

Smaller centres can be successful in attracting migrants. The key to their long term success, however, is encouraging them to settle in these areas permanently.

Recent Trends in Migration to Third-Tier Centres in the Prairies*

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Until recently, migration to third-tier communities in Canada has rarely garnered much attention. With ten federal-provincial agreements that provide the provinces with additional power in attracting immigrants to their communities, the settlement of international migrants may become a significant source of population growth for many third-tier centres in the Prairies. One of the main programs used by the provinces to convince immigrants to settle in third-tier centres has been the widely successful Provincial Nominee Programs (PNPs). One Prairie Province, Manitoba, has led the way in developing a program that not only attracts immigrants, but has convincingly shifted the population flow, as the figures below show. The purpose of this paper is to provide a snapshot of third-tier migration in the Prairie Provinces. In the process, we address the following questions: Is migration to these areas increasing or decreasing? Are the Prairie Provinces different from other provinces in terms of the number and distribution of migrants? We also spend some time providing information about temporary foreign workers (TFWs) to third-tier centres given the vital labour contribution they provide to rural areas in the Prairies. While it may be too early to assess the efficacy of the new PNPs, the historical data presented in this article can help researchers contextualize the numbers as the provinces begin to release the data on their respective PNPs.

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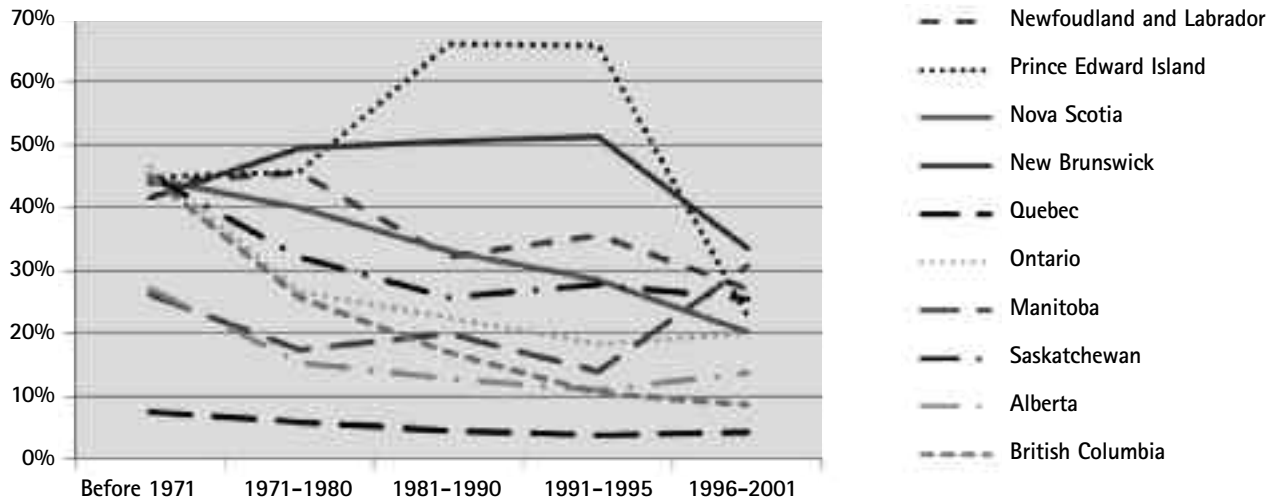
Is migration to third-tier centres increasing or decreasing?¹

Special tabulations produced for the Metropolis Project by Statistics Canada (2005)² reveal the migration patterns of immigrants by settlement location and various other characteristics. One of these patterns is the decline in rural residence by recently arrived migrants. Figure 1 shows the sharp decline in recently arrived immigrants residing in third-tier centres. Immigrants arriving in Canada prior to 1971 (29%) were roughly three times more likely to reside in third-tier centres than those arriving more recently (9% of those arriving between 1991 and 2001). These figures are supported by Clemenson and Pitblado (2007) whose findings indicate that fewer than 32,000 immigrants settled in rural areas between 1996 and 2001, and made up less than half a percentage of rural residents in Canada. If

¹ One of the unexpected challenges in producing this article was our difficulty in locating current statistics on provincial migration. While CIC's *Facts and Figures* remains the primary information source on migration statistics, it does not prepare tables in ways that are useful in understanding the characteristics of migrants at a provincial level, nor does it release figures regarding the magnitude and characteristics of immigration to third-tier centres. The problem of data release is not only federal; provincial governments do not provide detailed information, either. It was extremely difficult to locate information about third-tier cities outside of Manitoba, the province with the most accessible published data on migrants. We suspect, however, that as the popularity of the PNP grows in Saskatchewan and Alberta, more detailed statistics will be released in the near future.

