of where people are living in the province, but what's the expected wait time for permanent housing for our Ukrainian friends?

G. BYRNE: Well, they're finding it. They're finding market housing each and every day. One of the reasons we do recognize is that in St. John's, in metro, there are particular challenges. I always like to point out, to all who are interested and listen, we do have housing issues in our province. There's no doubt about that. We'd like to be able to move faster and stronger on housing. The trouble or the issues the Ukrainians have, or had with housing, is that there was an artillery shell that went through the side of their apartment building.

So they are coming here, fleeing the travesties the war. They are very, very patient to the understanding that housing here in this province is always sort of an issue, but they're finding it. They're moving to market housing. They're very appreciative of the fact that we are providing temporary housing and that's one of the reasons why, Colleague, that we also recognize that moving more Ukrainians outside of the metro area, finding work and

finding housing is a really valuable and effective strategy in dealing with this.

It's one of the reasons why I was able to accompany a group of Ukrainians on a pilot to the West Coast where they visited Stephenville – your colleague in Stephenville. They went to Corner Brook and Deer Lake and found employment and had good prospects for housing there. So we're trying to disperse this throughout the entire province.

J. WALL: Minister, with respect to family doctors, how many have access to a permanent family doctor?

G. BYRNE: One of the issues, of course, with the Ukrainians is that they are supplying health care services. Some have remarked that as we bring in more newcomers to our province, how will that influence or affect – and the assumption sometimes being negatively – health care services for the rest of us? Reflect and reflect well that the backbone of our health care system is in part – I repeat in part – serviced by newcomers.

Ukrainians are active in providing health care services for Newfoundlanders and Labradorians. There are some licensing issues that we're working through. They'll continue to be able to support each and every one of us. Ukrainians will be supporting each and every one of us in our health care ambitions and our health care needs, but it's also true to say that the Ukrainians themselves – and I do not wish to overstate anything here but the Ukrainians who are amongst us are very young, generally speaking. Their need for health care services is reduced, so their draw upon the health care system is not necessarily what we might otherwise think if we were to project it as sort of as regular participation by our own demographic.

Ukrainians are young and are not in need of health care services in a significant capacity. Again, I want to caution. I don't

want to overstate that, but the Ukrainians are adding to our health care system. They're contributing to our health care system. They're not utilizing our health care system like we ourselves might use because of their age, which produces a better health outcome, which results in a better health situation. This is something that Health and Community Services is actively working on to make sure that those talents are utilized.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

I remind the Member that his speaking time has expired.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

MHA Dinn.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Some questions first, Chair, with regard to the opening comments and following up on questions of my colleague.

With regard to Newfoundland's unemployment rate I think the minister stated that it was 9.9 per cent, seasonally, the second lowest since 1976 I believe. I'm just curious as to what type of jobs are we talking about here and the breakdown of them. Because if it's low-paying, part-time, minimum wage jobs versus good-paying jobs, there's a difference. I'm just curious as to what type of jobs are we looking at.

G. BYRNE: So thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Statistics Canada produces an overall labour market analysis. This is for all sectors and all professions, whether it be for Ph.D.s at the university to those working in the service industry to those working in schools as teachers or teachers' aids or staff. Every profession is included. This is a survey of the entire labour market of Newfoundland and Labrador, when I say the figure is 9.9.

J. DINN: Are there certain sectors that are growing more than others, for example, whether it's a minimum wage job versus the university professor? Do we have a breakdown of this? What I'm asking is what type of jobs?

G. BYRNE: That would constitute the 9.9?

J. DINN: That would make up that. Again, if you got two university professors hires and 100 people working at McDonald's in part-time shifts, that's what I'm trying to get at, what is the bulk or the composition of these jobs?

G. BYRNE: The national statistics agency, Statistics Canada, is the source of this data. They are the source. They conduct the survey, the labour market surveys, and draw these conclusions. I'm not aware that when they conduct these surveys that they ask individual respondents to provide their profession of choice when they report or answer questions or when the data is reported.

Notwithstanding that, I will ask if there's anyone within my team that may be able to answer that specific question with greater clarity than I have, but Mr. Dinn it really does represent a sort of a cross section without calculation of individual professions to the best of my knowledge.

Is there anyone on my team that would be able to answer that question differently?

Katie Norman.

K. NORMAN: MHA Dinn, we don't have that breakdown for you but we can certainly provide you with the breakdown that falls under that. It's part of the publicly available labour force survey. We do summarize it monthly and we can share that with you.

J. DINN: Perfect.

I guess someone who has a training, university degree, but ends up in a job as, I

don't know, a custodian, the skills match, that's what I'm looking at as well.

G. BYRNE: Agreed.

J. DINN: I think the minister mentioned about 1,085 newcomers welcomed since January and I think it was mostly talked about economic newcomers. Are there any other types of newcomers, people who are fleeing political persecution, religious persecution and so on and so forth or most of the newcomers who are welcomed into Newfoundland and Labrador are economic newcomers?

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much for the question, Mr. Chair.

Yes, this number does include it. It's not exclusive to economic newcomers. This is all permanent residents that have arrived in our province at a particular point in time.

This is a point that I'm particularly proud of, and I know that you and other Members of the Committee are equally proud of. You may not necessarily be aware of this, or all of you may not necessarily be aware of this, but Newfoundland and Labrador welcomes more refugees on a per capita basis than most other provinces in Canada. In fact, I think there are very few, only maybe one other province, maybe two, that when analyzed on a per capita performance or welcoming, no one does it any better than Newfoundland and Labrador.

For example – and I'll tease myself and question myself – but the numbers that I have in my mind are in 2021, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 660 refugees directed by the federal government to our shores. We did so quite willingly and in partnership with the federal government. New Brunswick, at that same point in time, welcomed with a population of over 800,000 – Newfoundland and Labrador's population of 500,000 – New Brunswick welcomed 385. PEI, with a significant efforts in economic newcomer attraction, welcomed, I

think, if my number is correct, 85 refugees. It's one of the reasons why, MHA Jim Dinn, I would always encourage all of us to ask the federal government to support the Association for New Canadians with additional resources.

The ANC is one of the busiest resettlement organizations in the country and receives some of the lowest in federal supports. I have said this publicly on many, many occasions. I make no apologies in pronouncing that expectation, that the Association for New Canadians be provided additional resources. I met directly with my federal counterparts, the federal Minister Responsible for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, and informed him of that circumstance and my expectation, our expectation. I informed the Members of Parliament from Newfoundland and Labrador of that circumstance and that expectation.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Is it possible then to have the breakdown, if you would, of information available of those who are refugees or newcomers, whether they're economic, political, religious, or otherwise? Would that data be available?

