



**Moving In, Moving Out**  
**New Brunswick's**  
**Immigration and Migration Story**



# Next NB/Avenir N-B

**It is time for New Brunswickers to talk to each other. Our province and our region face some challenges, which means both must confront some difficult questions. Just as our nation seeks to redefine its role in the world economically, militarily and diplomatically, so too must New Brunswick's citizens decide for themselves their place in Canada.**

**Next NB/Avenir N-B will do that through a series of discussion papers it will release between February 2004 and June 2005. These papers will be supported by public forums held throughout New Brunswick and will culminate with a conference in Saint John.**

**Next NB/Avenir N-B will be a bilingual project to reflect New Brunswick's nature and its distinction as the only officially bilingual province in Canada.**

***Next NB/Avenir N-B* is a unique opportunity to explore what New Brunswickers think about themselves, their province and its place in Canada and the world.**

*Please join us in the conversation.*

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## New Brunswick's

### Immigration and Migration Story

The hot pink posters were everywhere. There on the cinder block walls and on almost every glass door at the University of New Brunswick's Saint John campus were instructions on how to survive a Canadian winter. Dress in layers, buy a sturdy pair of boots and for goodness sake, don't leave home without mitts, scarves and that quintessentially Canadian piece of headgear – the wool toque. Forty years after it opened its doors to local students, UNBSJ now welcomes the world. Approximately one-third of its student body comes from outside Canada, the bulk of them from Asia and the Middle East.

The impact of international students can be clearly seen on this small campus of 3,000, located on a hill overlooking the Kennebecasis River in the city's north end. There's a group of Chinese students speaking Mandarin in the cafeteria, notices advertising the latest social event planned by the Muslim Association are tacked onto bulletin boards and English spoken in a myriad of accents echoes out of classrooms. Welcoming students from countries such as China, Pakistan and Russia has meant more than just overcoming a language divide. There has been a cultural divide to cross as well. For instance, in 2003 the Saint John city police force organized a friendly game of basketball between its officers and some international students, most of them from mainland China, to acquaint them with the concept of community policing, a foreign idea to students raised in a Communist state.

Members of the city's board of trade and the regional development agency Enterprise Saint John have also taken note of the students' arrival. Both believe the influx of educated young people from Asia, Africa and the Caribbean could hold the key to growth for New Brunswick's largest city. The challenge for Saint John will be to convince these students to stay.

Four hours to the north, the people of Bathurst are also contemplating their city's development. For the past 40 years Brunswick Mining and Smelting has dominated the local economy and today it remains one of the world's largest zinc producers. However the Brunswick Mines era is drawing to an end. Noranda Inc. estimates the deposit will soon be depleted and the mine is slated to close in 2008. Bathurst residents regard

that date as a deadline. They must transform their community from a one-industry town into a regional economic engine driven by a variety of businesses or risk Bathurst slipping into a steep decline. Just as the Nepisiguit River flows out through the Bay of Chaleur, so too does a generation flow out of this region.

The movement of people and the creation of wealth: these are the twin challenges that confront New Brunswick. Increasing the number of citizens and the economic opportunities available to them is essential if this province is to transform itself. To do that, it must steady its rhythms. Just as a pendulum regularly swings between two directions, so too have New Brunswick's regions swung between economic extremes. People will always move in and out of New Brunswick and businesses will continue to succeed and falter, but we must have enough of both to temper those fluctuations.

There are four routes that may lead people to settle in New Brunswick: they will come from other countries as immigrants, they will arrive from other parts of the country as migrants, they will be New Brunswickers returning home or they will be the ones who never left. A room with a view may attract tourists to New Brunswick but it will take greater economic opportunities to transform them into citizens.

## Who are we?

New Brunswick is a place of extremes. Its citizens either move away as part of the out-migration that has vexed politicians and parents for decades or they don't move at all, preferring to build their homes and raise their families close to where they grew up. According to the University of New Brunswick's social capital study, 43.2 per cent haven't moved in the last 15 years. This study, which polled 850 New Brunswickers between July and September 2003, found that the average person has lived in the same neighbourhood for 24 years.

However a second, equally strong tradition suggests that good neighbours aren't always enough to root people to New Brunswick. Out-migration. Going down the road. Heading out West. Whatever it's called, the end result is the same; a steady stream of New Brunswickers, hundreds of them under 30, leave home each year to find jobs. According to the 2001 Canadian census, New Brunswick experienced a net loss of 8,400 people

between 1996 and 2001. That is four times larger than the net loss between 1991 and 1996.

In fact, the last time the province experienced a net gain of people, Richard Hatfield was premier and *Rocky* was the number one film at the box office. After 30 years, the trend is not abating. Of the 41,000 people who left New Brunswick, 14,100 people headed for Ontario, while an additional 6,600 moved to Alberta and another 6,200 crossed the border into Quebec. Three-quarters of those migrants were anglophones. A significant number were also young. About 11 per cent (16,400 people) were between the ages of 15 and 29. Almost certainly, these people left in search of work.