² At the time of writing, the most recent special tabulation data on third-tier centres is based on the 2001 Census. Metropolis researchers look forward to the release of these tabulations for the 2006 Census.

FIGURE 1
Rural dwellers by period of arrival, before 1971 to 2001



Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2005).

settlement patterns in the three Prairie Provinces are considered separately, the picture is slightly different, but also in decline. According to Sorensen (2007), the rural population of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta currently makes up 21% of the provincial population, down from 29% in 1970. Her figures show that the rural population in Alberta has actually grown by 32% over the past 30 years, compared to 8% in Saskatchewan and 4% in Manitoba. In sum, this decline does not mean that the rural population has failed to grow, rather that the growth has not matched that of the urban centres.

Immigration to the three Prairie Provinces, as in other provinces, is mainly urban. Data provided by the Metropolis Project in Table 1 reveal that by 2001, 26% of the immigrant population in Canada lived in rural areas. Another 26% of temporary residents resided in rural areas. A differential urban/rural pattern of settlement between permanent residents and temporary residents can be seen when comparing provinces. Temporary residents are more likely to live in rural areas in Newfoundland and Labrador (52%) than any other province. Over 40% of temporary migrants live in rural areas in Prince Edward Island (48%) and New Brunswick (41%). Temporary residents are least likely to live in rural areas of Quebec (5%), British Columbia (20%) and Alberta (22%). Manitoba (26%) and Saskatchewan (28%) have the highest rates of rural-dwelling temporary residents in the Prairies.

Among permanent residents, Prince Edward Island (47%), New Brunswick (45%) and Newfoundland and Labrador (39%) have the highest proportion living in rural areas. These figures should be contextualized with the knowledge that the three Atlantic provinces receive the fewest number of immigrants. Of the Prairie Provinces, Saskatchewan (35%) has the highest proportion of rural dwellers, followed distantly by Manitoba (18%) and Alberta (17%). Readers should note that since these figures were based on tabulations from the 2001 Census, they do not take into account the numbers of migrants arriving in the various PNP's which were mainly introduced after 2001.

Recent trends in the Prairies

In examining more recent figures provided by the provinces, we can discern somewhat different trends. The Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Labour of the Province of Saskatchewan (2008) reports that by 2007, nearly 2,500 immigrants entered that province under their PNP, an increase of over 2,200 since its introduction in 2003 and surpassing all other classes of migration to that province combined. According to Garcea (2007), a significant majority of those migrants chose to live in the two largest centres. Saskatoon and Regina proportionately receive 35% more immigrants while the remaining third-tier centres in the province receive 45% less immigrants, according to population density. Saskatoon attracts 46% of all