G. BYRNE: By the left hand of my deputy minister, I can provide that to you right now.

In 2022, Newfoundland and Labrador welcomed 3,490 new permanent residents. This is the measurement that IPGS uses to measure progress towards our overall goal, as I mentioned earlier. This 2022 level of immigration is a 70 per cent increase over that of 2021 when we welcomed 2,055 new permanent residents.

Within the cohort, within that group of 3,000 – this is to answer your question directly, MHA Jim Dinn – within the 3,490 new permanent residents; 2,370 were economic immigrants, which amounts to 68 per cent; 225 were family-class entrants, i.e. the members of the family of the economic

immigrants which is built into the program; 770 were federal government-assisted refugees and protected persons, which is 22 per cent, which is a representation far and above any other province to the best of my knowledge; 110 were privately sponsored refugees; and 15 were other newcomers, such as humanitarian, compassionate approvals, asylum seekers.

J. DINN: Thank you.

With regard to retention rates that was asked before, and I noticed that the minister did say that his government would like to do better, is it possible to have a breakdown of the numbers and percentages of those that have come and those that have left? In terms of the refugees who come, whether they're here for economic, private sponsors, whether they are Ukrainian, Afghan, Syrian, and so on and so forth. Is it possible to get a breakdown of the numbers coming in and how many we are retaining and how many are choosing to leave the province? Is it possible to have those numbers? Whether now or maybe delivered to us would be good to.

G. BYRNE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I can provide a sampling of that data right now, and I do so with some enthusiasm, simply because it is often said and repeated and repeated that Newfoundland and Labrador has a very poor retention rate and that rolls off some tongues very easily. The data does not necessarily support it when it is compared to other jurisdictions.

For example, the retention rate of Newfoundland and Labrador – and we measure this because there's a certain stickiness to this. After one year of arrival, after being in a province one year, we measure retention. After those who have been here after three years, we measure retention and after five years, we measure retention.

Here's the data that I can share with you. In using the one-year comparison, Newfoundland and Labrador has an overall retention rate of 63.4 per cent. Our economic immigration is a very, very high retention rate, our family class is very, very high and our refugee class is relatively high. But we have an overall retention rate after one year of 63.4 per cent.

Prince Edward Island, which has prioritized immigration for a longer period of time than Newfoundland and Labrador has, I would argue, has a 58.1 per cent retention rate after one year. Using a three-year analysis, Newfoundland and Labrador's retention rate is 52 per cent. Whereas PEI's is 34.9 per cent. Using a five-year average – and again, I use PEI sort of as the descriptor simply because PEI has been in this immigration initiative for, I would argue, much longer than Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland and Labrador's retention rate after five years is 47.8 per cent. Whereas PEI's retention rate is 28 per cent.

Looking at the other two Atlantic provinces, besides PEI, while Newfoundland and Labrador's is 47.8 per cent, Nova Scotia's is just 55 per cent and New Brunswick is statistically identical to Newfoundland and Labrador at 48 per cent.

Newfoundland and Labrador performs much stronger in retention than what necessarily some may advocate. And repeating it and repeating it and repeating it does not make it true. The data is what proves this to be true.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03, further questions, MHA Wall?

J. WALL: Yes, thank you, Chair, I do have some further questions.

Minister, how many newcomers to our province have a health care background?

G. BYRNE: Given the number, I'll see if we can get that data for you right now. But health care backgrounds, of course, are very diverse. That could be anyone from a personal care attendant to a general surgeon to a specialized surgeon. Of course, we do have a number of people that if they didn't necessarily work as a personal care attendant in their previous lives, may be interested in working as a personal care attendant. There may be some others who would like to pursue health training, but we can endeavour to get better analysis and better information for you on that, but I will caution you that given the numbers and the fields, I would not want to be able to say to you that I can give you an absolute number.

J. WALL: Understood and appreciated.

Minister, of the new Ukrainians here to our province, how many are currently working in their field of study or their field of expertise?

G. BYRNE: Well, of the Ukrainians that are working, one of the things that they recognize is that they are prepared to take full-time, year-round employment where offered. They seek it out in their fields. We're really delighted with the fact that – and this is kind of an interesting culture. I'll give you a little bit of a story here. When a Ukrainian trains as an accountant, you or I may approach our designated field or our vocation as, if we trained as an accountant, that's where we're going to work. We want to work as an accountant. Ukrainians are a little bit different, and this is a generalization but I believe the generalization is true. If they can work in any field which provides them personal satisfaction, that's where they will work. If that means being a bookkeeper, a general manager, a marketing professional or an entrepreneur, that's what they will do.

So we may sort of analyze this a little bit differently than the culture of Ukraine and Ukrainians. They do not necessarily take sort of an exclusivity with their professions. If they were a veterinarian, they may be

very, very comfortable in a Canadian environment working as a veterinarian assistant or, for that matter, working in an office environment.

So that's really all I can say about that, is that we help them, job match them through ACCES Employment. The Association for New Canadians has an employment agency, ACCES Employment. We work with TaskforceNL and other agencies. We work directly with employers to match Ukrainian skill sets with employers that want those skill sets and what we have found on the résumés before the Ukrainians ever got here, many of them worked in a number of different fields, in a number of different sectors. That is not unusual for the Ukrainians.

J. WALL: Minister, I know this is an issue with many Newfoundlanders and Labradorians when it comes to child care. How does your department help new Ukrainian families providing child care in order to have a spouse or both members of the family working to support their families? What's being done with child care?

G. BYRNE: By way of a singular example but I think an effective one, we're working with the Ukrainian Newfoundland and Labrador organizations to actually create a Ukrainian daycare. That's one of the things we want to do in metro St. John's. That work is under way and we're asking the Ukrainians to, sort of, lead some of that with our assistance. But I will ask Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman if she can, sort of, expand on some of the issues around Ukrainian daycare.

K. NORMAN: Thank you for the question.

Ukrainians are eligible for child care subsidies from the Department of Education so they could probably speak more on the specifics of that, but that does enable individuals to obtain spaces through existing programming. As the minister mentioned, we are actively working with Ukrainian NL

on the establishment of a child care centre, not only to provide spaces for Ukrainian children, but also to provide spaces for Ukrainian-trained individuals who are looking to get their credentials recognized and we're actively working with the Association of Early Childhood Educators of Newfoundland and Labrador because there is good alignment between educational credentials for that field and what is offered in this province.

In addition to that, the Association for New Canadians has two types of child care that they provide. One is child-minding services. So we have a large number of Ukrainians who are availing of English as a Second Language training, sometimes as a supplement to part-time or full-time work. While the parents are taking that training, there is child-minding services available for that.

