



SABRINA BETTOUM

photo: Marta Guerrero

Immigration,

A NEED FOR EMPLOYERS

According to the 2016 Census, the number of Canadian-born people leaving the labour market exceeds the number of Canadian-born people entering the labour market. In Winnipeg in 2016, 22% of the workforce was over the age of 55. (1)

BY ROMAIN TELLIEZ

In 2016, immigrants represented more than 26% of the workforce in Manitoba's capital. (1) In some sectors, such as manufacturing or transportation, they represent as much as 46% and 36% of all workers and up to almost half of nursing workers.

Today, it is clear that the economy not only needs immigrants but has become dependent on them. The City of Winnipeg, among others, is facing a major demographic challenge. Low birth rates, out-migration of workers to other provinces and an aging population mean that immigration is no longer a choice but a necessity.

This conclusion holds for Francophone immigration as well. In fact, 40% of the city's Francophones are over 55 years of age, compared to 27% of the total population. And although Winnipeg is the city that attracts the most Francophones from outside Quebec, only 1,130 people whose mother tongue is French came to Manitoba between 2016 and 2018. (1)

Parenty Reitmeier is a perfect illustration of this necessity. The company, which provides translation services in over 100 languages, has a significant need for French-speaking

workers. Of its 45 employees, 12 are French-speaking. "We work a lot in French, it's the most requested language for our company," says Jean-Pierre Parenty, its president.

While Manitoba business leaders have difficulty recruiting in general, in the case of Parenty Reitmeier, the difficulty is twofold. "We always have difficulty recruiting, but it's not just us, it's all businesses. However, in our case, it's even more difficult because it's almost impossible to find enough local Francophones trained in translation."

In the past, to recruit its candidates, Parenty Reitmeier had to go all the way to Europe with the Destination Canada trade show. Today, thanks to Francophone immigration and CDEM programs such as Espace emploi, which brings together local employers and job seekers, the company has an easier time finding candidates.

Sabrina Bettoum is one of these new immigrants who are making Manitoba's economy more fluid. "I was just visiting my sister, who had moved to Manitoba. I was living in Algeria at the time. I came across a job offer from Parenty Reitmeier, and I decided to apply. I was interviewed while I was there and was promised a job that was our gateway to Canada.

"I then returned to Algeria to apply for a visa and get married. I was afraid I would lose this opportunity with the length of the process, but Parenty Reitmeier was understanding, they are used to this kind of thing. They were patient.

"I wasn't unhappy in my country, I was just looking for professional development that I couldn't get in Algeria. And I saw my sister moving forward here in Canada. She seemed to have a good life."

For Parenty Reitmeier, as for many businesses in Manitoba, immigration has become an essential element in their development. "Without newcomers it would be very difficult! And then, not only in French, but immigration is also very important in all languages," concludes Jean-Pierre Parenty.

(1) Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada – Economic Profile Series: Winnipeg, 2019. 