TABLE 1
Urban and rural immigration, Canada, 2001

	Immigrants		Non-permanent residents		Canadian-born	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Newfoundland and Labrador	8,030		955		499,095	
St. John's CMA	4,885	(60.80)	455	(47.60)	165,765	(33.20)
Rural	3,145	(39.20)	500	(52.40)	333,330	(66.80)
Prince Edward Island	4,140		310		128,935	
Charlottetown CA	2,200	(53.10)	160	(51.60)	54,935	(42.60)
Rural	1,940	(46.90)	150	(48.40)	74,000	(57.40)
Nova Scotia	41,320		2,595		853,660	
Halifax CMA	24,390	(59.00)	1,945	(75.00)	329,605	(38.60)
Cape Breton CA	1,780	(4.30)	115	(4.40)	105,980	(12.40)
Rural	15,150	(36.70)	535	(20.00)	418,075	(49.00)
New Brunswick	22,465		1,685		695,555	
Saint John CMA	4,615	(20.50)	415	(24.60)	116,305	(16.70)
Moncton CA	3,360	(15.00)	240	(14.20)	112,220	(16.10)
Fredericton CA	4,460	(19.90)	340	(20.20)	75,885	(10.90)
Rural	10,030	(44.60)	690	(40.90)	391,145	(56.20)
Quebec	706,970		40,195		6,378,420	
Total Metropolitan Area	668,710	(94.60)	38,405	(95.50)	4,040,180	(63.30)
Rural	38,255	(5.40)	1,790	(4.50)	2,338,235	(36.70)
Ontario	3,030,075		90,615		8,164,860	
Toronto CMA	2,032,960	(67.10)	58,135	(64.20)	2,556,855	(31.30)
Other ^a	997,115	(32.90)	32,480	(35.80)	5,608,005	(68.70)
Manitoba	133,655		4,520		965,520	
Winnipeg CMA	109,385	(81.80)	3,365	(74.40)	548,970	(56.90)
Rurale	24,270	(18.20)	1,155	(25.60)	416,550	(43.10)
Saskatchewan	47,825		3,105		912,220	
Regina CMA	14,010	(29.30)	870	(28.00)	175,135	(19.20)
Saskatoon CMA	16,870	(35.30)	1,370	(44.10)	204,390	(22.40)
Rural	16,945	(35.40)	865	(27.90)	532,695	(58.40)
Alberta	438,335		17,275		2,485,540	
Calgary CMA	197,410	(45.00)	7,590	(43.90)	738,310	(29.70)
Edmonton CMA	165,235	(37.70)	5,820	(33.70)	755,965	(30.40)
Rural	75,690	(17.30)	3,865	(22.40)	991,265	(39.90)
British Columbia	1,009,820		37,190		2,821,865	
Abbotsford CMA	31,655	(3.10)	765	(2.10)	112,570	(4.00)
Vancouver CMA	738,550	(73.10)	29,165	(78.40)	1,199,760	(42.50)
Rural	239,615	(23.70)	7,260	(19.50)	1,509,535	(53.50)
Canada	5,448,485		198,645		23,991,905	
Urban CMA	4,020,475	(73.80)	149,155	(75.00)	11,292,830	(47.00)
Rural	1,428,010	(26.00)	49,490	(25.00)	12,699,075	(53.00)

^a Includes major immigrant receiving CMAs, among which Hamilton, Kitchener, Windsor, London, Ottawa and St. Catharines.
Source: Statistics Canada (2005).

migrants to that province while Regina attracts 26%. The remaining 28% reside in smaller centres even though the rural residents account for 56% of the province's population (Statistics Canada 2008). Despite the issues regarding the imbalance in rural/urban settlement, the number of immigrants to Saskatchewan continues to increase. According to official figures, between 2007 and 2008, 3,517 immigrants arrived in the

province, an increase of 29%, almost entirely due to the PNP (Saskatchewan Ministry of Education, Employment and Labour 2008).

Alberta, unlike Saskatchewan, has only seen modest increases in migrant arrivals over the past five years. The fourth most popular destination province for immigrants (after Ontario, British Columbia and Quebec), Alberta consistently receives between 14,000 and 20,000 migrants

TABLE 2

Retention rate of immigrants by province, between 1980 and 2000

	Destined at landing	Out-migration	Retention rate (%)
Atlantic	21,530	10,340	(52.0)
Quebec	214,700	43,940	(79.5)
Ontario	668,625	40,310	(94.0)
Manitoba	41,855	14,305	(65.8)
Saskatchewan	16,300	9,185	(43.7)
Alberta	113,135	28,945	(74.4)
British Columbia	194,65	18,310	(90.6)
Total	1,270,710	165,335	(87.0)

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2007b).

each year (CIC 2008). In 2004,³ 16,469 migrants arrived in the province. Of that number, 29% of new immigrants settled in Edmonton and 57% settled in Calgary (Alberta Office of Institutional Statistics 2008). To better understand the imbalance in urban/rural destinations of immigrants to that province, Edmonton's population accounts for 31% of provincial residents while Calgary's population represents 32% (Statistics Canada 2008). As a result, very few immigrants settled in the province's third-tier centres including Red Deer (1.5%), Lethbridge (1.1%), or Medicine Hat (0.9%). This trend of migrant preference for Calgary and Edmonton has not changed since 1995⁴ (*Ibid.*). In sum, the trends for Alberta reveal a slight increase in the number of immigrants (they receive about 2,000 more immigrants per year in 2004 than they did in 1995), but the proportion of those migrants choosing to live in rural areas has not changed – with less than 15% selecting to settle in these smaller areas.

