



PEI Association for Newcomers to Canada



Bringing People and Communities Together

**2004 - 2005
Annual Report**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Erick Silva

The 2004-2005 fiscal year has been very active for the Prince Edward Island Association for Newcomers (PEIANC). On behalf of the Board, I would like to recognize the work done, throughout the year, by the staff members of the Association. Thank you to Kevin Arsenault, Executive Director, and Aghdas Missaghian, Michelle Jay, Rocio MacCallum, Cathy Ronahan, and our new Office Manager, Pam Garland. Welcome back to Erica Stanley, and a fond farewell and thank you to Lorraine Beck for her many years of service.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kevin J. Arsenault

It has been another very productive year for the PEI ANC, with new programs, new projects and some changes in staffing. Core programs continue to be our Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) and Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) service contracts. These agreements enable us to provide a range of services to immigrants and refugees coming to PEI. In addition to our CIC and HRSDC immigrant service contracts, the past year witnessed the beginning of a new contract relationship with the Provincial government. With more and more economic class immigrants coming to PEI through the Provincial Nominee Program, the PEI ANC is now providing settlement services to these immigrants as well. Additional details on these Immigrant settlement service programs can be found in the separate staff reports contained in this annual report.

In addition to our core programs, during the past year we also received project funding from Canadian Heritage, and have been involved in a number of other initiatives over and above the provisions in our service contracts. Information on these projects is also provided later in this report.

In my report, I want to touch on several areas of work which do not fall directly under the scope of particular grants, agreements or contracts. As well, I want to give some sense of the direction that the PEI ANC will be taking in the coming year.

Metropolis Atlantic Centre of Excellence:

During the past several years, I represented PEI on a regional sub-committee, along with PEI ANC Board Member Graham Pike, which has been working to establish an Atlantic Metropolis Centre. This initiative sought to establish a unique research collaboration between federal and provincial government, Atlantic Canadian Universities, and not-for-profit organizations working with issues of immigration, settlement, or some aspect of population dynamics and demographics.

The Atlantic Metropolis Centre will facilitate important research in the area of immigrant, refugee and diversity population issues. My involvement, along with that of other NGO representatives from Atlantic Canada, has ensured that members of Settlement Agencies such as the ANC will play a key role in the governance structures of the Metropolis Centre, as well as in actual research. The key focus for research expressed by all participants on PEI is how to increase population diversity, appreciation of diversity, and retention of immigrants and refugees of diverse cultural backgrounds on PEI.

A formal proposal for funding was submitted to government, and a number of funding partners have indicated support.

Atlantic Regional Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARISA):



The ANC is a member of ARAISA, which, as the name suggests, is a regional Association of thirteen Immigrant Serving Agencies in Atlantic Canada. Each year ARAISA hosts a Settlement Conference which affords an opportunity to the management and staff of Service Provider Organizations (SPO's) to share information and network on matters relating to the work of immigrant and refugee settlement in Atlantic Canada. The Atlantic settlement conference for 2003-04 was held last March in Fredericton, N.B. Three ANC staff attended: Kevin Arsenault; Aggie Missaghian; and Erica Carragher.. The Conference was an excellent chance to

The PEI ANC has been engaging in strategic planning weekends for the past few years. These weekend sessions are designed to chart a clearer course for the future direction and work of the ANC. During the past year, board and staff came together on the weekend of March 7-8, 2003 at UPEI. With the help of a \$500.00 community organization capacity building grant from the Community Foundation of PEI, the ANC was able to contract Paula Gallant to facilitate our planning weekend.

A couple of key outcomes emerged from this year's weekend: PEI must do a better job of attracting and keeping immigrant families to PEI; and more provincial government resources are needed for settlement services if this is to happen. Of course there was much discussion on particular needs, service gaps and required programs. Seeking support from the provincial government was identified as the primary objective for the year.

The provincial government has become involved in attracting immigrants through a new federal-provincial agreement on immigration signed with in the Spring of 2001. The Provincial Nominee Program allows the province to sponsor up to 200 immigrants per year. With family members, this represents hundreds of additional immigrants to PEI per year. To date, additional resources to facilitate and

network, share best practices and develop strategies to improve settlement services to immigrants.

