

Data Feature

Word Count: 1,747

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Upon walking out of her apartment, Heather Romanow isn't in the place she wanted to be. Here, in Ottawa, Ont. she walks down busy streets without a single wave or greeting. She longs for the simple smile and "good morning" that can be heard back home in Dartmouth, N.S.

"I remember thinking, 'I just want to go home,'" said Romanow.

Romanow moved from her home in Dartmouth 13 years ago. Coming from a military family, her father's job caused Romanow and her family to move to Ottawa once he reached a certain rank.

Romanow didn't initially make the move with her family. In 1999, her family started their new life in Ottawa but she stayed at home to begin her first year at university.

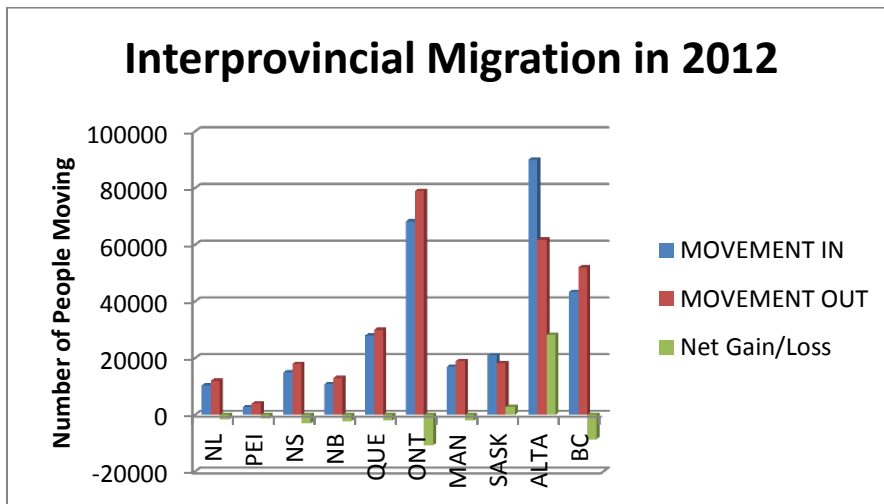
However, this was shorted lived.

"I ended up getting relatively sick," said Romanow. "I had strep throat for about six months. It wouldn't go away and the health care isn't so awesome there, so my parents dragged me against my will to Ottawa. But it was to have access to better physicians so I understood."

So, Romanow packed her things and moved to the capital.

Romanow, like many other Canadians, have moved between provinces at some point during their life. Interprovincial migration is a regular occurrence seen in Canada. Last year alone, over 613,000 people changed provinces.

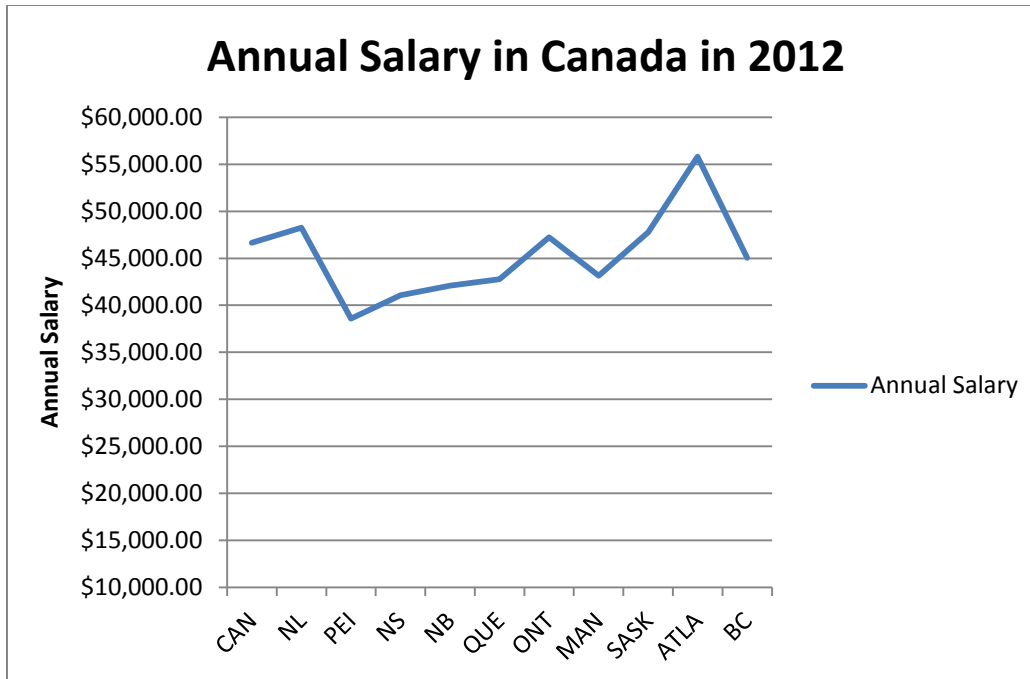
Of those people, about 68,300 of them moved to Ontario. And these noticed it wasn't like where they came from.



