BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS Infoline

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

After-Tax Income

- **The real income of Canadians (both families and unattached individuals) has been declining since the late 1980s.** With the effects of inflation factored out, after-tax incomes in the country fell from $39,400 to $36,900 between 1981 and 1996. In BC, income has dropped from $42,000 to $37,700 during the same period.
Source: SC, Catalogue 13-210-XPB

- **BC families had the second-highest average after-tax income ($47,421) in the country in 1996**. Ontario ($49,653) and Alberta ($46,793) were the only other provinces where family income was above the national average of $45,032.

  The average BC family earned $52,731, and received an additional $6,709 in transfer income during 1996. Income taxes averaged $12,019, consuming about 20% of total family income. The most highly-taxed families in the country were those in Quebec (22.0% of family income), even though pre-tax incomes in that province ($50,935) were below the national average of $56,629. Residents of Saskatchewan (20.8%) and Ontario (20.7%) also paid more taxes, relative to their incomes, than the average Canadian (20.5%). BC's tax rate (20.2%) was slightly below the national average.
Source: SC, Catalogue 13-210-XPB

Public Sector Employment

- **The number of public sector employees in British Columbia declined during 1997.** There were 345,600 people employed by governments, hospitals, educational institutions and crown corporations in the province last year, 5,000 less than in 1996. Federal government employment decreased 4.7%, while the number of jobs in the provincial/local sector edged down 0.4%.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **Relative to its population, BC had the second-smallest public sector in the country, with 88 employees per 1,000 population.** Most of these workers were employed in the provincial (42) and local (29) sectors.

  Ontario (83) and Alberta (90) were the only other regions where the size of the public sector was below the national average (92). The two territories, PEI (118), Nova Scotia (113) and Manitoba (111) had the largest number of public sector employees compared to their population.
Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS

Labour Market

- **The number of regular employment insurance (EI) beneficiaries in the province advanced 2.3% (seasonally adjusted) in April, rising to 69,420.** The increase followed a 2.0% upturn in the previous month. Nationally, the number of EI beneficiaries resumed its downward trend in April, dropping to 1.9% below the March level. Manitoba (-5.7%) and Ontario (-3.9%) posted the largest declines. The number of recipients was up significantly in Yukon (+6.2%) and Alberta (+4.4%).
Source: Statistics Canada

- **Average weekly earnings in British Columbia dipped slightly (-0.2% to $616, seasonally adjusted) in March, but remained above the national average (+0.4%, to $609).** In Alberta, average earnings rose 0.7% to $619, surpassing those in BC. Workers in NWT ($725), Yukon ($687) and Ontario ($652) continued to have the highest weekly earnings in the country.
Source: Statistics Canada

Report Tourism Room Revenue–1997 Annual Report

Did you know...?
An international survey of the cost of living ranked Vancouver 57th among 119 cities, with a cost of living comparable to that in Rome, Seattle, or Melbourne. Montreal was 64th and Toronto 69th. Tokyo is still the most expensive city in the world.

The Economy

- **Wholesale sales in the province edged down 0.3% (seasonally adjusted) between March and April.** Sales by wholesalers have been weakening during most of this year, and year-to-date, were down 2.1% from the first four months of 1997. Total Canadian sales have see-sawed, with increases in one month followed by declines in the next. Despite this, year-to-date sales were up 8.1%, as the recent softening has not yet offset the gains made during most of 1997. Four of the ten provinces posted year-to-date increases in excess of ten percent, which ranged from 10.3% in Ontario to 17.6% in Manitoba. Nova Scotia (-5.6%) and PEI (-4.3%) were the only provinces other than BC where wholesale sales have fallen. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Retail sales in the province picked up speed in April, rising 1.7% (seasonally adjusted) after increasing 0.5% in the previous month.** For the second consecutive month, the increase was above the national average (+1.0%). Alberta (+2.6%) was the only region where sales rose more than in BC.

  Year-to-date sales in the province remained slightly below (-0.3%) last year's levels, largely due to weakness during the autumn and winter months. Despite some volatility, retail sales in the rest of the country have remained well above the levels reached in the first four months of 1997. Nationally, sales were up 5.4%, with growth rates ranging from 2.2% in Yukon to 8.9% in Ontario. However, sales have been tapering off in many parts of the country, and if BC retailers continue to pick up speed, they may yet catch up. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Demographics

- **Canada's natural population growth is expected to approach zero by the year 2020 but in BC, the number of births in the province is expected to continue to exceed the number of deaths further into the next millenium.** Because such a large part of BC's population growth is due to migration, and migrants tend to be younger, on average, than the rest of the population, it is likely that BC's birth rate will continue to exceed the death rate longer than in the country as a whole. However, natural increase is forecast to account for only 7% of BC's population growth by 2025. Currently, about a quarter of BC's population growth is attributable to this factor. Natural increase accounts for just under half (47%) of the nation's population growth. *Source: Statistics Canada, BC STATS*