In addition, the Association for New Canadians does have a regulated child care centre, of which Ukrainians are eligible to avail of services there. So that's a good survey, I guess, of some of the services. We have also seen employers step up and provide supports for child care for Ukrainian families in some examples as well, which we certainly encourage.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you for that.

Minister, I believe you quoted – I thought I wrote it down correctly – 1,185 permanent residents. Was that the number: 1,185? Out of that number, how many are actual permanent residents or have they simply applied for permanent residency?

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much for the question, Chair. Those are established, approved permanent residents.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you.

G. BYRNE: There are many more in the hopper, to put it bluntly.

J. WALL: But from that number, okay.

You mentioned the ranking retention rates for other provinces. Do you have the national ranking retention rates?

G. BYRNE: I'm sorry. I missed the question. I will clarify. You said you had quoted me as saying 1,185. What I had said was 1,085.

J. WALL: Sorry, thank you.

G. BYRNE: Sorry, the question again, Mr. Chair.

J. WALL: The question was with respect to national ranking rates. You quoted other provincial ranking rates but is there a national ranking rate with respect to retention rates for Ukrainians?

G. BYRNE: Yes, there definitely is. In terms of Ukrainians, no, I'm not aware of a national ranking of Ukrainians. I will just leave you with this anecdotal piece of information, which is that Ukrainians are leaving other provinces to come here. This is not through our charters. You know, this is not a huge group but it's a significant group. Ukrainians have left Montreal, left Halifax, left other provinces and said it's Newfoundland and Labrador we want to be.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

A lot of great information here, Mr. Chair. I'll get into a couple of line item questions. I appreciate the smile, Mr. Chair.

I know, Minister, when you started the preamble with respect to the 2 per cent increase over four years for NAPE, so I do have some salary questions here. Forgive me, I'll try not to go through the ones you already answered.

With respect to 1.1.01, Transportation and Communications, what was the reason for spending \$14,500 less than budget last year? Was there less travel, less activity, less staff availing of it?

G. BYRNE: There was less travel by me going to federal-provincial-territorial meetings. Obviously, the conference board secretariat that organizes federal-provincial-territorial meetings of various departments or various functions had more Zoom meetings. So, in large measure, there was less travel conducted by me going to other events.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

1.2.01, Executive Support, again, this seems more than the 2 per cent over to NAPE for four years. Why the \$102,000 increase in salaries above budget in 2023 and should we expect the same in this budget?

G. BYRNE: So this was due – there was a contribution here that was made because of the new collective agreement cost and pay out of retro and signing bonuses as well. But there was the negotiated 2 per cent salary increases for unionized and non-management.

Madam Deputy, I don't know if there's any additional information to be able to provide there? So there was –

S. JONES: (Inaudible.)

G. BYRNE: Oh yes, okay. Thank you, Madam Assistant Deputy Minister Sharlene.

There was a payout of paid leave from within the Executive.

S. JONES: Walt's retirement.

G. BYRNE: You may recall, I believe MHA Paul Dinn may recall, we both attended his retirement event, Mr. Walt retired, who was an institution –

P. DINN: (Inaudible.)

G. BYRNE: What's that?

P. DINN: (Inaudible.)

G. BYRNE: I bet it was; it was much more joy.

Also Sheila, my executive secretary also retired this past year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03, MHA Dinn.

J. DINN: Thank you.

I think the question I was going to ask was with regard to the number of newcomers staying in hotel rooms, 1,236 I think. Are all of these individuals from Ukraine or are there others arriving from other countries that need to stay in hotel rooms while they find a more permanent accommodations?

G. BYRNE: The question that was asked which led to the answer was Ukrainian temporary accommodations, so that was the answer related to Ukraine.

If you were to ask the question: Is that the full compliment of those living in temporary accommodations? Obviously not. The federal Government-Assisted Refugee Program, the movement of refugees by the federal government to St. John's, in particular, there are refugees that are staying in temporary accommodations.

I would like to point out to the Members of the Committee that St. John's is the only location where the federal government will allow or move their refugees to. They will not move them to Corner Brook or Grand Falls or Gander or Happy Valley-Goose Bay or elsewhere because of certain criteria the federal government has, including access to things like public transit. They use that as a marker.

I believe the good people of Gander would do very well for themselves with accepting refugees and would welcome them readily. I think that particular question is not necessarily as relevant in Gander as what the federal government may do. But a

government-assisted refugee is only allowed to be landed in St. John's. With that said, if they move to elsewhere in the province, they do lose some of their benefits.

J. DINN: So how many are we talking about, Mr. Chair?

G. BYRNE: The question of government?

J. DINN: I was looking for the total number, 1,236 –

G. BYRNE: I cannot tell you exactly right now because we – I'll ask Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman to provide whatever information she has, but we don't have as good tracking on the federal side of things.

K. NORMAN: So on federally funded hotel rooms, we're aware as of March 23 that there were 24 government-assisted refugees from Afghanistan currently in temporary accommodations. As of March 31, there are 76 people who arrived on federal charter seeking asylum via Roxham Road and that's all federally funded.

J. DINN: So if I'm understanding correctly then it's 1,236 Ukrainians plus 24 Afghan and 76 asylum seekers. That's the total number?

K. NORMAN: That's correct.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

I'm just wondering how many have found housing? More or less in terms of the wait times for housing. I know that it was brought up before. I'm just looking at right now, I guess we're looking at how long would these people have been in a hotel room or in the alternate housing? I'm just trying to get an idea of the wait times and the supply/demand.

G. BYRNE: So right now the average duration, when we first started this initiative, when the numbers, the volumes were a little

bit more easily managed, case managed, the average time in the temporary accommodations was less than 30 days.

As I spoke of just a few minutes ago, we have seen a significant surge in Ukrainian arrivals in Newfoundland and Labrador and we're now in a situation, because of the surge, we're in excess of 50 days in temporary accommodations.

But an interesting point I think that's worth emphasizing here is that there is an assumption because people have met or saw Ukrainians at the hotel back in May of 2022 and they still see Ukrainians in the hotel, milling about the hotel, in March and April of 2023, it's the same group of Ukrainians, that they have been in the hotel for a very long time.

We have Ukrainian arrivals each and every day in our province, not directed by the hand of airlift but by their own fruition. So the average stay in a hotel is now gone to just a little bit above 50 days, as I understand it based on information that I personally receive from the ANC. We can get some clarity on that. I can get some clarity on that. But it is not the same. So it is not true to suggest that Ukrainians have been in temporary accommodations for excessive periods of time.

We do have an issue right now where, with this time of year, it's a little more difficult to seek market housing alternatives, but we suspect that with April 1, and the switch out of leases, movement of students outside of accommodations and other things, we expect to see many more Ukrainians moving to market housing in the next weeks and months.

