

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Census—Private Households

- **One in four households in BC were comprised of a person living alone in 1996.** Quebec (27.3%), Manitoba, and Saskatchewan (both at 26.5%) were the only regions where the percentage of one-person households was higher than BC's 25.3%. BC residents living alone were more likely to own their homes (47.2%) than the average Canadian (40.1%) in a one-person household. Less than a third (29.6%) of one-person households in Quebec lived in owned accommodation.

Source: 1996 Census of Canada

- **Condo ownership is more prevalent in BC than in any other part of the country.** Eleven percent of BC households were condo owner-occupiers, which was twice the national average (5%). In the other regions, condo ownership varied from less than one percent of all households in most parts of Atlantic Canada to 5% in both Ontario and Alberta.

In 1996, there were 156,955 condo owner-occupiers in BC, making up 30.5% of the Canadian total. Although Ontario had three times the population of BC, the number of condo owners in that province (204,470, or 39.7%) was only a third higher than in BC. *Source: 1996 Census of Canada*

The Economy

- **The number of cars, vans and trucks sold in the province was 7.1% lower in April than in the same month last year.** Sales of all types of vehicles except overseas-manufactured cars (+7.3%) were weaker than a year earlier. After four consecutive months in which new vehicle sales have fallen below 1997 levels, year-to-date vehicle sales in the province were down 10.2% from the first four months of 1997.

New vehicle sales have also been declining in Saskatchewan, where they were down for the fourth straight month (-14.3%, and -12.3% year-to-date). In the rest of Canada, vehicle sales advanced in April, increasing at rates ranging from 0.7% in PEI to 11.0% in Alberta. Canadian sales were 4.0% higher than in April 1997.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **The cost of new housing in the province continued to decline in April.** Vancouver's new housing price index dropped to 5.7% below the April 1997 level and in Victoria, the index was down 4.6%. New house prices have been in a free fall since mid-1994. In Victoria, the average new home now costs almost 20% less than in 1992, while the cumulative price drop in Vancouver is 12%.

Although both land and building costs have been declining since 1994, land price increases earlier in the decade have mitigated the overall deterioration. The average cost of land in Victoria is currently at about the same level as in 1992. In Vancouver, despite the continued slump, land prices are still 7% higher than in 1992. However, building costs have fallen 22% in Vancouver and 28% in Victoria. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Canadian goods-producing industries operated at 86.0% of their full capacity in the first quarter of the year, bringing the capacity utilization rate to less than one percentage point below its peak level of 86.8%, reached 10 years earlier.** In the construction industry, capacity utilization increased to 90.5%, which was higher than in any other major industry group. The manufacturing industry was also booming, at 86.7% of full capacity. Among manufacturing sectors, utilization rates ranged

Did you know...?

In 1996, one in eight BC homeowners spent more than a third of their income on shelter costs.

from a low of 70.0% in the tobacco industry to almost full capacity (99.4%) in the rubber products industry. Capacity utilization increased in the wood (85.9%) industry, but edged down to 89.6% for paper manufacturers. Utilization rates were slightly lower in the mining (84.6%), logging (79.1%) and utilities (78.0%) industries.

Source: Statistics Canada

Computer Programmers

- **The number of jobs for computer programmers and analysts in BC increased more than ten times as fast as total employment between 1992 and 1997.** The number of computer programmers employed in BC jumped 155% during this period, while total employment rose 14%. BC had the fastest employment growth for computer programmers in the country. Canadian employment in this occupation increased 92%, from 139,000 to 267,000. The unemployment rate for computer programmers averaged 3%. Canada's unemployment rate has not been that low since the mid-1960s. Computer programmers earned an average \$843 weekly in late 1997, \$266 more than the all-industry average. This was slightly less than the average (\$877) for other workers in the natural sciences, engineering and mathematics. About two-thirds of the programming jobs are found in Toronto, Montreal, Ottawa, and Vancouver. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Continuing Education