Before her move to Ottawa, Ont. Romanow had some ideas of what to expect.

“I had heard a lot about Ottawa being cold,” she said. “What I knew about it was that it was a very transient city. It had workers coming and going so it’s not the certain place you make friends who you have forever.”

She did look forward to the job opportunities that she would encounter in Ottawa. With the significant difference between minimum wage at Nova Scotia and Ontario, this would be a plus.



However, the idea of moving still worried her.

“I wouldn’t be the same. Nowhere is the same as the east coast but it feels like Ontario and specifically Ottawa is the most not the same,” said Romanow.

Once settled in Ottawa, unfortunately everything Romanow was concerned about was true.

“Here I find people look at their feet when their walking or have headphones in or have their phone to their ear. You don’t have to interact with them,” she said. “Whereas at home, when you pass by someone you look up, smile and acknowledged their existence opposed to keeping to their little space and not let other people invade it. The concept of personal space or personal interaction is very different.”

Because of this, it took Romanow a while to transition her life from home.

Years later, she understands that people here are different than the ones at home. Even if they don't talk to people on the street, Romanow is comfortable with herself to do it.

“If you ask me where home is, it's instantly Dartmouth. If you ask me where I see myself in five years I will have told you for the past 13 years that I see myself at home,” said Romanow.

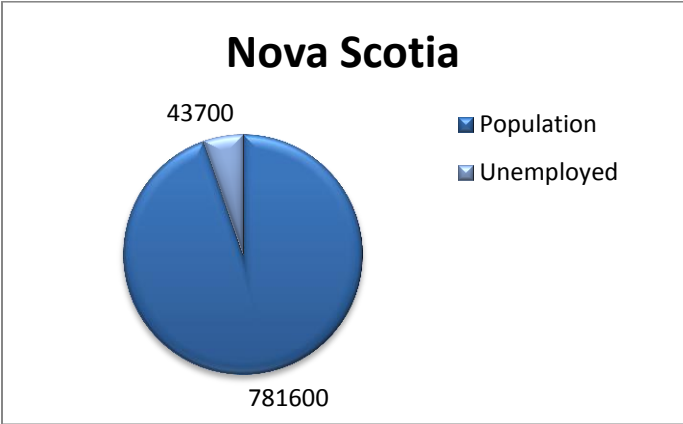
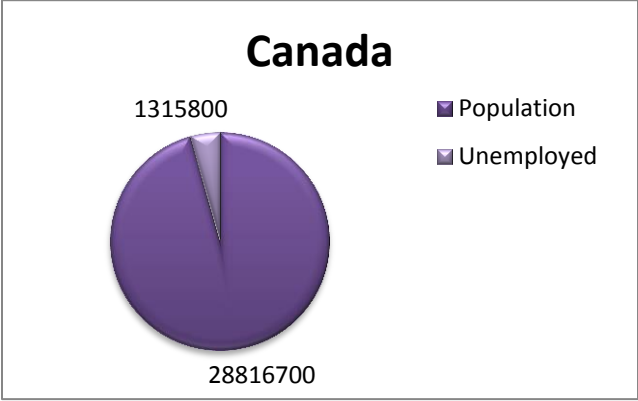
What's stopping Romanow is her family and career.

With two young children, Romanow and her partner need to plan the best time to make a drastic move. Schooling and taking them away from the friends they would have made is something to consider.

Her job is also important. She works as a research coordinator with the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. Here she works on many projects, one of which is to find a treatment for people with chronic pain.