All of this movement, coupled with a low birthrate, has left New Brunswick's overall population unchanged at three-quarters of a million people. That makes New Brunswick and Newfoundland and Labrador the only provinces in Canada to not experience growth at the end of the last century. If only New Brunswick faced a future of stagnant growth. But according to Statistics Canada projections, starting in 2006 New Brunswick will record more deaths than births, turning the province's natural increase into a decrease. By 2008 that shift will cause New Brunswick's population to sharply decline.

Immigration is oftentimes touted as a means to offset this loss. However, the province does not have a strong history of retaining new Canadians. In 2001, 18.4 per cent of Canadians were foreign-born; in New Brunswick it was just 3.1 per cent, the second lowest provincial percentage. Of the immigrants New Brunswick has welcomed, few arrived in the last decade. A paltry 0.6 per cent of the province's residents immigrated between 1991 and 2001; the national figure is 6.2 per cent. Again, New Brunswick is at the bottom of the provincial pack.

This lack of new faces is evident when you look around New Brunswick. In a country where 13.4 per cent of Canadians are visible minorities, New Brunswick has only 1.3 per cent. The largest group is African-Canadians with 3,845 people. They are followed by Chinese (1,530 people), South Asian (1,415 people) and Filipino (355 people). Only Newfoundland and Labrador and PEI have less. We must confront the reasons why more people haven't wanted to make New Brunswick their home.

- Do you know anyone who left New Brunswick in search of work? How many?
- How long have you lived in your neighbourhood?

- Do you know anyone who immigrated to New Brunswick in the last 10 years?
- Why doesn't New Brunswick have a culture of immigration?

## Where does it start?

By acknowledging that even New Brunswickers don't want to live in some parts of New Brunswick. We are a people on the move. Between 1996 and 2001, 63 of New Brunswick's 103 municipalities saw their populations shrink by at least 2 per cent. The greatest number left Saint John - 2,833 people move away, a drop of 3.9 per cent. The smallest decrease was in the little village of Port Elgin, located near the Confederation Bridge. It lost just nine people, enough to register a 2 per cent drop in a community of 436 people.



Only 16 municipalities increased their populations by 2 per cent or more. If we were to go on a tour of New Brunswick's hot population spots we wouldn't have to venture very far off of one significant path. Eleven of those 16 communities are on the new TransCanada Highway. We would start in Florenceville where the addition of 55 people meant a jump of 8 per cent to the community's population. From there we'd head south, to Perth-Andover (47 people) and Woodstock (106 people). Then we'd turn east and drive by Fredericton (1,053 people), Gagetown (22 people) and Cambridge Narrows (20 people). We'd finish our journey in the Moncton area where five communities – Salisbury, Moncton, Riverview, Dieppe and Shediac – have grown. The greatest increase was in Dieppe, which welcomed 2,454 new people, an incredible population jump of 19.6 per cent. The only other communities to see their populations increase were St. Andrews, St. George, Stanley, Blackville and Nigadoo.

There are three areas where the shrinking population is particularly acute.

#### *The Saint John region*

For generations it has been the industrial heart of New Brunswick and as the home of three corporations – J.D. Irving, Limited, Irving Oil Limited and Aliant – this region's citizens can be forgiven for thinking things were fine. But things are not fine. Four communities - Saint John, St. Martins, Hampton and Sussex – lost a total of 3,040 people between 1996 and 2001. Except for an increase in St. George and St. Andrews, Saint John and its surrounding communities are not keeping pace with Fredericton and Moncton.

#### *Madawaska*

Edmundston and its neighbours watched 1,062 people leave 10 of their communities. Eight of these communities hug the New Brunswick/Maine border, outlining the Madawaska panhandle from St-Francoise-de-Madawaska down past Edmundston to Grand Falls in Victoria County. Edmundston lost the most – 503 people. Madawaska's interior also lost people; 144 out of St-Quentin and another 65 out of St-Leonard.

#### *Restigouche, Bathurst and the Acadian Peninsula*

This region, which stretches from Campbellton, down through Bathurst, out to Lamèque and around by St.-Isidore faces the greatest challenge. Six communities in Restigouche County lost 1,605 people. Starker still are the numbers for the Acadian Peninsula. In Gloucester County, 15 of the county's 18

municipalities lost people, a total of 2,335. Only Tracadie-Sheila and Shippagan didn't experience a significant loss – the former lost 1 per cent of its population and the latter experienced no change. Nigadoo alone grew, by a mere 22 people. And let's not forget Dieppe's role in the Acadian Peninsula's story. In a province where the majority of francophones move within New Brunswick, it's easy to guess where an increasing number of Acadians are choosing to live.

To increase New Brunswick's fortunes, New Brunswick must increase its population.

- What is northern New Brunswick's role in a modern New Brunswick?
- What must happen in the Acadian Peninsula to retain people?
- Why is the Saint John region faltering?
- Infrastructure obviously plays a role in settlement patterns. Realizing that, what should be the provincial government's next infrastructure priority once the TransCanada Highway is completed?