J. DINN: Well, if that's the case, will the shift to market housing for those, as students move out, create another problem then in September when students are moving back in and they have no place to go? That's basically what's going to happen, if I understand what you said. As students

move out, market housing will become available. That's a temporary thing because that means that once students show up again in September, the housing crunch will still be there, it's just for a different group of people. I'm just wondering then how are we going to address this situation?

G. BYRNE: So the answer to addressing the situation is not to take a St. John's-centric emphasis or preoccupation. It is to do that which we have already done on a pilot scale, which is to facilitate exploration by Ukrainians outside of the St. John's metro area into places like Deer Lake, Stephenville, Corner Brook, Clarenville, Gander, Grand Falls, Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Southern Labrador, elsewhere.

There are Ukrainians now, today, in Newfoundland and Labrador living in 39 different communities. They are very successful. There are 39 communities in our province hosting Ukrainians. That is part of the answer here, but I do encourage, always reflect on one simple thing. If we have to solve every problem before we ever, ever take an action, we will never, ever act.

The alternative would be to simply stop welcoming Ukrainians, say that we really don't want you here because housing may be kind of tight right now. We don't you to come here. I will not take that position. We will work for solutions.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

First of all, not a St. John's-centric, it's only when the minister points out that it will be solved by students moving out, I would assume that's St. John's.

Secondly, my ask is not to stop welcoming people but to make sure that we have housing because it's creating a significant issue, certainly in metro St. Johns and elsewhere, so my solution is – I'm certainly not suggesting about not welcoming people.

What I am saying is let's find homes. It's as simple as that, deal with that problem.

The number of refugees who have arrived here in the past few years, how long, on average, does it take them to find work and can government improve in its ability to match newcomers with employers seeking qualified labour?

G. BYRNE: The refugees that have come here, what we know to be very true, is that they're filled with ambition, with hopes and with skills. Sometimes English as a second language to them is a process which takes time. Many refugees, less so with – and I term Ukrainians as former refugees because once anyone comes to Newfoundland and Labrador, they are no longer a refugee, they are a former refugee.

With Ukrainians, their English language skills are relatively higher, much higher. With those who come from Eritrea, from Syria, from Afghanistan, what we have experienced is that their English language is not as proficient, but we believe it's important to take the time and the energy and the resources to assist them in improving their English language skills. That's why we have a significant English language training capability that we're always ramping up to meet the needs. That is one of the core issues when it comes to finding employment.

But with that said, I'll ask Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman if she can elaborate on any other details that I may have not provided.

K. NORMAN: I don't have on hand the average job search period, but I can share that over 253 individual employers have hired Ukrainians, including some that have hired a dozen or more. So we are seeing a significant level of participation by employers in the labour market. We're getting to a point in this journey where I would say that there are also individuals who have accepted one job and are now

moving on to accept potentially a second job. Just as their English language proficiency has increased, they're able to potentially accept higher skilled labour as time has gone on.

So it's not necessarily as a direct linear journey with one job and then kind of done. We're continuing to support throughout the employment life cycle.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Back to you, MHA Wall.

1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Under 1.2.02, under Salaries, Minister, why is there a \$147,300 variance in 2023? Were there positions that were unfilled for that number?

G. BYRNE: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, I was just conversing with the deputy minister. Would you be able to quickly, briefly just say the question again?

J. WALL: Not a problem, conversing with the deputy minister is important.

Under Salaries, 1.2.02, \$147,300 variance of Budget versus Revised for 2023. Were there positions unfilled for this amount?

G. BYRNE: You're quite correct in your assumption that savings did accrue related to short-term vacancies of the following positions: there was a director of information management, an ATIPP policy analyst, a financial officer, a clerk IV, a training officer and a departmental program coordinator that were temporarily vacant. In addition to that, of course, there was the adjustment to salaries across the board due to the regular.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, \$47,500 is under Budget, \$25,000 is under

Revised; however, \$10,000 is under Estimates. Can you please give some insight as to these numbers, please?

G. BYRNE: I'll ask our controller if he could provide some details on this.

S. FRENCH: For Transportation and Communications, our amount was a lot lower this past year because of the anticipated costs that we had for postage and the cost of land lines were lower because we eliminated a few phone lines.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, an unexpected spend of \$6,400. Can you please explain?

S. FRENCH: For Property, Furnishings and Equipment, we had additional costs. We had to replace some old and updated or broken furniture throughout the department and these costs vary year to year. This year it just happened to be higher than our budget amount.

J. WALL: Thank you.

1.2.03, again, the Salaries, a variance of \$168,600. The positions unfilled, are you hoping to fill them, Minister, for '23 and '24?

G. BYRNE: I believe that would be a question for my deputy minister.

K. STONE: Yes, absolutely.

J. WALL: Yes.

Thank you.

One final one for this one. Under Purchased Services, what's included in this particular category, Minister?

G. BYRNE: In that subhead of 1.2.03?

J. WALL: Yes.

G. BYRNE: Purchased Services is funding provided for resource data management, such as licences related to reporting and data management. It's software licences.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Chair, nothing else for that subheading.

Thank you.

CHAIR: MHA Dinn, do you have anything left on 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive?

J. DINN: Sure.

Can you provide an update on the work completed by the Ministerial Committee on Anti-Racism?

G. BYRNE: Yes, indeed.

This is a new initiative of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, which has never been embarked upon before. But it engages key ministers in certain portfolios. I, as co-chair, Minister of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, joined by Minister Dempster as Minister Responsible for Indigenous Affairs, the Ministerial Committee on Anti-Racism has met 35 groups and organizations over an extended period of time and we've received 87 submissions from the public.

I'm joined on the Committee by the minister responsible for Education and as well the minister responsible for Justice and Public Safety. But the Committee itself does not work in isolation within those four key ministries. We perform duties across government to inform our colleague ministers, our fellow ministers, of any actions that are required and often we bring in to direct discussions the Minister of Health and Community Services, the Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, ministers across government are involved.

Actions taken to date include updating curriculum in the schools, intercultural competency training for public servants, including the Justice sector and we condemn – this is an interesting – part of the work is very roll-up-your-sleeve orientated. I was personally engaged in initiatives to condemn specific race-based violent acts in our province and to prevent expressions of race-based prejudice and actions that would cause certain racial groups to feel very uncomfortable within our province that may be perpetrated by others from within other communities, within the province. This is a very, very delicate act but it's an important act and it requires intervention, because it's one thing to not be a racists, it's another thing not to enable racism in others. That is the true meaning of anti-racism. It's not just to be anti-racist but it is to condemn outright and to prevent the enablement of racism.