Since last Fall, I have also participated in several Conference call meetings of the Board of ARAISA, and attended a day-long ARAISA meeting in Halifax to development a protocol to govern the Settlement Sector's involvement and relationship, March 5 & 6, 2003.

This year, the Atlantic Settlement Conference will be held on PEI

Annual Strategic Planning Weekend:

improve settlement and integration services for these highly skilled immigrants has not been forthcoming. With this in mind, considerable work has been done during the past year to establish a good rapport and working relationship with staff within various departments of the provincial government. More recently, the PEI ANC has written to Premier Binns requesting that his government negotiate a settlement service contract with the PEI ANC.

Community Outreach, Research and Networking:

The PEI ANC also engages in community outreach and networking. Board members and staff have found many opportunities to participate and collaborate in community processes and events during the past year, some of which are mentioned by other staff members in their reports. As Executive Director, I have attended a range of meetings, events, and planning sessions during the past year, including:

- Participation in the Metropolis Conference on attracting Immigrants to Atlantic Canada held in Halifax, November 18-19, 2004;
- 20th Anniversary celebrations for the Cooper Institute;
- Holland College Christmas celebrations for LINC students;
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- Attended graduation ceremony for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) students at Holland College;
- Attended Citizenship ceremonies;

Christmas Open House:

On December 17, 2003, we held another very successful Open House event at the ANC office. Roughly 100 people turned out for food and socializing. Premier Binns and Hon. Shawn Murphy were among those who attended. We look forward to similarly successful gathering this year.

What's Ahead for the PEI ANC?

The coming year will be an exciting one for the Association for Newcomers. It is our intention to once again submit an application to Canadian Heritage to repeat the successful project, *The World Among Us.* We are especially looking forward to establishing a new working collaboration between federal, provincial and community organizations through the *Building Strategic Partnerships Phase II* project.

Each year the Settlement Agencies in Atlantic Canada come together for an Atlantic Region Settlement Conference. . Next year (2005) it is PEI's turn to host this event.

I must say that I am very fortunate to work with such a talented staff. ANC staff are the only trained and experienced settlement workers on the Island. A heartfelt thank you to Michelle, Erica, Aggie, Barb and Lorraine for your hard work, good cheer and dedication to immigrants and refugees coming to PEI. Thanks also to Marg Younker, our part-time bookkeeper who works each Tuesday in the office.

Finally, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our funders, especially the local management and staff with whom we work: Asifa Rahman, Mohammed Cherif, and John Barrett at CIC; Mary Gillis and Paul Hines at HRDC; Claire Arsenault and Donald Arsenault at Canadian Heritage; and Elaine Noonan at the PEI government Population Secretariat.

My gratitude to all ANC volunteers, including those involved in the Host Program, those who provided newcomers with computer training or language tutoring, those who assisted with the ISL summer program, as well as members of our Board of Directors.

I would like to express a special note of appreciation to Susan Carruthers, who has served as the President of the PEI ANC for the past two years. Susan is giving up a position on the Board as she pursues new challenges. Susan has done an excellent job guiding the PEI ANC through a difficult period of transition and growth. All the best!

As well, during the past year Beti Andric left the PEI ANC to work on a home-based computer business. Beti's contribution to the ANC and her many talents can not be overstated. Beti has graciously agreed to volunteer her time to maintain our web site and is doing a spectacular job.

The PEI ANC has once again accepted two Canada World Youth (CWY) participants under the terms of the Charlottetown/Russia Netcorps Program 2004/05. CWY placements will begin at the PEI ANC in January, 2005.

PROGRAM REPORTS

OFFICE ADMINISTRATION

Pam Garland

In previous years, the PEI ANC office administration and reception needs were met first by a position required to also provide program support, then by two successive twelve (12) week term positions, established with grant funding from the PEI government through Employment Development Grants. The bookkeeping requirements were met by a part time position. Increased demands on the program coordinators, as well as increased complexity in program budgets, magnified the need to create a position to support all program staff and the Board of Directors,



while providing consistent, day-to-day bookkeeping.