- **Enrollment in continuing education courses at BC universities fell 14.1% in 1996/97.** There were 67,039 students enrolled in these courses, compared to 78,023 in the previous year. Across Canada, enrollment was down in all provinces except Alberta (+4.7%), where registration in sports and recreation and liberal arts courses boosted the total. Canadian enrollment fell 6.6% to 327,181. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Residents of the three prairie provinces, Nova Scotia, and BC were the most likely to participate in continuing education programs at universities.** In BC, the enrollment rate was 22 per 1,000 adults. Saskatchewan (26), Alberta (25) and Nova Scotia (25) led the nation, while Newfoundland (7) and Quebec (8) had the lowest rates. The national average was 14. The

average tuition fee for a university continuing education course was \$360—13% more than in the previous year. *Source: Statistics Canada, BC STATS*

Alcohol Use

- **British Columbians aged 15 and over spent an average \$532 on purchases of beer, wine and spirits from liquor stores and agencies in the province during the 1996/97 fiscal year.** This was marginally (+0.3%) more than in the previous year. The two territories (NWT at \$714 and Yukon at \$952) were the only regions where per capita alcohol purchases were higher. The national average was \$475, and spending in other provinces ranged from \$401 in Saskatchewan to \$519 in Newfoundland. Beer (\$248 per capita) accounted for about half of total spending in BC, but residents of the province spent less on beer than the Canadian average (\$256). *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **In terms of volume, the average amount of alcohol purchased from liquor outlets in BC was 105 litres, 6 more than the national average.** BC residents bought an average 84 litres of beer (compared to a Canadian average of 83), 14 litres of wine (compared to 11), and 7 litres of spirits (compared to 5). Purchases of spirits were highest in the north and in the prairie provinces (with averages ranging from 8 to 12 litres). After Yukon (19 litres), BC residents had the highest per capita wine purchases in the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Since the beginning of the decade, per capita sales of alcoholic beverages in the province have declined 11.4% (from 119 to 105 litres), more than in any other region except NWT (-14.1%) and Newfoundland (-15.1%).** Sales of beer, wine and spirits all fell more than ten percent during this period. Nationally, total alcohol sales decreased 8.1%. However, the extent to which the proliferation of U-brews has affected alcohol sales is unknown. These figures only include sales from liquor stores and beer and wine outlets. *Source: Statistics Canada*

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Infoline Report:

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British Columbia Falling Behind in Export Boom for Secondary Manufactured Wood

Exports of secondary manufactured solid wood products have risen fast in British Columbia during the 1990s. British Columbia exports of a selection of the most important products in this category (see table next page) rose 184 per cent between 1990 and 1997, for an average annual growth of 26 per cent. However, as impressive as these figures may seem, exports from the rest of Canada have risen faster. Secondary manufactured solid wood products shipped abroad from other provinces rose 414 per cent over the same period, at an annual average rate of 59 per cent.

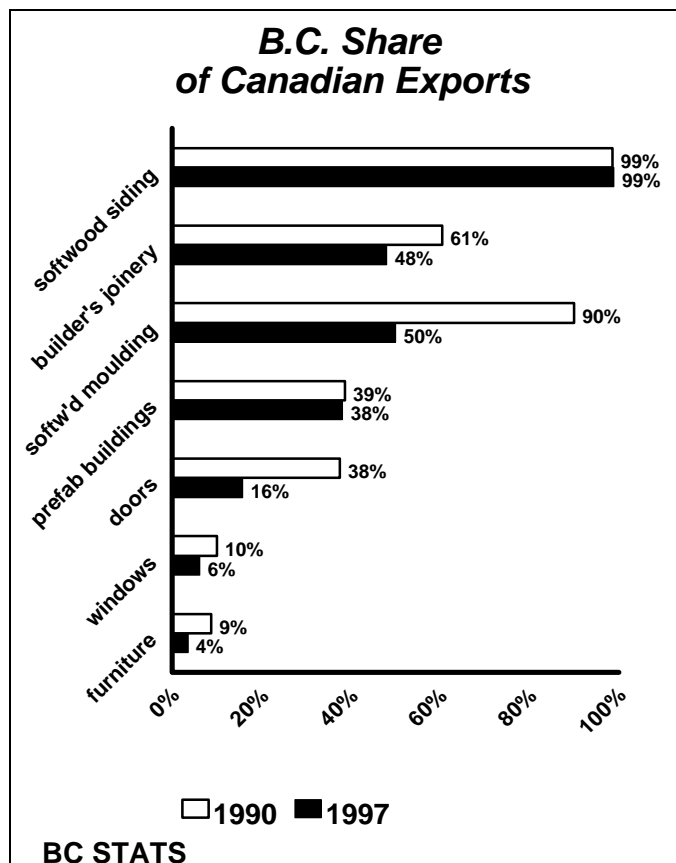
This has meant that British Columbia is falling behind the rest of Canada (taken as a whole) in the drive to include more value added content in its solid wood exports. Although the secondary manufactured ratio of British Columbia's total solid wood exports rose from 6.2 per cent to 8.5 per cent between 1990 and 1997, the ratio for the rest of Canada rose from 22.3 per cent to 30.6 per cent.