So our initiatives are very vast, are very broad based. When we meet with groups, we take in points of view. We take in opinions. We recognize that the opinion of one group may not necessarily reflect the opinion or priorities of another group. We take things in balance. I think what we have done is we have fostered – through the work of the Ministerial Committee on Anti-Racism, I think we have created a growing confidence within all communities of our province that the province, more importantly, the people of Newfoundland and Labrador are committed to maintaining a province where racism is not to be tolerated.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Can we have a breakdown or an indication of how many people have availed of the Job Creation Partnerships funding?

G. BYRNE: We most certainly can but not by me so I will pass that over to Assistant Deputy Minister Sharlene.

S. JONES: Thank you.

In 2022-23, there were 224 agreements in place with organizations to support 1,040 individuals. I don't have the breakdown right here but we can supply that afterwards.

J. DINN: Thank you.

With regard to the Office for Indigenous and Northern Skilled Trades, how many people have been helped or equipped to help by this office?

S. JONES: I'll have to get that information for you as well; we can have a breakdown provided to you.

G. BYRNE: I'll just quickly intervene and I'll give you a ballpark because it is fresh in my mind having spoken with Executive Director Darin King not too long ago. It's approximately 450 and includes not just in Labrador, it includes those individuals impacted who are resident of Northern Labrador who may not necessarily self identify as Indigenous.

J. DINN: Thank you, Chair.

Is it possible to have how many people have availed of the Study and Stay Program?

G. BYRNE: Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman, that is a granular piece of information but an important one. Do you have that data right now?

K. NORMAN: Unfortunately, I don't have that on hand but we'll certainly provide it.

J. DINN: Thank you.

How many newcomers have we welcomed as part of the International Entrepreneur category of the Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Nominee Program since its launch in 2018?

G. BYRNE: Madam Assistant Deputy.

K. NORMAN: I don't have that on hand but we'll provide that as well.

J. DINN: Thank you.

That is it, Sir.

CHAIR: Thank you.

If the Committee is ready for the question, shall 1.1.01 to 1.2.03 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 1.1.01 through 1.2.03 carried.

CHAIR: Can I get the Clerk to call the next set of subheads, please.

CLERK: 2.1.01 to 2.1.07 inclusive, Employment and Skills Development.

CHAIR: Shall 2.1.01 to 2.1.07 inclusive carry?

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, 2.1.02, under your Employment Development Programs, line 09 is the Allowances and Assistance, a removal of \$300,000 and Grants and Subsidies, a removal of \$329,000 for '23-'24.

Can you please explain why the removal and how it is going to affect your department?

G. BYRNE: I can, I'll be able to refer directly to that which I referred to in my preamble, which this is a consequence of the federal government's two-year COVID-related funding for Labour Market Transfer Agreements which sunsetted on March 31, 2023. That has a certain result, and that is true for both categories. It's simply a matter

that we had enriched funds for COVID. We may not necessarily have that amount on a go-forward basis so we'll have to adjust accordingly. And all provinces and territories in Canada face this circumstance. It's not unique to Newfoundland and Labrador.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

2.1.03, under Transportation and Communication, \$40,000 under spent. Can you please explain why, Minister?

G. BYRNE: I can. Let me just read it to you. There were one-time savings due to the delay in intergovernmental negotiation meetings with the federal government resulting in meetings and trips being deferred to '23-'24, that's because the federal government was not in a position to be able to meet.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Purchased Services, there was a \$31,600 overspent. Can you please explain why?

G. BYRNE: Under Purchased Services in that subhead, I'll ask our controller, Mr. French, if you could provide some clarity on that.

S. FRENCH: The amount of the expenditure was higher because we had one-time liability insurance for participants of the LMDA projects. WorkplaceNL has a blanket agreement to cover the job creation partnerships, Labour Market partnerships and Employment Assistance services. At any one time the participants of these projects could be funded under the blanket coverage, as they are employer premiums and the increases are due to the increased number that we have as part of the programs, the number of employees. Any core staff of these programs, or agreements, I should say, would be the employer responsibility.

There were also some higher expenditures for – we have a Accountability Resource Management System, ARMS, so for the reporting it costs a little bit more and ARMS is a case management tool for reporting our community partners and allowing community partners to track clients and interventions and report on outcomes of the agreement. So those are the main reasons for the costs.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Property, Furnishings and Equipment, there was a \$35,500 overspent. Can you please explain this to that line item?

S. FRENCH: So the overage in that area was related to one-time purchases of laptops that were required for our regional service staff.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Minister, 2.1.07, again, the \$50,000 variance less for '22-'23 and then an increase of \$190,800 for the '24 budget. Is that back to the NAPE negotiations and the collective agreements again?

G. BYRNE: I'm sorry. I just missed the line that you were referring to, colleague.

J. WALL: 2.1.07.

G. BYRNE: Yes, correct.

J. WALL: Under Salaries.

G. BYRNE: Yes. Okay.

Thank you very much for the clarity. I just did not have an opportunity to hear you so I appreciate your patience with me.

Salaries were revised down by \$49,000. These were savings in short-term vacancies in turnover within the division.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, again, we have a large underspend of \$84,000 variance. So is the department going to expect to spend this budget in this current year?

G. BYRNE: The short answer is yes. We hope to because that gets us out and engaged, but there was a one-time saving resulting from challenges in travel earlier in the fiscal year.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Supplies, you have a small increase. Can you please explain why?

G. BYRNE: There was an additional expense in this area related to a web-licence fee to utilize a particular platform, Kurzweil, to support apprentices and trade qualifiers requiring an exam accommodation. So Kurzweil is an electronic reader that will read an exam to a client. It allows for accessibility options that did not previously exist. This increase is a result of the increase in the number of exams that were offered, as well the increase in the number of clients seeking this particular kind of accommodation.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, why the \$211,000 variance for the '22-'23 budget?

G. BYRNE: There was a one-time savings. So the revised down by – this is what you are referring to, the revision of the dealt of just over \$200,000. This was a one-time savings in block training under the industrial training program and funding was reprofiled back to the Labour Market Development Agreement to be utilized in that same fiscal year.

We intend, because of circumstances with certain industrial training programs, that we'll be back to them in due course.

J. WALL: Mr. Chair, one last question under this heading. Under Revenue - Provincial, what accounts for the \$277,400 increase?

G. BYRNE: So this was revenue for the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Project amongst the Atlantic provinces, which our participation – this was revenue under that particular project to manage certain elements of it.

J. WALL: Okay, thank you, Minister.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

MHA Dinn.

At the conclusion of your questions on this section, we'll have a 10-minute washroom break.

J. DINN: Thank you.

CHAIR: So 2.1.01 to 2.1.07 inclusive.

J. DINN: In 2.1.01, Salaries, again, last year's revised amount was \$39,300 under budget and this year's estimate is increased. I'm assuming that's because of the labour agreements and that?

