



Infoline

Issue: 97-02

5 Pages

January 10, 1997

You will find the last 5 issues on our website:
<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca>**Report****Retirement in British Columbia**

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Oct 1/96	% change on year ago
BC	3,888.5	2.5
Canada	30,101.6	1.2
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT	1995	% change on year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices - \$ millions)</i>		
Current Dollars	103,273	4.6
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,107	1.9
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Oct	2,871	1.8
Merchandise Exports (raw) Oct	2,240	0.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Oct	2,602	1.9
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX	Nov '96	% change on year ago
<i>(all items - 1986=100)</i>		
BC	138.8	0.7
Canada	136.8	2.0
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)	Dec '96	% change on year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>		
Labour Force - BC	2,017	3.7
Employed - BC	1,840	4.2
Unemployed - BC	177	-1.1
		Dec '95
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	8.8	9.2
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	9.7	9.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jan 8/97	Jan 10/96
Prime Business Rate	4.75	7.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.20	6.95
- 5 year	6.95	7.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jan 8/97	Jan 10/96
<i>(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$</i>	1.3651	1.3589
<i>US \$ (reciprocal of above rate)</i>	0.7325	0.7359
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS	Oct '96	% change on year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>		
BC	611.94	1.7
Canada	593.77	3.2
SOURCES:		
Population, GDP, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Review		

highlights resumes this week

highlights is included with this transmission. The issue number has been set to 97-02 to match the issue number that appears on this page. For libraries that file **highlights** separately, we advise that no issue numbered 97-01 was produced.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Quarterly Regional Statistics, Third & Fourth Quarters, 1996

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, December 1996
- Tourism Room Revenue, September 1996
- Earnings and Employment Trends, October 1996
- Immigration Highlights, First Three Quarters, 1996

Infoline Report:

January 10, 1997

Retirement in British Columbia

Reprinted from the Third Quarter, 1996 Issue of *Migration Highlights*. An annual subscription is \$30 + GST.

The interest in the topic of retirement has been growing as a result of both the ageing of the population and the move to more varied patterns of retirement. The early baby boomers are considering their retirement options for the not too distant future. While at one time 65 was the normal age at which a person moved from full-time work to full-time retirement, there is now much more variety in the pattern, including both earlier and later retirement ages, gradual reduction in hours of work prior to full-time retirement, and retirement followed by return to some form of work on either a full-time or part-time basis. These factors are also raising important questions about the financial situation of retired people and the viability of pension plans.

A recent Statistics Canada studyⁱ examined the changing retirement patterns in Canada from a wide range of perspectives. The study was based on those aged 50 and over distinguishing those who were retired from those whose main activity was working at a job or business, or those who had other principal activities such as keeping house, looking for a job or having a long-term illness. Of those aged 50 and over in 1994 in British Columbia, 42% were retired, 32%

were working and 26% and were engaged in other activities. It is worth noting that many women currently aged 60 and over do not consider themselves to be retired since they had never been in the labour force.

In 1994, 11% of Canada's population aged 15 and over was retired, which represented 14% of men and 8% of women. However, the profile of retired people in British Columbia is somewhat different from that in the rest of Canada. At 13%, B.C.'s proportion of the population that was retired in 1994 was higher than in other parts of the country. The average retirement age for men in B.C. was 60.9 years, half a year earlier than for the average Canadian male. Women in both B.C. and the country as a whole retired at 58.5 years on average.

The image that Canadians have is that B.C. is the preferred retirement destination within Canada and this is reflected in the fact that only a quarter of the retired people in B.C. were born in the provinceⁱⁱ. In Ontario and the Prairie provinces slightly over half of the retirees were born in their current province of residence, while in Quebec and the Atlantic provinces most retired people (88%) were living in their province of birth.