## How do we get there?

By building on what is already here. New Brunswick may not be the most ethnically diverse province, but it is home to a handful of small ethnic communities. There are just under 600 people of Chinese descent in Fredericton and another 400 are from India. In Saint John the 670-strong Lebanese community is well-established while a small Muslim community of 300 people has taken root. If New Brunswickers want to attract immigrants, these communities may be able to help, either by spreading the word that New Brunswick is a place worth immigrating to, or by providing support systems to those who decide to move. The larger community must also participate.

The Multicultural Association of Carleton County is an example of a community group that has embraced these new faces. At first blush, the small communities of the St. John River Valley may not be a likely place to find immigrants. However McCain Foods Limited in Florenceville is subtly changing the look of the valley. It needs workers, everything from engineers to long-haul truck drivers, and it has filled some of those positions with immigrants from countries such as India, Cuba, Morocco and Nigeria. These employees have brought families and the

multicultural association has given them the support they need to integrate into small town New Brunswick. The association also reaches out to long-time residents of Carleton County by holding events that highlight the foods and cultures of these new arrivals. For instance, at a recent multicultural night, they transformed a community hall into the Taj Mahal as part of a celebration of South Asian life.

McCain Foods isn't the only company searching for skilled employees. Business New Brunswick, the economic development arm of the provincial government, maintains an ever-changing list of skilled jobs that companies need to fill. Included in that list are positions such as medical laboratory technicians, machinists for the plastics industry, tool and die makers, translators, graphic designers and pharmacists.

Some companies may be able to fill these positions through the provincial nominee program. Established in 1999, the nominee program helps fast track an immigrant's application if they are able to prove they have either a job or an investment opportunity waiting for them in New Brunswick. The program has slowly grown. In 2001 it processed 50 applications; by 2003, 110 people arrived through the program. Already between January 1 and April 30, 2004, 42 people have been approved with close to 400 applications under consideration. The retention rate for the nominee program is promising. Of the original 140 people who came in 1999, 72 per cent are still here. Ensuring that people not only immigrate to New Brunswick but actually stay will be the key to any future immigration policies or programs.

- What can communities do to increase the number of immigrants entering the province?
- Do we have the necessary infrastructure to support the immigrants now arriving?
- Does your community have a multicultural association or support network for immigrants?

## What do we want?

More than anything, we desire stability. New Brunswick, like the rest of Atlantic Canada, stands on the edge of an odd predicament. Despite an unemployment rate higher than the national average, the province will experience a labour shortage before the end of this decade if current trends continue.

There are two factors driving that theory. The first is population and the fact that New Brunswick's isn't growing. That alone means less people available to work. The second issue is women. For the past 25 years their presence has steadily grown but that growth will soon slow because women's participation rate will be almost equal to that of men. That too will have an impact on New Brunswick's economy. Which means that if we want the provincial economy to maintain its current pace, let alone grow, New Brunswick needs more people.

Immigration alone will not be enough. Between June 2002 and June 2003, 651 people immigrated to New Brunswick, about the same number who came here in 1960 when the province's population sat at just under 600,000. Nova Scotia, with a population of 849,765, welcomed 1,260 immigrants, almost all of who settled around Halifax. Then there's Manitoba, with its population of just over 1 million people, which managed to absorb 4,900 immigrants last year.

We should increase our immigration rate but we must acknowledge it will not be enough to halt New Brunswick's population decline. The province must retain its own and there is only one way it can do that: its businesses must forge an economy that offers sustainable job growth. Contract positions for university graduates and skilled workers will not keep them here. The North American economy is growing fast enough that if they are willing, they will find work elsewhere. And once they have settled into Calgary, Halifax or Toronto, made new friends, bought a house or a condo and adopted the rhythms of this new life, it will be difficult to pry them back to their old life in New Brunswick. Diversifying the economy, through the development of small- and medium-sized businesses, might temper the fluctuations in New Brunswick's economic pendulum. Limiting the extremes in that cycle of boom and bust will stabilize job creation and that, in the end, is the surest way to both draw people to New Brunswick and keep the ones who are here.

- What should be New Brunswick's focus as it continues to develop its economy?
- What do you think about the New Brunswick government's recent push to increase immigration?
- Should New Brunswick target a specific type of immigrant or people from specific countries?
- Are you confident in the current state of New Brunswick's economy?

# Why?

Because we alone cannot transform New Brunswick. This summer, New Brunswick will celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Samuel de Champlain's short sojourn on St. Croix Island. He and his sailors were the first Europeans to visit the area and they were followed by French, Scots, Irish, British and German settlers who would carve out a life in what was to become New Brunswick. They transformed the land and created a province. Now it is our turn to write the next chapter in New Brunswick's ever-evolving story.

To mould a modern province takes an open mind and a willing spirit. We must welcome immigrants who bring a fresh perspective to our province and a world-view that has the power to expand New Brunswick's horizon. We must show those who have left that there is something worth coming home to in New Brunswick. That means creating a variety of jobs that allows workers to earn a decent salary to support their families and communities that give them the Maritime lifestyle they want. And we must encourage younger New Brunswickers, the group that is the most eager to leave, that they can build a life here. Retaining more of its people and creating greater wealth; these are New Brunswick's greatest challenges. They are also the key to our transformation, the base upon which we will create a province that the next generation will embrace as its own.



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