G. BYRNE: The revision is down in Salaries for –

J. DINN: Well, they're down and then there's an increase. I'm assuming that's part of your explanation at the beginning.

G. BYRNE: I'll allow you, Madam Deputy, just to ensure because there are two halves to that question. I just want to make sure it's answered correctly.

K. STONE: Yes, that's correct.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

In 2.1.03, Professional Services, last year's revised amount was \$30,100 under budget. What was the reason for that?

G. BYRNE: Madam Deputy, do you want to proceed?

K. STONE: There were lower than anticipated expenses for Adobe upgrades to the LaMPSS system.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

This one may have been answered. Allowances and Assistance, this year's estimate has decreased by \$1 million – over \$1 million, actually.

G. BYRNE: That, colleague, again relates back to our situation with the LMTAs and the federal government and the sunsetting of particular funding spheres of that program.

J. DINN: Under 2.1.07, is it possible to provide an update on the progress of the Atlantic Apprenticeship Harmonization Program?

G. BYRNE: Yes, it most certainly is.

Assistant Deputy Minister Sharlene, if you would.

S. JONES: So the project that was funded by the federal government actually finished up March 31, 2023. However, because it was so successful and the fact that all four Atlantic provinces felt that working together – and we still had some more to do, we decided to continue with it. It was decided that Newfoundland would continue to host the maintenance office going forward. That's why you see the provincial revenue line and it's not a federal line, because the other provinces are also paying their share and they're funding it. So we're going to continue that office here in the province.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Are there any plans to expand where a specific block training is offered to reduce the travel required for apprentices who live or work in a community with a CNA campus?

S. JONES: As you maybe aware, we are in the process of now just signing a contract to do an apprenticeship review. So right now we're on hold while the review is ongoing to look for better ways. So there are going to be town halls, all our stakeholders are going to be consulted. All issues that are brought forward are going to be reviewed and hopefully solutions also determined and we'll act upon those.

So while that review is ongoing, that will just be one of the issues that will be considered by the consultant.

J. DINN: Thank you.

That's it, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

So if the Committee is ready for the question, shall 2.1.01 to 2.1.07 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 2.1.01 through 2.1.07 carried.

CHAIR: Before we get into the next set of subheads, we'll just take a – so it's 7:31, if we can be back in 10 minutes, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you.

Recess

CHAIR: Okay, thank you.

Welcome back to the Estimates of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills.

I will ask the Clerk to call the next subhead, please.

CLERK: 3.1.01, Regional Service Delivery.

CHAIR: Shall 3.1.01 carry?

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

3.1.01, Client Services. Under Salaries, why the underspend in '22-'23, and, again, the increase of \$462,700 in '24? Are we back to the collective agreement in that instance as well?

G. BYRNE: Thank you, Chair.

To my colleague, the answer is a simple, yes.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Transportation and Communications, the \$75,000 variance, less budgeted versus revised. Can you please shed some light on that one, Minister?

G. BYRNE: I can.

Thank you, Chair.

These savings related to lower requirements for the cost of telephone services, cellphone services and lower travel costs due to challenges related to travel earlier in the fiscal year.

J. WALL: Mr. Chair, the subheading –

CHAIR: It's just 3.1.01.

J. WALL: That's it?

That's why you're the best Chair ever.

CHAIR: That's it.

Could we possibly have an update on the Provincial Nominee Program? How have the numbers of applications changed in the past year? Is the department equipped to handle any further increases? So an update, the number of applications change and is the department ready for it.

J. WALL: That's all I have, Chair.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

G. BYRNE: Thank you, Chair.

MHA Dinn, 3.1.01.

J. DINN: That's it.

You certainly can, colleague. This is one of the brightest spots, I would argue, not just within this department but within government generally. Our performance on our immigration targets, our achievements here in this field have been nothing but extraordinary.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you.

If the Committee is ready for the question, shall 3.1.01 carry?

I do credit the able team within the executive and the staff within not just Immigration and Multiculturalism, but as well, within our labour market team, our workforce development team. We've really worked in great synergy.

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

I am going to ask assistant deputy minister, Katie Norman, to fill in the Committee on the progress that has been made to date. It is a remarkable accomplishment and I really do celebrate her and her team in this regard.

On motion, subhead 3.1.01 carried.

CHAIR: I ask the Clerk to call the next set of subheads, please.

K. NORMAN: Thank you, Minister.

CLERK: 4.1.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive, Immigration and Workforce Development.

In terms of provincial nominations, for the first time in the province's history, we fully exhausted the Provincial Nominee Program in calendar year 2022. Immigration nominations are issued January to December.

CHAIR: Shall 4.1.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive carry?

We're going to go to MHA Dinn.

J. DINN: I'll take you up on that.

In 2022 we were able to nominate 2,755 people to permanent residency through the Provincial Nominee Program alone; 1,140 of them were principal applicants. So that's the job seeker who's secured employment in Newfoundland and Labrador and they are being joined by 1,615 of their spouses and dependant children.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Well, you didn't get a question in the last one, so I thought we'd ...

J. DINN: Okay, no problem. Thank you.

Just to give a sense of the growth, that number of 2,755 in 2021, which was also at the time a historic year, the number was much lower at 1,430. If you look back to 2015 that number would have been only 715. So there's been considerable growth in the program. As we look forward, we see the potential for even further growth as a result of negotiated increases to the Provincial Nominee Program spaces and the Atlantic Immigration Program spaces in 2023.

So for this coming year, we have 3,050 immigration spaces available between the two programs. We estimate that each immigration space actually translates into 2.21 individuals coming to Newfoundland and Labrador. Which means that in 2023, we anticipate that we will nominate 6,741 people – that's an estimate – for permanent residency through both the Provincial Nominee Program and the Atlantic Immigration Program.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Earlier, there was a question asked about retention of newcomers. I think the numbers were that after one year, retention is 63 per cent; three years, 52 per cent; five years, 47.8 per cent. Are exit interviews conducted with those who leave the province or a follow-up to find out why?

G. BYRNE: We would definitely take any opportunity to engage in an exit interview to be able to find out what it is that created this circumstance of why individuals took the choice to move to a different country or to a different province. Because that is sometimes the case, they not only leave Newfoundland and Labrador but to a different country altogether, they don't stay in Canada.

Unfortunately, that's not always possible because, of course, they don't report to us their departure. There's no requirement for them to report to us their departure. After many years of being here they may just take

a decision. The same as you or I may take a trip somewhere else, they take a trip but on a more permanent basis.