This position is very diverse as there is a requirement to be involved in all programs offered by PEI ANC, as well to provide support for executive decisions and strategic planning for the Director and Board. In addition, the complexity of budgets and program expense reporting requires a strong knowledge of accounting rules. Previous positions I have held in this field have followed a more predictable path on a daily basis, therefore, I appreciate the challenges offered by my position at PEI ANC, and look forward to meeting those challenges over the coming year.

SETTLEMENT PROGRAM

Aghdas Missaghian

RAP and ISAP

The settlement program comprises two separate programs funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada. The Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) and the Immigrant Settlement Adaptation Program (ISAP). Each program has separate but similar objectives.

Both address the settlement concerns of immigrants, with RAP focusing on initial needs, within the first four to six weeks of arrival in Canada, and ISAP focusing on longer term integration concerns. I am responsible for both the RAP and ISAP program at the PEI ANC.

Information sessions are provided to Most of our clients have survived tragedies in their home countries and arrive in Canada feeling emotionally drained and vulnerable. They have limited knowledge of life in Canada, often don't speak English, and are reluctant to trust anyone. I feel a great deal of compassion and respect for our clients, and will spend as much time as necessary to reassure them that they are safe and can trust the help we are offering. Once their specific needs are assessed, I will make referrals and schedule appointments with Mental Health and medical professionals to look after immediate health concerns. I continually work with Mental

newcomers under both the RAP and ISAP programs. Under the RAP program, an orientation presentation and handout has been prepared, and is available in five languages; English, French, Russian, Croatian and Spanish. This orientation provides basic information about life in Canada, including Canadian laws, schooling for children, grocery shopping and housing, and is presented to the newcomer within the first weeks of his/her arrival. In the immediate future under the ISAP program, an information session will address the issues of car seat and bicycle safety.

In addition to greeting clients at the airport upon arrival, booking hotel rooms, and assisting in locating housing and purchasing household items, I assist with necessary paperwork for Social Insurance Numbers, Child Tax Benefit and Provincial Health Cards.

Interpreters play a large role in effectively communicating with newcomers, and over the past year I have trained four (4) new interpreters in different languages.

We received sixty five (65) Government Assisted Refugees since last Fall, from a variety of countries including; Afghanistan, Bosnia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Somalia and Colombia. When we look at the number of arrivals based on the calendar year (January 1, 2004 - December 31, 2004) we see that we received 60 Government Sponsored Refugees. Eleven (11) of the sixty five (65) newcomers have since left the province.

Health providers and others to explore ways to enhance Mental Health supports for newcomers in need.

This was my 5th year representing the PEI ANC on the victim Services Advisory Committee. I also advocate on behalf of clients with Social Services and other service providers, and have been involved with partnership activities with Legal Aid.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE SERVICE

Michelle Jay and Catherine Ronahan



The past year has been challenging and rewarding, for the ANC and the Employment Service in particular. New challenges involve an increased demand from Provincial Nominee clients, who experience different realities than our mostly-refugee newcomers. As well, these new immigrants have necessitated an ongoing negotiation with the province as to services that we can and will provide, with financial support. For all of the individual programs of the Association, new types of clients needs mean an adjustment in service delivery.

The EAS service has been very fortunate to be able to provide increased assistance, with the addition of *Catherine Ronahan* for 3.5 days/ week. She has been a marked asset, bringing previous experience, professional work ethic, and real commitment to helping newcomers with employment needs. As the sole employment counsellor previously, I am especially appreciative of the additional assistance.

We are pleased to be working on a *new employment resource*, with *Beti Andric*. Similar to the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) orientation tool, we are creating employment-specific information. It will be available to newcomers as a slideshow using the data projector, in hard copy, and on-line via the ANC website. To date, the work that *Beti* has completed is outstanding, and we anticipate this being a very useful EAS tool.

The difficulties associated with *recognition of foreign credentials and prior learning* continue to be a major issue for new immigrants. There is some movement to address related concerns, and we have been meeting monthly as a provincial committee since June. Progress has been made, but our interests are divergent. We are able to provide some assistance in paying for translation of documents and having diplomas assessed, which is essential for newcomers in the process of credential recognition. I am hopeful that attending the Canadian Association for Prior Learning (CAPLA) conference in November, in Toronto, will provide increased options for a small organization such as ours.

