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Oral Question 117-18(3) Immigration Recruitment

Thank you for your questions on February 15, 2018 regarding Immigration Recruitment. During our exchange, I committed to talk to the Department of Industry, Tourism and Investment (ITI) to see whether the fees required from foreigners to invest in the Northwest Territories (NWT) is a hindrance in attracting immigrants to the NWT.

I offer the following information:

The minimum required eligible investment (REI) of \$300,000 CDN equity into starting, buying or investing in a business, only applies when an applicant wishes to propose a business concept within the corporate boundaries of Yellowknife. This REI is set primarily to ensure that the business concepts accepted under the Business Stream of the Northwest Territories Nominee Program (NTNP) have the ability to be sustainable in the NWT over the long term and are providing significant economic benefits to the region in which they are proposed.

When a prospective applicant to the Business Stream of the NTNP proposes a business concept outside of the corporate boundaries of Yellowknife, the minimum REI is \$150,000 CDN equity. The Business Stream of the NTNP offers one of the lowest REI thresholds for its regional centres across Canada's provincial nominee programs. Due to the low REI, there has been a notable increase in interest in the regions. Currently, we are awaiting the arrival of three applicants in Hay River, and have received interview requests in both Inuvik and Fort Smith.

To date, the Business Stream of the NTNP has conducted 57 interviews across the NWT, accepted 14 individuals into our program, with an additional ten applications being processed. Five applicants have arrived in the NWT which equates to a total of 15 new NWT residents since the applicants brought family with them. These five applicants are all operating their businesses and have invested approximately \$1.6 million into starting their businesses. These statistics highlight the success of the NTNP Business Stream to date.

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Further, it is important to remember that it is difficult to compare Nominee Programs across the country as most programs operate an Expression of Interest (EOI) model which differs from having set criteria like in the NWT. The EOI model means that eligible candidates complete a series of questions online. The candidate's profile is then placed in a pool with other eligible candidates and a score is assigned based on the answers provided. The candidates are ranked on criteria such as how much they will invest into the businesses, what level of English they have, how many years of experience operating a business they have, etc. The highest-scoring candidates are then invited to submit an application to the program. Although one province may state that they require a minimum of \$200,000 investment, the EOI model usually means that they only accept the highest ranking individuals who will be making significantly higher investments into their programs.

The NWT is actively exploring the EOI model as many candidates applying to immigrate to Canada are familiar with this model. However to date, applicants have been happy with the NTNP Business Stream model due to our lower language and investment requirements.

Thank you for your interest in this very important initiative. I trust this information addresses your questions.



Wally Schumann
Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

- c. Honourable Robert C. McLeod
Minister
Finance

- Mr. Tim Mercer
Clerk of the Legislative Assembly

- Mr. Tom Jensen
Deputy Minister
Industry, Tourism and Investment

- Mr. David Hastings
Legislative Coordinator