The story for Manitoba is significantly different in terms of rural settlement of migrants during the past five years. Much of this difference can be attributed to their widely successful PNP. Established in 1998 and renewed indefinitely in 2003, the major objective of this program is to attract 3.8% of all immigrants to Canada to Manitoba, representative of the province's proportion of the national population (CIC 2001). In 2006, they met and surpassed that

target, mainly due to their PNP. In that year, 50% of all immigrants who entered under the various PNPs in Canada were destined to Manitoba (N=6,661).⁵ There remains, however, an imbalance between the number of immigrants settling in Winnipeg (76%) versus smaller centers in the province (24%). Winnipeg is home to 60% of provincial residents but attracts 76% of all immigrants. (Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2008). This urban/rural imbalance, however, is not as great as those discussed in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Winkler, a centre of 9,106, attracted 710 immigrants in 2007, representing nearly an 8% increase in their population based solely on the arrival of migrants. Other centres such as Brandon (population 48,256) attracted 642 immigrants and Steinbach (population 11,066), 369 during the same year (Statistics Canada 2008, Manitoba Labour and Immigration 2008). In short, smaller centres can be successful in attracting migrants. The key to their long term success, however, is encouraging them to settle in these areas permanently.

While the three Prairie Provinces are working hard to attract immigrants, particularly to settle in third-tier centres, researchers have not undertaken an examination of the retention rates. Using data from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB),⁶ Wilkinson and Pettigrew (2007) find that the Prairie Provinces do not fair well in retaining migrants compared

³ This is the year of most recently available statistics for smaller centres in that province. Citizenship and Immigration Canada does not release statistics for smaller non-urban areas.

⁴ Readers should note that the preference for Calgary over Edmonton has been consistent over the past ten years, with Calgary receiving as much as 25% more immigrants than Edmonton.

⁵ This is based on calculations from figures released by Manitoba Labour and Immigration (2007) and CIC (2007b).

⁶ The IMDB is a restricted-access file that links landing records from CIC's Landed Immigrant Database with tax records from Revenue Canada. The data is useful in tracking of immigrants' economic performance, mobility within Canada and changes in job status over time.

TABLE 3

Temporary foreign workers by province and urban area

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Manitoba	1,591	1,841	1,790	1,712	1,470	1,305	1,506	1,791	2,150	2,878
Winnipeg	1,041	1,372	1,197	1,158	887	834	922	1,008	1,265	1,579
(%)	(65)	(75)	(67)	(68)	(60)	(64)	(61)	(56)	(59)	(55)
Other	550	469	593	554	584	471	584	783	885	1,299
(%)	(35)	(25)	(33)	(32)	(40)	(36)	(39)	(44)	(41)	(45)
Saskatchewan	1,102	1,059	1,113	982	940	863	969	1,295	1,340	1,851
Regina	266	290	288	204	246	192	198	252	270	362
(%)	(24)	(27)	(26)	(21)	(26)	(22)	(20)	(19)	(22)	(14)
Saskatoon	294	285	324	339	317	255	360	406	461	702
(%)	(27)	(27)	(29)	(35)	(34)	(30)	(37)	(31)	(34)	(38)
Other	542	484	501	439	377	416	411	637	609	787
(%)	(49)	(46)	(45)	(45)	(40)	(48)	(42)	(49)	(45)	(43)
Alberta	7,341	7,227	8,118	8,393	7,300	6,768	7,840	9,592	14,652	24,371
Calgary	2,854	2,548	2,991	2,996	2,635	2,491	3,010	3,574	4,948	7,431
(%)	(39)	(35)	(37)	(36)	(36)	(37)	(38)	(37)	(34)	(30)
Red Deer	123	168	159	88	71	70	119	273	164	393
(%)	(2)	(2)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(1)	(2)
Edmonton	1,833	1,786	1,994	2,173	1,712	1,503	1,546	1,615	2,455	5,368
(%)	(25)	(25)	(25)	(26)	(23)	(22)	(20)	(17)	(17)	(22)
Wood Buffalo	75	96	121	135	96	90	123	273	421	495
(%)	(1)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(1)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(3)	(2)
Other	2,456	2,629	2,853	3,001	2,786	2,614	3,042	3,857	6,664	10,684
(%)	(33)	(36)	(35)	(36)	(38)	(39)	(39)	(40)	(45)	(44)
Total	10,034	10,127	11,021	11,087	9,710	8,936	10,315	12,678	18,142	29,100