“If I stayed at home there is a very high likelihood that I wouldn't have done anything or gone anywhere,” she said. “I have quite a few years of work available in Ottawa and I can't see the same thing if we were to move back.”

In 2012, about 18,000 people moved away from Nova Scotia. Many of these people did so to find employment.



Nova Scotia’s unemployment rate as of Nov. 2013 was 8.8 percent. This is not too bad in relation to other provinces in Canada.

However, the problem doesn’t seem to be unemployment, it’s having a career and becoming success in that field.

Similar to Romanow's move to Ottawa, Adam Casey, a 20-year-old student in the city, noticed a major difference.

Casey moved from Cole Harbour, N.S, just 10 km from where Romanow was living in Dartmouth, to Ottawa.

Like Romanow, his father was in the military and in 2009 was posted to Ottawa.

"I find it's a lot nicer in Cole Harbour and much more friendly," said Casey. "It's more of a country and not as much of a city which I prefer. The view is amazing; it's not flat like Ontario."

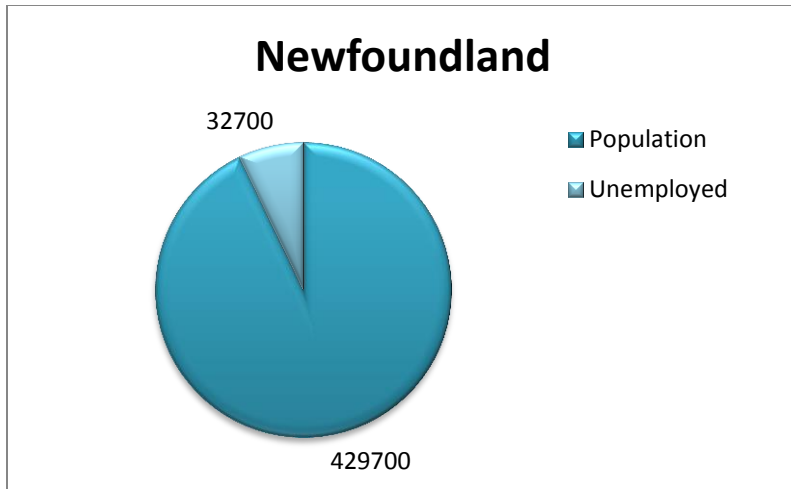
Another former east coast resident, Stephanie Dawe moved from Newfoundland to Ontario.

Moving from Marrystown, N.L. to Ottawa, Ont. in 1991, Dawe came to find employment.

"The town I grew up in didn't have steady work as it was mainly seasonal work," said Dawe. "I grew up in a town that had a fish plant so fishery was one of the main sources of income."

In Marrystown, it was normal for people to move away to find work and build their career.

In 2012, about 12,000 people moved out of Newfoundland and to another province. With the unemployment rate being the highest in the country, 12.3 percent, it doesn't leave Newfoundlanders with much of a choice.



After completing one year at university and three years at nursing school, Dawe knew she had to leave her home in order to find work.

“It’s silly, but my boyfriend at the time and I chose Ottawa because he had a friend that lived there. That’s the only reason. I had no family there and knew no one,” she said.

Once in the city, the infrastructure took Dawe by surprise.

“I moved from a small town to this large city. I remember seeing the 416 highway was a big deal for me and very different,” said Dawe.

Even going to school in St. John’s, the capital of Newfoundland was not comparable to what Dawe saw in Ottawa.

Working at the Ottawa hospitals was a change for her as well. With more patients and a larger more challenging working environment, it was a new experience for Dawe.

“I wouldn’t go back to Newfoundland at this point because if I went back, to get to where I am now, I’d have to work my way up again,” said Dawe. “Three years ago I looked into moving back home, but the work isn’t comparable.

“Notice how I say ‘Back home,’” she pointed out. “That’s one thing you’ll find with Newfoundlanders and other people from the east coast; we consider where we grew up home. I’ve spent more time in Ottawa than I have in Newfoundland. I left when I was 18 and I’ve been living here since 1991, so I’ve actually lived here longer than I did at home. But, I still call it home.”

This is very similar to Romanow’s view of coming from Nova Scotia. Although both have a new home and have been there for over a decade, home is not in Ottawa.

But unlike Romanow, she doesn’t long to go back home.

