Alberta sees new exodus

DEMOGRAPHICS

Majority head to Ontario and B.C., likely due to economy

Albertans are on the move.

New data shows the number of people leaving for other parts of Canada is at its highest point in 20 years, largely due to workers departing for greener economic pastures in Ontario and B.C.

Statistics Canada’s estimates show that between July 1, 2016, and June 30, 2017, roughly 70,800 Albertans left for other provinces. Meanwhile, about 55,700 people moved here, resulting in a net loss of approximately 15,000.

In comparison, when oil was still booming from 2011 to 2014, the population was growing by 30,000 people every year.

“From an economic perspective, it’s not at all surprising,” said Todd Hirsch, chief economist of ATB Financial. “The only thing I’d say that is maybe surprising is the fact that the level of out migration wasn’t bigger.”

The last time Alberta saw a decline of this size was in 1987 and 1988, during the last major economic slump. Back then, the net loss was more than 23,000.

According to Frank Trovato, a professor of sociology and demographer at the University of Alberta, the loss is likely caused by the slump in Alberta’s economy due to low oil prices as well as a construction boom in British Columbia and a revived manufacturing sector in Ontario.

Trovato suggested the data indicates “a lot of the people who moved here early on are the same people going back.”