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008b).

to the other provinces. Table 2 shows that nearly 75% of immigrants destined to Alberta stay there, compared with only 66% of those destined to Manitoba and 44% of those destined to Saskatchewan. When compared to the remaining provinces, the retention rate is much lower than the national average of 87%, owing mainly to the propensity of migrants landing in Ontario and British Columbia to remain in these provinces permanently after landing.

Economic opportunities and migration

Immigrants, like native-born Canadians, settle in locations where there are job opportunities and where familial and friendship networks exist. Analyses from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada (Schellenberg and Maheux 2007) reveals that job issues affect over 50% of recent migrants and that one in five migrants indicated problems locating suitable employment as their primary problem in settlement. Data from CIC (2000) and other studies indicate that economic class immigrants (investors, self-employed, skilled labourers) and refugees destined to second- and third-tier centres are more likely to

relocate to first-tier cities after their arrival in Canada mainly due to better job opportunities. The lure of the big city is not new: Trovato (1988) and Newbold (1996) in separate studies suggest that the main reason immigrants relocate to large cities is the existence of better work opportunities and well-established ethnic communities. Immigrants in the United States are no different. Immigrants there are mainly “attracted to large cities with relatively well-educated adults and high wages” (Scott, Coomes and Izyumov 2005: 113).

With the introduction of the Canadian Experience Class, the government has signaled its intention to encourage TFWs to remain in Canada once they have completed their work commitment by easing the transition from temporary to permanent resident. The number of TFWs to Canada has increased significantly in the past decade. In 1998, approximately 66,000 TFWs resided in Canada. By 2007, just over 115,000 migrants entered under this category, almost double the number ten years earlier (CIC 2008). Among the Prairie Provinces, Alberta received the largest number of arrivals in this category, with 24,371 arriving in 2007, representing 84%

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of the Prairies total, an increase of 11% of the Prairies total since 1998. A closer look at the trends reveals that the number of TFWs has increased significantly in Alberta, ranging from a low of 7,227 in 1999 to a high of 24,371 last year. In fact, nearly 10,000 new TFWs entered that province between 2006 and 2007. Saskatchewan and Manitoba have seen modest increases in the number of TFWs destined to their provinces. Manitoba has nearly doubled its number of TFWs between 1998 and 2007.

Temporary foreign workers provide valuable labour to smaller centres in the Prairies. The distribution of TFWs in smaller centres is similar across the three Prairie Provinces. Just over half of all the TFWs to Manitoba reside in Winnipeg, with the remaining 45% living in third-tier centres. In Saskatchewan, 58% of these workers reside in Saskatoon or Regina, the remaining 42% living in third-tier centres. In Alberta, 53% live in Edmonton and Calgary, the remaining 47% residing elsewhere.

Temporary foreign workers who re-enter Canada tend to be those most interested in permanent residence. This is the group that is most likely to take advantage of the Canadian Experience Class, if they qualify. In 2007, nearly 50,000 TFWs returned to work in Canada in this category, up from just 34,000 ten years earlier (CIC 2008). In the Prairies, the number of returnees has remained steady in Saskatchewan and Manitoba. In 2007, 630 TFWs returned to work in the province, compared with 533 in 1998. In Manitoba, the trend is similar with 949 returnees in 1998 and 1,056 in 2007. Readers should note, however, that more TFWs are living in third-tier centres in 2007 (45%) than they were in 1998 (35%). Alberta has the largest number of returnees in this category. In 1998, only 2,810 TFWs returned to work in the province, but by 2007, 5,034 had returned to work, nearly doubling in ten years. Alberta accounts for 75% of all returnee TFWs in the Prairies. In that province, 58% of returnees are living in third-tier centres while in Manitoba, 45% are living in third-tier centres.⁷ This may be a good

avenue for third-tier centres to attract immigrants to settle permanently using the Canadian Experience Class. It is important to track secondary migration among TFWs who apply for permanent residence status using the Canadian Experience Class to ascertain if this would be a viable program to attract more migrant residents to third-tier centres.