As well, *Catherine* and myself are both doing some work on the *Atlantic Security and Immigration* project. Together with a top-notch Local Reference Group, we organized a Town Hall in 2003, conducted a Focus Group, and are preparing for surveys and personal interviews this autumn.

- conducting *Group Job Search Session*, Pre-Literate Summer Employment;
- attending *PEI Career Development Association* employment conference;
- participating in *Effective Career Counselling*

The EAS service has maintained an active caseload of more than 30 clients for the past year, and has been able to meet the employment targets established by the HRDC contract without much difficulty - the real challenge, as always, lies in securing meaningful work with livable wages. Below are statistics representing the number of employment and schooling positions initiated by newcomer clients from **September 1, 2003 - August 31, 2004:**

Full-Time Positions	22
Permanent	10
Seasonal/Contract	12
 Part-Time Positions	 52
Permanent	22
Seasonal/Contract	30
 School / Training Programs	 27

A note about the unusually high number of part-time positions: nearly 20 of those were picking strawberries, for 4 - 7 weeks. There were many newcomers who were able to communicate only very basically, and were willing to labour during the summer months, while the LINC program was closed, before returning in the Fall to improve their language skills. *Catherine* made contact with the strawberry growers, negotiated between them and the clients, oriented the workers, arranged transportation and provided on-going liaison for the harvest season.

Some features of the Employment Service throughout the year include:

- attending *Recognizing Learning in a Knowledge Economy* - National CAPLA Conference;
- establishing *ACSW Inge Blackett Bursary for Refugee Women*;
- contributing interviews to the publication *Employment Journey*;
- participating in *MISA Qualification Recognition Study*;
- acting as Facilitator, *Atlantic Security and Immigration Project*;
-
- workshop with *Norm Amundson*;
- HRSDC Consultation, *Revised Skills Development Applications and Process*;
- Catherine* attending *Contact 4* client-tracking software training.



IMMIGRANT STUDENT LIAISON PROGRAM

Rocio McCallum

The Immigrant Student Liaison Program has successfully completed the 2004-2005 school year and is beginning another as schools seek to continue in this partnership of providing additional support to immigrant students.

The Provincial Government of Prince Edward Island has made this possible through funding not only for the completion of the past school year but with additional funding that will allow the expansion of the ISL Program on the 2005-2006 school year to a full time position for the Program Coordinator. This will increase the number of schools which presently maintain a regular on-site schedule from four (4) to six (6).

The ISL Program began in April of 2002 with a partnership that included the four Charlottetown Schools with the highest concentration of immigrant students: Prince Street Elementary School, St. Jean Elementary School, Birchwood Intermediate School and Colonel Gray High School. Now it is looking to expand to Spring Park Elementary School and Queen Charlotte Intermediate School and I have started this partnership by sending letters of introduction to Principals of both schools. There has also been a major change in the ISL Program in relation to the position of ISL Coordinator. As of August 22nd, I succeeded Lorraine Beck as the ISL Program Coordinator and I am now going through the process of learning and networking with the school's contacts as I am new on the position and there have also been many changes in the administration of the majority of schools. The four main objectives of the program continue to be:

1. To assist immigrant and refugee students in adapting to their new school environment;
2. To facilitate and encourage greater involvement of newcomer families in

their children's education;

3. To assist school staff in meeting the special needs of immigrant 1st students within the school system;
4. To refer immigrant students and their families to appropriate community services.

As of June 22nd, 2005, the ISL Program was serving 58 newcomer students; 24 Elementary School students, 12 Intermediate School students and 22 Senior High School students. This number does not reflect the total number of high school students participating in the International Friendship Group at Colonel Gray. The total number of student clients surpasses the numbers of previous years and it is expected to continue growing as it is forecasted with the Provincial Nominee Program.

Additional support was given to newcomer students in other schools based on individual requests for service. Queen Charlotte Intermediate and Spring Park Elementary have both accessed the services of the ISL program in facilitating the integration of newcomer students. It is our aim to keep offering our ISL services to other schools which may request them on an ad hoc basis.

The ISL program continued with the coordination and facilitation of the International Friendship Group at Colonel Gray High School for the 2004-05 school year.