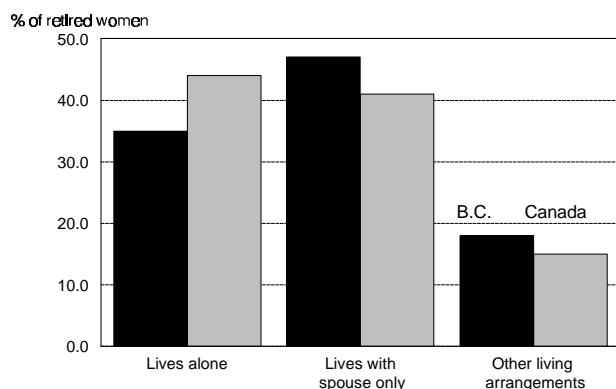
Three quarters of retired people in B.C. were born elsewhere

Place of birth	Place of residence					
	British Columbia	Prairie provinces	Ontario	Quebec	Atlantic provinces	Canada
	% of all retired people					
Residing in province of birth	24	54	55	88	88	60
Not residing in province of birth	44	20	15	17
Born outside Canada	32	26	30	12	...	23
Proportion of retirees in population	13	10	12	10	11	11

Source: Statistics Canada, General Social Survey, 1994.

The social and economic situation of retired people appears to be more favourable in B.C. than in the country as a whole. A smaller proportion of retired women live alone and consequently a larger proportion live in households with a spouse or other relatives/ friends, resulting in greater social and economic support.

Fewer retired women live alone in B.C.



Statistics Canada,
General Social Survey, 1994.

The education levels of B.C. retirees are generally higher with 19% of men having an university degree as compared to 14% for Canada as a whole; 21% of retired men and 27% of retired women in B.C. have a college or trade school education compared to 15% of Canadian men and 18% of Canadian women. The higher education levels are an indication that the financial position of B.C. retirees may be more favourable than for Canada as a whole.

The large proportion of interprovincial and international migrants in the B.C. retired population is a contributing factor to the differences in educational levels and other characteristics, as people with more education are more likely to migrate.

ⁱ Canada's Changing Retirement Patterns, Findings from the General Social Survey, Statistics Canada Cat.no. 89-546-XPE.

ⁱⁱ The comparable statistic for the entire B.C. population is 50%.

highlights

January 10, 1997
Issue: 97-02

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate dropped 0.7 percentage points in December, falling to 8.8% (seasonally adjusted).** The decline in the unemployment rate was the largest in the country. It was due to a combination of factors: BC's labour force shrank slightly, (decreasing by 3,000) while the number of jobs rose by 11,000 to 1.84 million. Women benefitted most from the increase in employment, with 8,000 of the 11,000 additional jobs last month going to females. The female unemployment rate fell 1.2 percentage points to 8.4%. The rate for males (9.1%) was 0.3 points lower than in November.

Unemployment rates were down in all provinces except Newfoundland (+1.4 points), PEI (+0.5 points) and New Brunswick (+0.1 points). Canada's unemployment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 9.7% in December. The improvement in the national unemployment rate was attributable to an increase (+34,000) in the number of people with jobs, combined with a drop of 13,000 in the labour force. Employment was up in all four western provinces, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Both of the province's large urban centres benefitted from lower unemployment rates in December.** Victoria's rate decreased from 9.0% to 8.7% last month. In Vancouver, the unemployment rate was 8.9%, down from 9.2% in November. Relative to other urban centres, unemployment rates in BC were higher than in the rest of western Canada, about the same as in Ontario, and lower than the rates observed in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.
- **Unemployment rates outside the Vancouver and Victoria regions were above the provincial**

Source: Statistics Canada

average. Southern coastal British Columbia had an unemployment rate of 10.5% (3-month average, seasonally adjusted), as did the Southern Interior region of the province. In northern BC, the unemployment rate was 10.2%.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wages and salaries paid to workers in British Columbia increased 0.6% (seasonally adjusted) between September and October.** This was the third consecutive month in which wages and salaries in the province rose. The increase was above the national average (0.3%), but significantly lower than in the rest of western Canada. Wages were up 1.1% in Saskatchewan, 1.2% in Alberta, and 1.4% in Manitoba. In Ontario, wages and salaries declined 0.2%, largely due to a labour dispute at General Motors.
- **BC's help-wanted index rose for the fourth consecutive month in December increasing from 68 to 69 (1991=100).** The upward movement in the last few months marks the first period of sustained growth in the index since 1989. Nationally, the help-wanted index rose three points, to 93. Prince Edward Island (-4 points), Nova Scotia (-3 points) and Quebec (-2 points) were the only regions of the country where the help wanted index fell below the November level.