“Ever since I’ve moved here I’ve never had a second thought of going back. So when I moved here, I made that decision to live here and embrace it,” she said.

Dawe and her two children have made trips back home. Her oldest daughter started attending Memorial University of Newfoundland this past September.

“At home everybody knows your business and wants to know how you are. That was one big difference here,” said Dawe. “I just didn’t find people were interested in how you were, who you are, what your life was like. Initially, nobody ever got personal with you.”

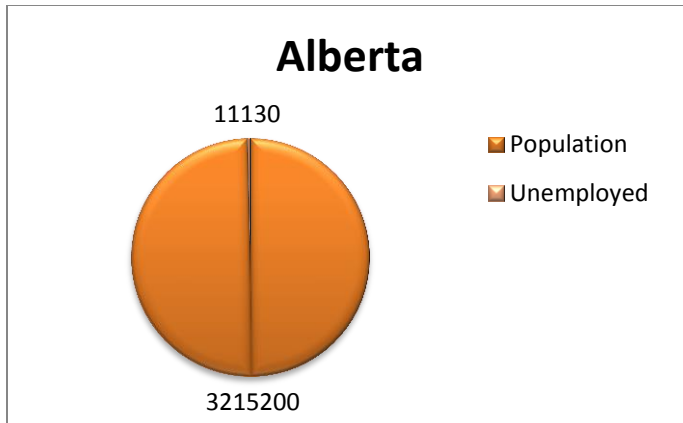
It is not only people from the east coast that find Ottawa is not a friendly city. People from the West seem to have more smiles as well.

Christina Lachmann grew up in Ottawa. Up until 2005, this city was all she knew.

However, after working at the Canadian Bank Note for many years and not enjoying it, she quit and moved to Calgary, Ala. all in the matter of two weeks.

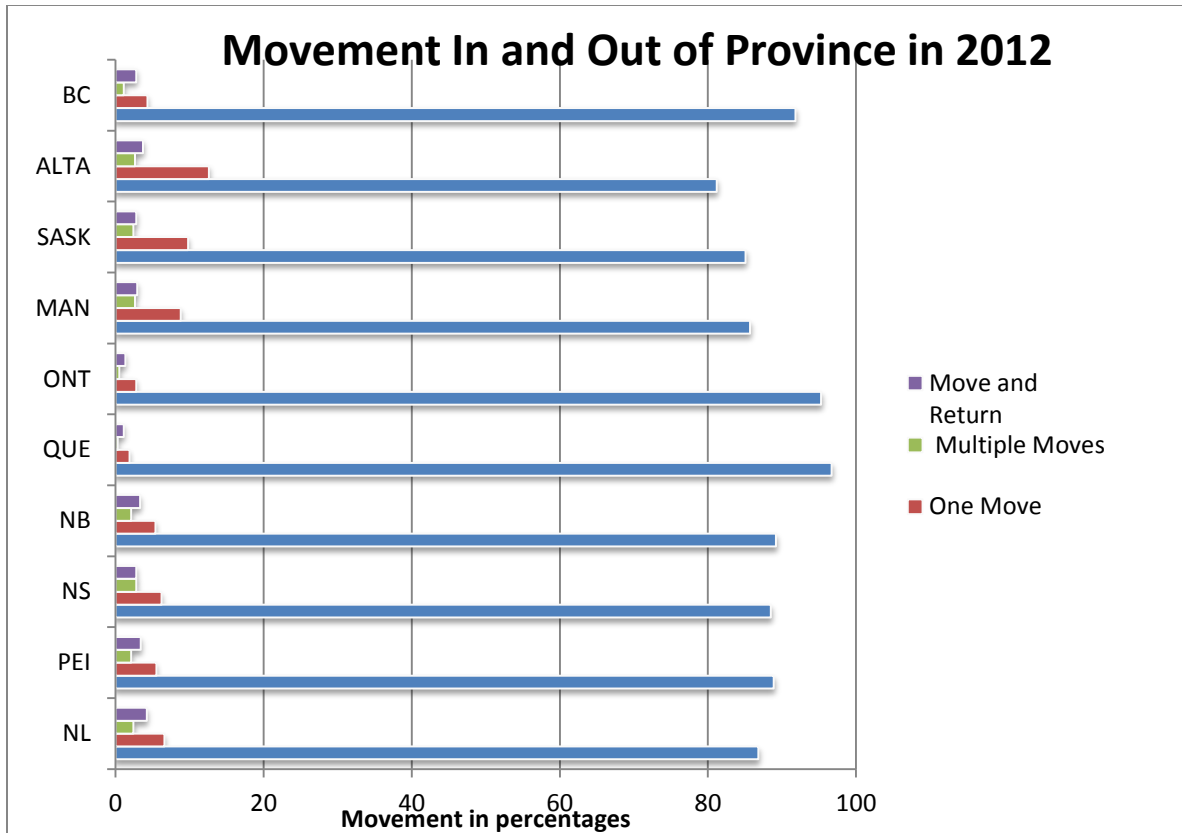
Lachmann rented an apartment on her own. She found employment within the first two weeks.