The International Friendship Group was formed by approximately 40-45 students from a diversity of countries all over the world, this group included landed immigrants and exchange students. There was regular attendance throughout the school year at the monthly meetings which included refreshments, icebreaker activities, and topics of interest to students. The group also celebrated the 1st Culturama Gray Days Activity, a two day event that involved music, dancing, a fashion show and international food and jewelry sale. There was a really good response from administration, teachers, and student body



This year the ISL program was invited to do presentations in two schools, one was at Eastern Kings Consolidated (Souris) regarding life in a refugee camp and the other was at The ISL coordinator met regularly throughout the school year with guidance counselors, principals, and vice principals, to address individual needs of newcomer students, give recommendations regarding school and academic placements at the request of administration and to provide support to teachers requiring intervention for students on cultural and academic issues. This often involved visiting families of newcomer students to explain particular challenges their children are having and to encourage parents to become more involved through attendance at parent-teacher interviews, etc.

Other services provided by the ISL program included regular cross-cultural support counselling to individuals particularly at the junior and senior high level. This was done mostly through consultation and referrals by guidance counsellors. Many students struggled with feelings of isolation and the challenges of fitting in and forming new friendships.

The greatest challenge which continues to present itself to newcomer students in the 4 designated schools of the ISL program is the lack of adequate ESL instruction. The 60 hours provided through the Dept. of Education continues to be grossly inadequate and the PEIANC continues to lobby for an increase.

This year the ISL Summer Program did not offer a Summer Program for newcomer students due to cuts in our last year's funding. Many of the students were referred to other community services in order to access services that would keep them active for the summer.

I look forward to another year of serving newcomer students and families through this very fulfilling and rewarding program.

LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS

Colonel Gray on the topic of immigration. Both presentations included student speakers who shared their experiences.

The PEI ANC continues as the only service provider of Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessments (CLBA) for new immigrants to PEI for placement in the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program delivered by Holland College. This contract is funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada. For the time period from September '04 - September '05, the number of CLBA's administered through PEI ANC was ????. Of this number, 27 were Government Assisted Refugees, 3 were Family Sponsored, and 1 Independent.

HOST PROGRAM

Erica Carragher

The Host Program has expanded and continues to be a vital component of our clients' successful integration into the local community. This program offered by the PEI ANC provides our clients the opportunity to be matched with a volunteer in the community for friendship and support. The 'Host Volunteer' often becomes the closest thing to family for our newcomer clients who have no friends or relatives nearby who they can turn to for help.

Every match proves to be as unique as the people who comprise them. Often, a true friendship grows from what begins as a somewhat contrived, or externally organized relationship. When this happens, it is very rewarding for everyone involved. It is our belief at the PEI ANC that the Host Program is instrumental in the decision of some clients whether to stay, or move to another province.

Such was the experience of one newcomer client who came with her husband and daughter a year ago from Russia. When they arrived to PEI, she wanted to move as soon as possible to Toronto, because she was used to living in a large city. However, when she had the good fortune of making friends with two wonderful women through



the Host Program, she began to feel at home in Charlottetown. Thanks to the close friendships they have formed, the client and her husband have decided to settle here with their family.

From September, 2004 until May, 2005, Rocio McCallum held the position of Host Program Coordinator, taking over for Erica Carragher's maternity leave. In May, 2005, Erica returned from leave and resumed her position as Host Program Coordinator. Rocio is currently the ISL Coordinator.

1. Volunteers and Matches

This year, 34 new volunteers have been recruited as Host Volunteers, or as tutors for newcomers. Some volunteers are very

The PEI ANC's Host Program is currently working with 30 active volunteers. Every newcomer family has at least one volunteer matched to them, although it is very difficult for one person to meet the diverse needs of each family member. It can be overwhelming and unpleasant for a volunteer to be alone with a whole family. For this reason, more volunteers are needed so that every client can have an appropriate match. Only four out of our 30 active volunteers are men, therefore our male clients are lacking friendship and support from other men. There is also a lack of 'volunteer families' to be matched to newcomer families. These and other gaps need to be filled in order to give all newcomer clients a fair chance to integrate into the local community.

2. Host Program Events

Five formal 'Host Events' were held this year, as well as one less formal event for children.