Source: Statistics Canada

Source: Statistics Canada

Interprovincial Trade

- **British Columbia's major trading partners within Canada are Alberta, Ontario and Quebec.** In 1995, Alberta purchased more BC products (\$4.8 billion) than any other province. Ontario (\$3.7 billion) and Quebec (\$1.9 billion) were ranked second and third.

BC's interprovincial exports totalled \$13.0 billion in 1995, but its imports from other parts of the country were valued at \$20.8 billion. Half (\$10.0 billion) of these interprovincial imports

Did you know...?

Less than half of all Canadian kitchens are equipped with a (mechanical) dishwasher. In 1995, 47% of Canadians households had a dishwasher. Microwave ovens were more popular, showing up in 83% of all households—but there is no human substitute for a microwave oven.

originated in Ontario, with Alberta (\$5.4 billion) and Quebec (\$3.1 billion) comprising the bulk of the residual. Ontario, Alberta and Quebec together accounted for 90% of BC's interprovincial imports, and 80% of its exports to the rest of Canada.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **In 1995, 73% of BC's total production was consumed within the province.** Exports to other countries accounted for 19% of total supply, with the remaining 8% of goods and services produced in British Columbia destined for use in other provinces. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Housing

- **Despite some volatility during the year, the number of housing starts in the province's urban centres ended 1996 up 5% from 1995, as construction began on 24,744 new housing units.** The strength was mainly due to increased activity outside the province's two major population centres. Housing starts rose 17% in Kelowna, and 13% in other urban centres, but increased only 3% in Vancouver. Starts were down 12% in the Victoria area. For all of urban BC, single detached housing starts were 15% higher than in 1995, but multiple unit starts declined 1% last year. Nationally, housing starts were up 14% over 1995.

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

- **The cost of new housing continued to decline in November, as the new housing price index (NHPI) for Vancouver dropped to 4.6% below the November 1995 level.** Victoria's NHPI fell 5.0%, and is now only slightly higher (8.8%) than in 1986. The NHPI has been declining steadily since mid-1994, and while new house prices continue to fall, the rate of decline has eased off slightly. Nationally, the NHPI was down 1.0% in November.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **BC's housing resale market was active in November, as the number of MLS residential sales rose 16.0% (seasonally adjusted) to 7,411 units.** The increase was above the national average (10.3%), but lower than in New Brunswick (+42.0%), Alberta (+24.3%) and Newfoundland (+17.6%). Housing sales in Brit-

ish Columbia have been recovering from the doldrums they were in earlier in the year, with double-digit growth rates reported in both October and November. The improvement in the housing market has been widespread across the country, as consumers have responded to the stimulus of lower interest rates. Mortgage rates are currently at 40-year lows.

Source: Canadian Real Estate Association

- **The average price paid for homes sold in British Columbia moderated in November, dropping to \$207,375, or 5.4% less than in the same month of 1995.** Even though house prices rose in the rest of Canada, the average resale price for homes in British Columbia continued to be the highest in the country. Nationally, the average residential price rose 1.1% (from \$150,594 to \$152,233) between November 1995 and the same month of 1996.

Source: Canadian Real Estate Association

The Information Highway

- **BC has the highest rate of internet usage in the country.** In 1996, 10.4% of households with a computer had an internet connection. Nationally, only 7.4% of households with a computer had access to the internet. Internet usage was also above average in Alberta (10.0%), Ontario (8.7%) and Nova Scotia (8.1%). Prince Edward Island (<1%) and Quebec (4.1%) had the lowest internet usage in the country.

Source: SC, Canadian Economic Observer

- **In addition to being more avid users of the internet, British Columbians were more likely than most other Canadians to have a home computer.** In 1996, 37.7% of BC households were equipped with a computer. This was just slightly below the percentage in Alberta (37.9%), and compares to a national average of 31.6%. Households in New Brunswick (21.5%) were least likely to be equipped with a computer.

Source: SC, Canadian Economic Observer

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