So we would always engage in an effort to be able to find what some of the causes were. We have a great partnership with the Association for New Canadians who are regularly engaged in this activity. But, again, it is not always available to us to be able to actually have a face to face with a newcomer who is deciding to move on somewhere else simply because they do not have a requirement to report to us that they're doing that.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Is it possible to provide a breakdown of retention rates of international students and out-of- province domestic Canadian students that have attended our post-secondary institutions by year?

G. BYRNE: Yes, we can. We can sort of create that data.

We work closely with the Internationalization Office of Memorial University to support our university with their efforts. Newfoundland and Labrador has one of the best pathways available for retaining our international graduates. You may not be aware, but we are one of few provinces that actually allow for insured medical benefits to post-secondary students in our province.

If an international student goes to school in Ontario they do not get OHIP protection, the provincial health care insurance plan. If an international student goes to Quebec, they do not get provincial health care protection. They have to buy their own insurance. We are one of a smaller number of provinces that does provide protections, not only for international students while they're in session, in school, but we also provide MCP protection for them after they graduate. We extend that protection for a period of time after they graduate.

We always encourage, we want to make sure that MUN is an active agent in recruiting permanent residents to Newfoundland and Labrador. One of the discussions that we're having with the Internationalization Office and with their recruiting efforts is to best match their recruitment to jurisdictions, to countries, to perspective students who have a propensity to stay here.

There are some students who just naturally do not necessarily choose Newfoundland and Labrador as their permanent home. They like it as a place to study, but there is a propensity for them to leave. They do not have any intentions of seeking permanent residency here.

There might be an assumption, sometimes, that every international student who studies at MUN has the intention of residing here full time upon graduation. That's not actually true. Some people just come here to study and they have no intentions of ever, ever residing here full time. But there are many students who do.

What we're working on is to try and encourage MUN to focus their recruitment efforts, in some respects, without limiting diversity, but at the same time focusing recruitment efforts to those places and those perspective students that have already established large communities here and that would like to stay on for further.

I don't know, MHA Dinn, if that answers your question, but I can ask Assistant Deputy Minister Katie Norman to fill in any further details if that's incomplete.

J. DINN: No, it didn't. I actually just wanted to know what the data was and when can we expect that data. I think you said the department can create that.

G. BYRNE: We'll work with the Internationalization Office to try to create that data.

J. DINN: And the domestic Canadian students as well, by year.

Thank you.

What work has your office done with the federal government to streamline the process for getting professional credentials of immigrants accredited and are there any updates?

G. BYRNE: There are. We've done extensive work on this. In fact, this House, of course, ratified new legislation in terms of foreign credential recognition. That's very welcomed. One of the things, I think, is that we recognize that it is this Legislature itself which has the constitutional mandate and responsibilities to be able to produce restrictions on the right to practise in certain professions. We delegate. This Legislature has taken a decision, through the creation of special acts and statutes, to delegate some of those responsibilities to professional organizations, colleges and registrars such as the college of nurses and the College of Physicians and the engineering professionals and other bodies. It is this Legislature that has the ability to regulate those professions, but it is this Legislature which created various acts to be able to delegate that out to professional bodies.

We're working on a number of different initiatives, right now, to support those colleges, to look at their licensing practices to see if they could be streamlined.

One example, which I think is just phenomenal, which really I want to yell from the rooftops is our work with the registrar for the college for nurses. Lynn Power, the Executive Director of the college has been to India with our teams to recruit, to look at recruitment of Indian nurses. Lynn Power, the Executive Director of the college of nurses, the registrar there, has worked directly with us so that she can see with her own eyes and report back to her board as to what she sees as potential there to

streamline and expedite the licensing of Indian-trained, foreign-trained nurses from India into the Newfoundland and Labrador health care system.

These are the kinds of things that really give me great hope that we will see more and more recognition of foreign credentials that is of highest standard in quality providing health care in our province with no risk to safety whatsoever.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

4.1.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive.

MHA Wall.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Minister, 4.1.01, Salaries, I'll go back to Salaries again. What accounts for the \$277,600 variance more from last year and the \$2.4 million increase for '23-'24?

G. BYRNE: Thank you very much, Chair, for the question.

To my colleague, the additional costs are mainly related to the new collective agreement and additional costs for the following positions that were created as a part of budget '22-'23. There was a senior manager of immigration policy and foreign credential recognition just adding to the narrative that I just supplied. There was a manager of in-country operations. For example, our operations in Warsaw, Poland. One of the principal occupants or the presence that we had in Warsaw, Poland, was our manager of in-country operations, a phenomenal employee who has created a reputation for himself which, within the Ukrainian community itself, is I think destined for sainthood. There are eight immigration development program officers, there are two senior program and policy research analysts and there's a department program coordinator. Those are the new positions that were created.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Under Transportation and Communications, a variance of \$298,400 and, of course, the \$909,000 increase for '23-'24.

G. BYRNE: Chair, thank you very much for the question.

These are increases related to travel costs. I did not head to India or Poland. I'd love to one day but it won't be any time soon. These were travel costs related to India and Poland for the Ukrainian Family Support Desk in Warsaw and for our Indian recruitment of nurses. We had a small team but a mighty team there for a period of time and the results were phenomenal.

J. WALL: Thank you, Minister.

Under Purchased Services, can you please explain what's included in the increase for this line item in the budget?

G. BYRNE: So the Purchased Services, these were increases related to the costs associated with the airlifts from the Ukraine, the \$733,000 was the airlifts from Ukraine and there was increased funding allocated to support expanding international immigration activities of in-country operations in both India and Poland.

J. WALL: Thank you.

Under Grants and Subsidies, what's included in these new Grants and Subsidies for that amount of \$17 million?

G. BYRNE: There was a significant increase in this particular field. This is the new funding which was announced within the budget for the funding of newcomers' settlement services. It's how we tackle our retention issue. We want to make sure that our newcomers are provided with the resources and supports. So this is related to those activities.

J. WALL: Okay. Thank you, Minister.

4.1.02, again the increase would go to the collective agreements of \$148,700.

Nothing further, Chair.

Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you, MHA Wall

MHA Dinn, anything further with 4.1.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive?

J. DINN: Just a few more, Chair, thank you.

What was the total amount allocated for the Multiculturalism Grant Program?

G. BYRNE: I'll defer to you, Assistant Deputy Minister Norman, to be able to reply to that. I have an idea in my mind but I want to make sure you have the right idea.

K. NORMAN: Certainly, the amount allocated in 2022-23 was \$40,000. However, as a result of a significant increase in demand, we actually were able to identify additional provincial funding of \$81,000. So the overall amount spent on multiculturalism grants last year was \$121,000, which represented support for 75 different community organizations and 85 different events.

J. DINN: Thank you.

Do you plan to continue the freeze on provincial immigration fees and for how long?