In Nov. 2013, the unemployment rate in Alberta was the lowest of all provinces. With only 4.2 percent of the population without jobs, Lachmann was one of many who were able to find a career upon arrival.



“For a while I wondered why everyone was so much friendlier than in Ottawa,” said Lachmann. “Then I realized it’s a training city. They hosted the Olympics so trained people and every year with the Stampede. It’s the largest outdoor rodeo in North America so they have to train people to be friendly and deal with tourists.”

However, after seven and a half years living what she thought was finally her grownup life she was looking for, Lachmann moved back to Ottawa after a marriage divorce.



“It was so different there. People were nicer. I had two children and a great job. I had a life and coming back to where I spent all of my childhood wasn’t what I wanted,” said Lachmann.

This past year, about 61,800 people moved out of Alberta for another province.

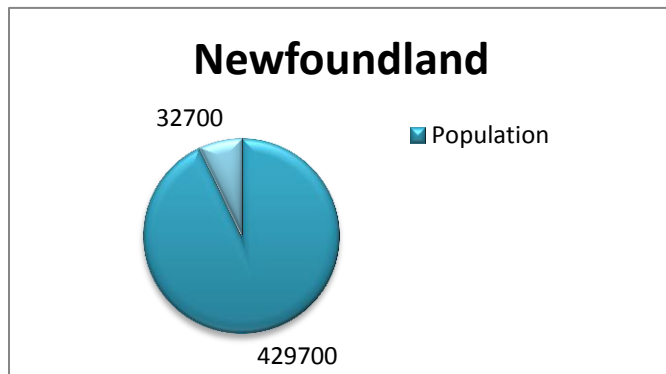
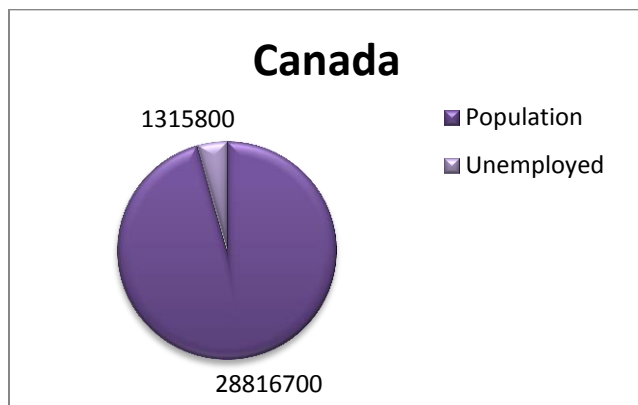
With her arrival back in Ottawa, it has been hard for Lachmann find a job she wanted.

“Ottawa is great but I find I’m more limited in job opportunities because I don’t speak French,” she said. “When I moved back, I knew my career would never go anywhere because of this.”

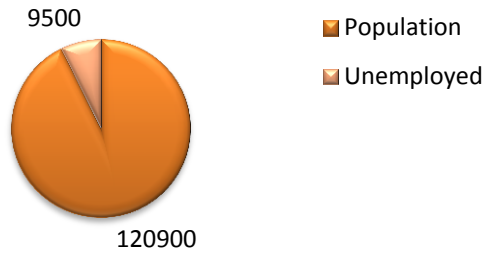
Lachmann took French classes all throughout high school and college but it still limited her.

After taking human resources in school and learning French, she has what she needed to land a job when she first lived in Ottawa. However, after applying to a different sector in her field at the bank, the company out sourced it. She did not have the qualifications.