Much of the increase in exports of secondary manufactured wood products from the rest of Canada has been produced by the very rapid growth of furniture exports from Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario and Quebec. It could be argued that wooden furniture exports are less strictly value added wood products because they include upholstery and other non-wood components, and because the woods used are often imported from other provinces or countries.

If furniture is excluded from the selection of secondary manufactured wood products, the figures still suggest that British Columbia's progress to increase the value added content

of its solid wood exports in the 1990s falls short when compared with that of other provinces.

With furniture excluded, the portion of secondary manufactured products in British Columbia solid wood exports went from 5.5 per cent in 1990 to 7.9 per cent in 1997 – an improvement of 2.4 percentage points. For the rest of Canada, the portion went from 10.7 per cent to 15.2 per cent – an improvement of 4.5 percentage points.



Exports of Selected Secondary Manufactured Wood Products

from B.C. (\$ millions)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
softwood siding	146	137	143	141	144	142	130	176
builder's joinery	23	20	28	42	60	82	122	265
softwood moulding	9	6	9	12	12	12	15	16
hardwood moulding	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1
pre-fab buildings	36	34	24	34	64	108	130	152
doors	9	8	14	16	28	33	32	25
windows	1	1	2	2	1	2	4	5
furniture	33	30	26	31	47	49	65	66
other *	33	37	48	58	69	74	86	121
Selection Total	291	273	294	337	425	503	585	827

from other Canada (\$ millions)

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
softwood siding	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2
builder's joinery	15	19	22	37	75	103	163	287
softwood moulding	1	1	1	3	13	15	13	16
hardwood moulding	13	8	9	14	18	20	27	28
pre-fab buildings	57	59	62	63	105	152	237	247
doors	15	16	20	24	53	69	103	133
windows	9	13	20	28	42	44	65	76
furniture	347	344	439	668	935	1,113	1,423	1,823
other *	139	141	158	194	246	309	323	462
Selection Total	598	603	733	1,033	1,488	1,827	2,356	3,074

B.C share of Canadian total

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
softwood siding	98.6%	98.6%	98.6%	98.6%	99.3%	98.6%	98.5%	98.9%
builder's joinery	60.5%	51.3%	56.0%	53.2%	44.4%	44.3%	42.8%	48.0%
softwood moulding	90.0%	85.7%	90.0%	80.0%	48.0%	44.4%	53.6%	50.0%
hardwood moulding	7.1%	0.0%	0.0%	6.7%	0.0%	4.8%	3.6%	3.4%
pre-fab buildings	38.7%	36.6%	27.9%	35.1%	37.9%	41.5%	35.4%	38.1%
doors	37.5%	33.3%	41.2%	40.0%	34.6%	32.4%	23.7%	15.8%
windows	10.0%	7.1%	9.1%	6.7%	2.3%	4.3%	5.8%	6.2%
furniture	8.7%	8.0%	5.6%	4.4%	4.8%	4.2%	4.4%	3.5%
other *	19.2%	20.8%	23.3%	23.0%	21.9%	19.3%	21.0%	20.8%
Selection Total	32.7%	31.2%	28.6%	24.6%	22.2%	21.6%	19.9%	21.2%

* 'other' includes fencing, flooring, cases, pallets, etc.