G. BYRNE: That is the current budget decision.

J. DINN: Okay, thank you.

Will there be any increase in funding for the Association for New Canadians?

G. BYRNE: I'm sorry, Mr. Chair, would the question be able to be repeated?

J. DINN: Sure thing.

Will there be any increase in the funding for the Association for New Canadians?

G. BYRNE: Undoubtedly, and I'm certain there will be additional funds supplied to the Association for New Canadians in support of our overall efforts towards newcomers.

One of the things – and I would always encourage the hon. Member to support me on this – is that we would like to have the federal government supply the Association for New Canadians with additional resources as a federally designated contracted resettlement agency, one of 50 across the entire country.

I have evidence; I've supplied this evidence that the Association for New Canadians is underfunded by the federal government. We have stepped in as a provincial government and as a people in our province to support the ANC. We'd like them to do that but we also recognize that the ANC will undoubtedly need additional resources for the Ukrainian initiative and other initiatives such as the asylum seekers.

As you may be aware, colleagues, Ottawa has directed asylum seekers from what is infamously known as Roxham Road to Newfoundland and Labrador. They are very welcomed here and they will be treated with respect and dignity and we will supply them with supports as they see fit. The federal government does not directly support asylum seekers. They claim or deem that to be a provincial issue. So while the federal government transported asylum seekers from Roxham Road to Newfoundland and Labrador, same as they have to other provinces, they have basically said that they will provide them with a temporary, short-term accommodation capacity or availability. They will provide them with some language supports and some other smaller things, but, generally speaking, asylum seekers are the responsibility of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador and we will rise to the challenge and make sure that they are supported.

J. DINN: That's it.

Thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you.

If the Committee is ready for the question, shall 4.1.01 to 4.1.02 inclusive carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, subheads 4.1.01 through 4.1.02 carried.

CLERK: The total.

CHAIR: Shall the total carry?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills, total heads, carried.

CHAIR: Shall I report the Estimates of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills carried?

All those in favour, 'aye.'

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Aye.

CHAIR: All those against, 'nay.'

Carried.

On motion, Estimates of the Department of Immigration, Population Growth and Skills carried without amendment.

CHAIR: Before we end this evening, I'd like to offer MHA Wall some closing remarks.

J. WALL: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, Minister, for all of this information this evening and, of course, to your staff. You're only as good as those around you, so on behalf of the Official Opposition I would like to thank the staff as well for preparing this this evening. It is appreciated and I'm sure we'll have much to ask in the future, but thank you for the information provided here this evening.

CHAIR: MHA Dinn.

J. DINN: Thank you as well. I will join my colleague in that for the work you do. It's not easy, when it comes to immigration to bring people in, make them feel welcome in our province, no matter how good our province is. There are a lot of moving parts. So thank you for being here, for the information and the work you do.

CHAIR: Minister, on behalf of yourself, your department and your staff.

G. BYRNE: Thank you, Chair.

The Premier has assembled for my benefit, but more importantly for the benefit of the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, what I call my dream team, which is my Executive. I have been involved in public life for 28 years. I can say this, I have friends who have served as deputy ministers, I have acquaintances who've served as deputy ministers, but I am blessed by the best deputy minister that I have ever worked with in my career is Karen Stone. I can say that unequivocally and the Executive that she has helped assemble around her, it is the dream team.

If I can say this, colleagues, before I leave, you can provide a real leadership role in your constituencies on Ukrainian supports and resettlements. There are Ukrainians who want to come to your districts, who

want to live in your communities. I want to say thank you for the efforts that you have already made to facilitate the welcome, to match employers with potential Ukrainians. It's been phenomenal. I will come to your caucus at any point in time to help you, to give instructions as to my experiences, our experiences as to what it does, how to facilitate in your districts, in your constituencies, the bond, the partnership between the employer and the Ukrainian. Because it's not difficult, it's not that complex, but there are things that need to be done in order for it to be successful.

One is your work with your employer community. You need to identify employers who are prepared to say and say out loud what wage they would provide to a Ukrainian, because you always have to protect the interest of the Ukrainian. You need to identify employers which will identify what wage rate they would be prepared to offer. That doesn't necessarily need to be public, but they need to know this, they need to process this in their own minds. They need to be able to supply employment on a full-time, year-round basis.

It's one thing to be able to offer a seasonal job to a Ukrainian, which is appreciated and some Ukrainians will want, but, as we know, in order to get permanent residency under the Canadian law, under Canadian policies, full-time, year-round employment is required, in order to meet the application requirements for permanent residency. That is really important.

So identify employers who are prepared to pay a fair wage rate on a year-round, full-time basis. Those employers can identify what skills they are looking for. We can help you match those skills, that job offer, galvanize the job offer; we can help you find a job seeker. We can help recruit a Ukrainian to your community.

One of the things that I would say is that it's really helpful for the employer, not necessarily to supply housing but to assist

in the housing question, in answering the housing question. If you were to go to Warsaw tomorrow and prospectively look for a job, you'd want some help in the housing question. Well, it's no different when it comes to the Ukrainians.

So if somebody is going to go to Greenspond or Eastport or to Port au Choix or to Corner Brook or wherever, an employer, if they were to assist in answering the housing question, that is very, very helpful in recruitment of the Ukrainian worker.

That is the magic formula. That's it in a nutshell. Find employers who have missing skill sets, who are prepared to hire Ukrainians; make sure that they're prepared to pay a fair wage rate; make sure that they are prepared to offer full-time, year-round employment; make sure that they identify the skill sets they need; encourage them to look at the housing question and support their prospective employee with answers to the housing question. We will then, once you identify the skills, once the employer identifies the skill sets they're looking for, we will assist you, we will assist them in the recruitment of an able-bodied Ukrainian to come work for them. We'll help facilitate that match.

This transcends all political environments. This is about you, your constituency, your districts, the future of your community, but, most importantly, it's about the future of Newfoundland and Labrador. I will come to your caucus to spell that out anytime, to make that perfectly clear as to what is the magic formula to make this successful. Because it is not magic, it is just roll up your sleeves, hard work, dig down, work your community, work your employers and you will have an able-bodied community of Ukrainians living amongst you very quickly as your neighbours.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Just before we adjourn, I just want to remind the Committee that our next meeting is only a hop, skip and two jumps away, tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. to consider the Estimates of the Department of Industry, Energy and Technology.

I'd certainly like to thank the minister and his able staff and to the Committee and to our friends down in the Broadcast Centre for sticking by us tonight and thank you, Kim.

With that, I'll ask for a mover for adjournment.

J. HAGGIE: So moved.

CHAIR: MHA John Haggie.

This meeting is adjourned.

On motion, the Committee adjourned.