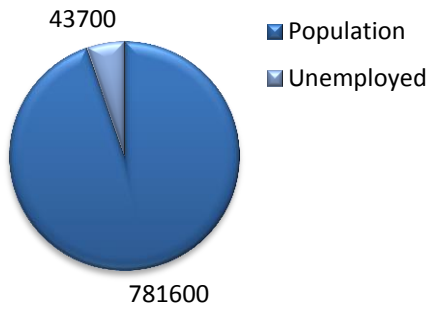
“I’ll probably never have a proper career, or the one I wanted now that I’m back here,” said Lachmann. “Ottawa is a place where people find employment, but it’s getting harder. This makes me not want to stay here and try another province.”



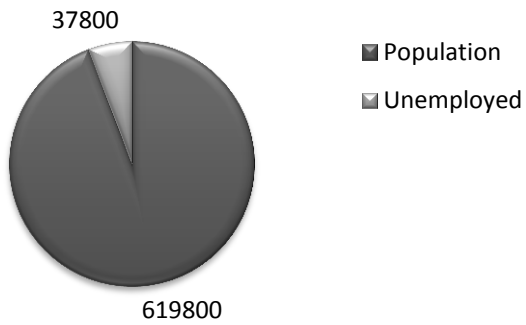
Prince Edward Island



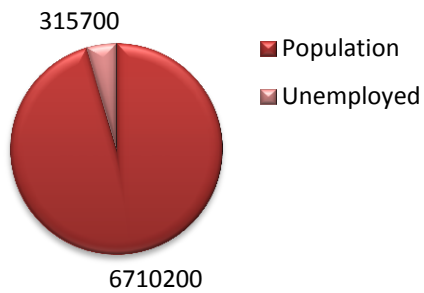
Nova Scotia



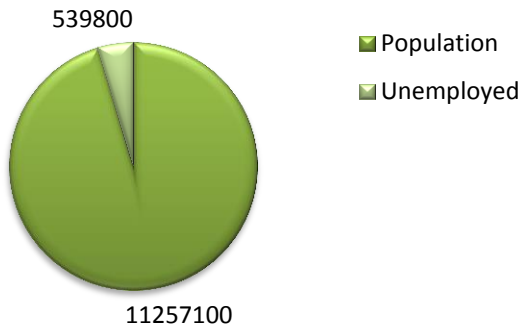
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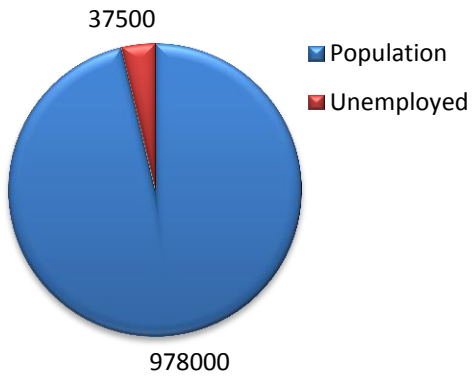
Quebec



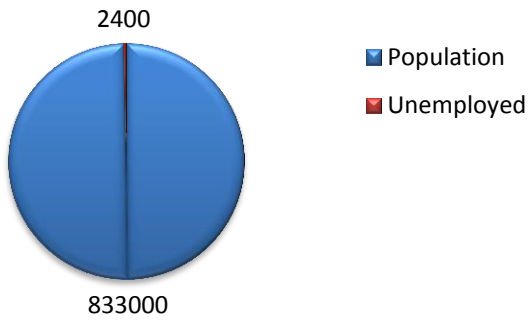
Ontario



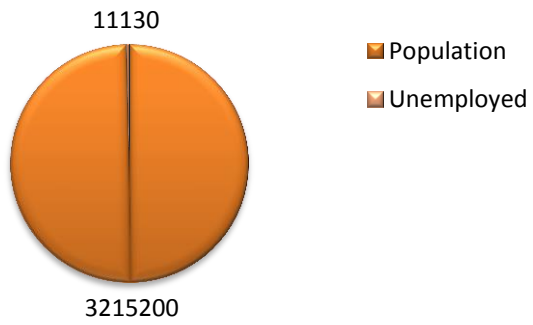
Manitoba



Saskatchewan



Alberta



British Columbia