Conclusion

This short review article has provided a snapshot of migration to third-tier centres in Canada, but many issues remain unaddressed. If the three Prairie Provinces are serious about their efforts in attracting and maintaining their migrant populations, we urge the governments to consider releasing more statistics and in a timely fashion. Currently, only the Province of Manitoba makes statistics on third-tier migration readily accessible to non-government researchers. We hope that the Alberta government will make improvements to their statistics Website that includes additional information on the migrants to that province. We encourage the Province of Saskatchewan to consider distributing their statistics more publicly. Similarly, CIC is urged to provide more detail about the characteristics of migrants to third-tier centres in its annual *Facts and Figures* report.

We also encourage all three provinces and researchers to closely examine the retention rates of migrants, especially as the Provincial Nominees and TFWs who apply for permanent residence status through the Canadian Experience Class both become more widely used as an entry point to Canada. While the PNPs are beneficial in that they cut waiting times in processing paperwork and gaining access to Canada, do they really help encourage a wider geographic distribution of migrants? Preliminary research from Manitoba (Wilkinson and Pettigrew 2007) indicates that significant numbers of migrants to Manitoba resettle elsewhere. While data

⁷ It is not possible to calculate the number of returnees to third-tier centres in Saskatchewan using available statistics.

TABLE 4

Re-entering foreign workers by province and urban area

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Manitoba	949	958	999	949	826	604	656	632	851	1,056
Winnipeg	616	626	686	618	536	411	384	395	500	582
(%)	(65)	(65)	(69)	(65)	(65)	(68)	(59)	(63)	(59)	(55)
Other	333	332	313	331	290	193	272	237	351	474
(%)	(35)	(35)	(31)	(35)	(35)	(32)	(41)	(38)	(41)	(45)
Saskatchewan	533	508	399	387	370	325	336	460	562	630
Regina	72	85	85	67	88	79	81	84	101	119
(%)	(14)	(17)	(21)	(17)	(24)	(24)	(24)	(18)	(18)	(19)
Other	461	423	314	320	282	246	255	376	461	511
(%)	(86)	(83)	(79)	(83)	(76)	(76)	(76)	(82)	(82)	(81)
Alberta	2,810	2,872	2,803	3,006	2,727	2,443	2,732	3,116	3,903	5,034
Calgary	958	953	844	885	804	793	918	1,029	1,161	1,363
(%)	(34)	(33)	(30)	(29)	(29)	(32)	(34)	(33)	(30)	(27)
Edmonton	670	688	726	748	638	540	592	532	570	773
(%)	(24)	(24)	(26)	(25)	(23)	(22)	(22)	(17)	(15)	(15)
Other	1,182	1,231	1,233	1,373	1,285	1,110	1,222	1,555	2,172	2,898
(%)	(42)	(43)	(44)	(46)	(47)	(45)	(45)	(50)	(56)	(58)
Total	4,292	4,338	4,201	4,342	3,923	3,372	3,724	4,208	5,316	6,720

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2008b).

limitations made it impossible to separate those arriving as PNs from other classes in the IMDB at the time of preparing the report, it would be interesting from a policy and practical standpoint to see if these programs really encourage migrants to stay, particularly those destined to smaller third-tier centres. It is also instructive to see if the PNP is being used as a “backdoor” mode of entry that encourages significant outmigration, particularly in the rural areas. It may be that provinces, such as Manitoba, may need to rethink their efforts in attracting PNs to their province if significant numbers subsequently leave. Similarly, once data on the Canadian Experience Class becomes available, it is important to track the secondary migration figures.

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