BC STATS

Within the broad category of secondary manufactured wood products, British Columbia's export progress compares better for some items than for others.

In the important prefabricated housing category, the province's export growth came close to matching the rest of Canada. Exports of these products from British Columbia rose 322 per cent between 1990 and 1997, from \$36 million to \$152 million. Over the same period, export shipments from other provinces rose 333 per cent, from \$57 million to \$247 million. Most of this has been shipped to the Japanese market, where British Columbia enjoys some trade advantage relative to the rest of Canada because of its Pacific location.

For wood siding, British Columbia's export growth was the highest in Canada. However this was because almost all was produced from red cedar, a tree that is harvested in no other province, and that is becoming very difficult to obtain in the United States. Even in British Columbia, red cedar is becoming scarce, so that there is limited potential to expand the volume of wood siding exports in future, unless a suitable substitute can be produced from another type of wood. During the 1990s, British Columbia's wood siding exports grew 21 per cent. They reached \$176 million in 1997, 99 per cent of the Canadian total.

British Columbia's timber resources provide no such unique advantage for producing wooden mouldings. Mouldings are the continuously shaped strips of wood used to trim doors and windows, among other purposes. Softwood mouldings (those made from coniferous wood) exported from other provinces grew 1,500 per cent from \$1 million to \$16 million between 1990 and 1997, as exports of hardwood mouldings (from non-coniferous wood) grew 115 per cent, from \$13 million, to \$28 million. British Columbia exports of softwood mouldings grew a more moderate 78 per cent, to \$16 million. The province exported only \$1 million of hardwood mouldings in 1997.

Exporters across Canada having been shipping much greater values of products in the builder's

joinery category. These include pre-drilled studs and many of the engineered wood structural components, such as 'I' beams, that have increasingly replaced sawn lumber in construction work. Exports of builders joinery products from British Columbia, grew 1,052 per cent between 1990 and 1997. For the rest of Canada they grew an even more striking 1,813 per cent. The value shipped from British Columbia in 1997 amounted to \$265 million, 3 per cent of the value of all solid wood exports from the province, and 48 per cent of total Canadian exports of builders joinery products.

More highly processed and value added types of building products shipped from British Columbia have traditionally accounted for far smaller shares of the Canadian total. And these shares have shrunk even further during the 1990s.

For example, wooden door exports from British Columbia accounted for 38 per cent of the Canadian total in 1990, but by 1997 they had slipped to 16 per cent of the Canadian total. This occurred as British Columbia's wooden door exports actually grew 178 per cent, from \$9 million to \$25 million, but exports from other provinces jumped 787 per cent, from \$15 million to \$133 million.

There have been similar patterns for exports of wooden windows and furniture. British Columbia export growth for these products has been outstripped by exports from the rest of Canada, leaving the province with small and still shrinking portions of total Canadian exports.

Many of the companies that have produced the surge in exports of secondary manufactured wood products from other provinces have been small or medium sized. Gerhard Kress, Industry Canada senior specialist for the wood processing industry suggests that the smaller size and family ownership that is typical for these firms establishes a different business style than is prevalent in the large corporations dominating the high volume, commodity producing British Columbia wood industries.

This assessment is echoed by Dr. Bill Wilson of the Canadian Forestry office in Victoria. Dr. Wilson who adds that British Columbia cannot rely on its timber resources alone to encourage the development of more value added wood processing because 'secondary manufacturing of more refined wood products tends to be based near the markets.' This could certainly have been an important factor in the development of Ontario and Quebec secondary wood processing industries, but it explains less of the success enjoyed by firms located in Winnipeg or Calgary.

In addition to markets, Dr. Wilson identifies the two other important factors for secondary wood manufacturing industries as, 'skilled and affordable labour, and reliable access to wood at reasonable and stable prices.'