Income Support

- **In April, 7.3% (292,598) of British Columbians were beneficiaries of Income Support–the lowest level since October 1991.** The number of dependent children in families on income support was at its lowest level (97,077 children) since June 1992. *Source: Ministry of Human Resources Administrative data*

Legal Aid

- **Legal aid expenditures in the province declined 7% in 1996/97, falling to $25.23 per capita.** Nationally, legal aid spending was down 15%, to $17.90. Spending fell in most regions, with Alberta (+15%) and PEI (+8%) being the only exceptions. About 60% of legal aid expenditures in BC are funded by the province. *Source: SC, Juristat, Catalogue 85-002-XPE*

Working at Home

- **Although working at home is becoming an increasingly common practice, it hasn't caught on in BC as much as in some other parts of the country**. About 9% of employees work at home in BC. Alberta (12%) has the highest rate, while Quebec (7%) has the lowest. Quebec, New Brunswick (8%) and PEI (8%) are the only provinces with a smaller percentage of the workforce working from home. One in four workers with a university education do all or part of their work at home, compared to 7% of those with a high-school diploma or post-secondary certificate. Working at home is most common when there are children under 16 present. *Source: SC, Perspectives, Summer 1998*

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BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

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Tourism Room Revenue ◆ Annual 1997

1997 Highlights

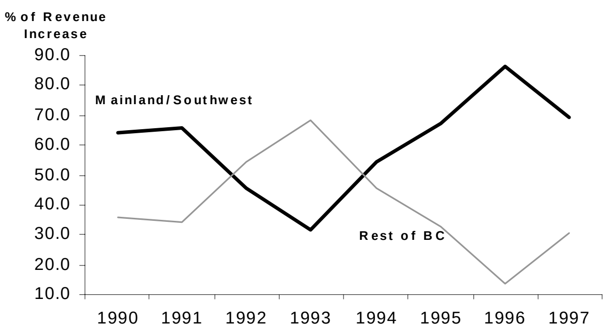
The Province

- British Columbia room revenue grew 5.8% in 1997. Total revenue exceeded $1.1 billion, the highest ever annual amount.

In the Regions

- A significant percentage of overall BC growth was concentrated in Mainland/Southwest (+7.0%). This region accounted for more than half of total BC revenue in 1997, and more than two thirds of the $63.3 million BC revenue increase.

Lower Mainland revenue boosts BC



- The other development region that experienced revenue expansion above the BC average was Northeast (+21.1% to $24.1 million). Kootenay's increase (+5.3% to $44.6 million) was the eighth consecutive year of growth for the region.

***Note**: All comparisons are for the reference year relative to the previous year, unless otherwise noted.*

The Accommodation Types

- Revenue advanced for all accommodation types in 1997. Vacation rentals had the strongest growth, increasing 13.2% to $86.3 million. Some of this can be attributed to a 5.7% increase in the number of vacation rental rooms available in 1997.
- Total hotel revenue was $863.4 million, or three quarters of the total BC room revenue. While total hotel growth was 5.2%, the larger hotels seemed to benefit the most from this expansion. Hotels with 250 or more rooms saw revenue increase 6.8% to $363.9 million, while hotels with 150 to 249 rooms expanded 5.9%. Motels, which accounted for 14.3% of total revenue, experienced moderate growth of 3.8%.

Text Table 1. Room Revenue Summary

Accommodation Type	1997 ($000)	1996 ($000)	% chg
Total	1,156,666	1,093,402	+5.8
Hotels	863,431	820,553	+5.2
Motels	165,966	159,789	+3.8
Other	127,269	113,025	+12.6
Regions			
Northeast	24,105	19,907	+21.1
Mainland/Southwest	664,041	620,324	+7.0
Kootenay	44,601	42,339	+5.3
Thompson/Okanagan	145,732	139,136	+4.7
Vancouver Isl./Coast	205,139	198,674	+3.3
Nechako	11,133	10,890	+2.2
Cariboo	45,170	44,582	+1.3
North Coast	16,746	17,550	-4.6

1997 Room Revenue Trends

Whistler leads Lower Mainland

The municipality of Whistler led the way in Mainland/Southwest with a 10.1% jump in revenue during 1997. This occurred even though hotel revenues in Whistler softened, increasing only 6.9% after 2 years of double digit growth. Vacation rental revenue surged 20.7% in Whistler, the fourth consecutive year of double digit increase.

Vancouver hotels accounted for almost three quarters of Greater Vancouver Regional District hotel revenue, and over 60% of Mainland/Southwest hotel revenue. Hotel revenue in downtown Vancouver (+9.1%) and the rest of the city of Vancouver (+9.9%) rose, while hotels in the remainder of the GVRD fell (-1.9%).