The Fall 2004 event was a trip to Robinson's Farm, and to Gateway Village, where everyone got to dress up as Anne of Green Gables. The Winter 2005 event was a bowling and bingo extravaganza, with 100 participants, which was the highest attendance ever at a Host Program social event. Following the Winter event was the Volunteer Appreciation Night, which was a

dependable and dedicated, while others are more transient and do not fulfill the six month to one year recommended time commitment. However, most matches are successful in the sense that both parties benefit from the relationship and enjoy each other's friendship. Most matches are self-sufficient and the Host Coordinator asks for an update every two months if there is no correspondence. Other matches require interventions along the way and sometimes do not work out. This is to be expected, although it is unfortunate when a client is left feeling abandoned. Measures are being taken to prevent this from happening, such as a trial period for new volunteers, or assigning volunteers as tutors rather than 'Host Volunteers' if they are worried about the commitment.

great success in April, 2005.

The Spring Social Event was substituted by the World Refugee Day Celebration at the Confederation Centre on June 20th. It was attended by over three hundred guests, and included live entertainment and speakers. The most recent event was the Summer Social, which was held at Greenwich National Park, and included a tour of the interpretive centre and some time at the beach.

There were also some semi-structured weekly activities during the summer months, including separate conversation groups for men, women, and children. The children's groups were the most popular. Many thanks to those who volunteered to facilitate the small groups.

3. Promotion

Over the course of the year, the Host Program has been promoted on the radio, several times in the newspaper, and in the Buzz entertainment guide. A booth has also been set up at community events, such as the World Refugee Day, (which was organized through the Host Program), and at the UPEI Community Connector Fair in September 2005.

5. Administration



All volunteers have fulfilled the requirement of providing three character references, and have submitted an official police check before having contact with newcomer clients.

Hard files and computer files with client and volunteer information are managed and kept secure by the Host Program Coordinator. They are continually updated to reflect the current contact information and involvement status of every volunteer and client involved.

The quarterly newsletter of the Host Program, the 'Host Post' has been published and sent out on schedule, with relevant information and news of interest to both newcomers and volunteers. The office manager, Pam Garland, has compiled an updated and centralized version of the mailing list, which has greatly facilitated the mail-out.

Inter-Cultural Support for Women, Phase II:

The BSP Phase I project which the PEI ANC undertook back in 2001 culminated in a very successful conference at the Delta Hotel, with a post-conference challenge for the PEI ANC to find concrete ways to implement new structures, programs, and policies to address the identified problems and gaps in immigrant service. During the past year, a BSP Phase II project funded by Canadian Heritage built on the work of the phase I project, with great success.

Canada World Youth Placements

UPEI Nursing Preceptorship

Fostering Multicultural Communities on PEI

Public Information Sessions were held in the following municipalities: O'Leary, Summerside, Charlottetown, Montague and Souris. Although they were open to the public, they targeted municipal and town councils. These sessions are funded by the Government of Canada through the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Inter-Cultural Support for Women project was a great success, which led to ICSW Phase II. Objectives of Phase I of this project were:

- To train eight (8) women on the issues of violence against women
- To engage a committee of 6-7 women to develop training resources
- To inform 50-60 attendees about project at Community Workshop
- To increase knowledge of, and communication between, the PEI ANC and women's equality-seeking organizations on PEI
- To have eight trained inter-cultural support workers available in the community to assist women with violence issues

An application was submitted to the Canadian Women's Foundation, and the ANC received some additional funding to develop further the training modules and have them reproduced and distributed to organizations working in support of women who are victims of violence. This resource will be posted on our website in coming weeks.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

Building Strategic Partnerships Phase II:

These 2 hour evening sessions will be held from June 20th to June 30th 2005 and they are intended for an average group of 50 individuals from each of the five Island communities. These information sessions have been planned as an opportunity for Municipalities which feel they could benefit from **Immigration** as an avenue to rural repopulation and community development and stabilization.

FINANCIAL AUDIT

Our financial audit was completed by Wendy Ripley, chartered accountant, Charlottetown, who has recently joined the firm of MRSB. Copies are available at our office, 179 Queen Street, or can be downloaded from our website at www.pei.anc.com.



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