The problem of finding ways to include more value added processing content in British Columbia's wood exports has taken on a new urgency recently. The traditional wood industries have been experiencing shutdowns and layoffs because of a combination of problems including limited commercially available wood supply, new international competition, product substitution for dimension lumber products, and economic slowdown in Asia. More than ever, this has focused attention on value added process-

ing as the best way to preserve employment levels in the industry.

One important initiative intended to promote value added processing has been the Centre For Advanced Wood Processing (CAWP). This is a University of British Columbia based program inspired by European models. The Centre describes itself as 'an interdisciplinary initiative by the faculties of Forestry and Applied Science at U.B.C. --- created through a partnership of the Canadian wood products industry, the Federal and Provincial Governments, and Forest Renewal B.C.' CAWP produces graduate students at the masters and doctorate level in advanced woodworking. It also provides workshops and seminars to transfer the latest available technology to Canadian industry and conducts industry supported applied research.

Another initiative is WoodLINKS, a Forest Renewal B.C. funded program operated as a non-profit society. WoodLINKS is designed to provide the value added industry with better qualified entry level employees.

As more graduates are produced through these programs they should provide the industry in British Columbia with more of the skilled labour that has been listed as one of the requirements for a healthy secondary wood processing industry.

Recent Feature Articles Published in EXPORTS, Listed By Release Date

March 1998	<i>British Columbia Hardest Hit By Slumping Asian Exports</i>	December 1997	<i>Exporting To Latin America Calls For New Export Mix</i>
March 1998	<i>Export Emphasis Shifts to Manufactured Goods, As Resource Commodities Falter</i>	October 1997	<i>New APEC Markets For British Columbia As Asia Industrialises</i>
January 1998	<i>Air Freight Services Promoting Export Growth and Diversification</i>	October 1997	<i>New Jobs Tied To New Exports</i>
January 1998	<i>Forty Years Later, Forestry Exports As Important As Ever</i>	September 1997	<i>Canadian Building Products Climb As Japanese Regulatory Barriers Fall</i>
December 1997	<i>British Columbia Export Focus Swings Back To United States</i>	July 1997	<i>With Hong Kong, China Becomes Third Largest Export Destination For Western Provinces</i>

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 also on the Internet at <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca>

BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Jan 1/98	
BC	3,950.7	1.7
Canada	30,425.3	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on one year ago
(BC - at market prices)	1997	
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	109,347	3.3
GDP (\$ 1992 millions)	98,201	2.2
GDP (\$ 1992 per Capita)	25,039	0.2
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1992 per Capita)	16,515	-2.3
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Mar	2,841	-4.1
Merchandise Exports (raw) Mar	2,086	-11.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Mar	2,681	-0.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
(all items - 1992=100)	Apr '98	
BC	109.8	0.2
Canada	108.3	0.8
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
(seasonally adjusted)	May '98	
Labour Force - BC	2,048	2.2
Employed - BC	1,850	1.3
Unemployed - BC	198	12.1
		May '97
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	9.7	8.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	8.4	9.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jun 10/98	June 11/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.55	5.40
- 5 year	6.95	7.35
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jun 10/98	June 11/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.4666	1.3869
US \$ (reciprocal of above rate)	0.6818	0.7210
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Mar '98	
BC	615.40	1.4
Canada	607.26	2.0
SOURCES:	Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics	

Area Census Profiles

One of the most requested pieces of information from BC STATS is the census profile for a particular area in the province. We have produced these for the past several censuses and have had a 1996 Census profile that has been updated with each wave of data that has been released. There is a profile for each and every regional district, including all the municipalities and subdivisions of the regional district (SRD). We will supply copies to clients who pay between \$10 and \$30 depending on whether that area is covered by a 20-page, 30-page or 60-page profile. The number of municipalities and SRDs making up an area set the pages and hence the cost. If you are unsure of the contents of these profiles or you do not need that geographic detail, you may be satisfied with the sample set that we have put up on our Internet site.

http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/cen_pro.htm

The sample data tables will give you a complete profile for BC and the eight Development Regions. Note that we have not yet added the housing data release, but plan to do so next week.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, May 1998
- Exports, March 1998

Next week

- Tourism Room Revenue, February 1998
- Migration Highlights, First Quarter 1998