North Coast ebbs…

North Coast decreased after four years of growth. Effects of the general slowdown in the forestry & fishing industries, cutbacks at Skeena Cellulose, and the temporary relocation of the Alaska/BC ferry service, contributed to a downturn in revenue (-4.6%). Hardest hit was the city of Prince Rupert (-10.8%) which accounts for 40% of total revenue for the area.

…while Northeast soars

Northeast continued to benefit from recent activity in the oil and gas industry. Total 1997 revenue of $24.1 million was the highest ever. The largest increase was in vacation rental revenue (+42.6%) which rebounded from a setback in 1996. Since 1992 vacation rentals in the area have increased from $536 thousand to $2.8 million, over 500%.

Vancouver Island up

The Vancouver Island/Coast increase of 3.3% to $205 million marked the 6th consecutive year of growth. The strongest increase in revenue among the Vancouver Isl./Coast regional districts was Alberni-Clayoquot with a 17.4% rise from 1996. Despite this, the total number of revenue properties in the region declined by 2.2%, one of only two BC regions to experience this (the other was Kootenay (-1.6%)). Hardest hit was the city of Nanaimo, which lost 28.6 percent of hotel properties and 13.7% of total rooms.

Text Table 2. 1997 BC Tourism Indicators

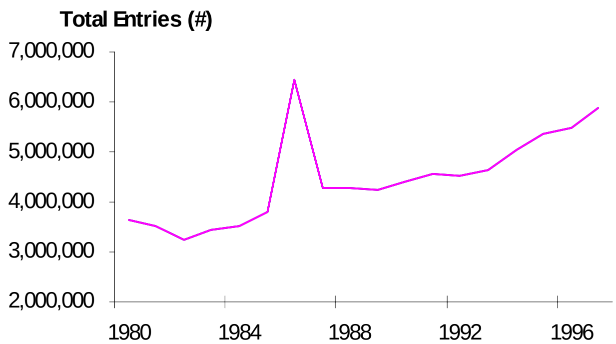
	Change	*Total*
Hotel Industry		
Occupancy rate (%)	- 1.6	67.0
Average room charge ($)	+ 7.03	109.02
(Pannell Kerr Forster)		
Passenger Traffic	**(%)**	**(000s)**
Vancouver International Airport		
Total traffic	+ 5.3	14,786
US	+ 8.3	3,733
Other international	+ 6.4	3,110
Canada	+ 3.6	7,941
(YVR)		
Victoria International Airport		
Total traffic	+ 12.7	1,103
(*Victoria Airport Authority*)		
Transportation	**(%)**	**(000s)**
Coquihalla Highway		
Passenger vehicles	- 0.4	2,326
(Ministry of Transportation & Highways)		
BC Ferries		
Vehicle volume	- 0.8	8,094
Passenger volume	- 0.8	22,025
(BC Ferries)		

- A slight dampening in hotel occupancy rates in 1997 reflected the wet spring and cool summer experienced in most of BC. However, courtesy of El Nino, a dry fall period extended the tourist season and offset much of the weather-related slowness. Total BC occupancy was 67.0%, a 1.6 percentage point drop from 1996.
- The highest occupancy rate recorded in 1997 was Richmond (Airport) at 77.2%. Outside the Lower Mainland the highest rate was Prince George (73.3%), which has held this honour for the last five years.

1997 Traveller Entries to BC

- In 1997, American travellers took 5,892,660 trips to Canada via British Columbia, an increase of 7.2% from 1996. This is the highest yearly total since Expo sparked 6.4 million trips in 1986.

American travellers on the increase



- Americans made 7.3% more same-day trips into BC in 1997. This was slightly higher than the equivalent growth of trips into all of Canada (+5.0%). The 7.3% increase in overnight trips to BC by USA residents was also above the equivalent Canadian average of 6.2%.

Trips from overseas waning

- Although total entries by overseas residents edged up 1.3% to 1,430,238 in 1997, this was substantially less than the 16.8% and 25.5% increases recorded the previous two years.
- Entries to BC by residents of Asian countries continued to dominate overseas entries. Despite tapering off from the double digit advances of the last three years, total 1997 Asian visitor entries rose a modest 2.5% to 797,987. This was the highest yearly total on record, and accounted for 55.8% of total overseas trips to BC in 1997.
- Fewer (-3.9%) residents of European countries entered BC 1997. The largest percentage decrease was German residents (-9.5% to 121,215). Total German entries into Canada were also down (-10.4%), indicating that the relative strength of the Canadian dollar against the German mark may have been a factor.

More Canadians travel abroad…

- Canadian travellers seem to be taking advantage of the relative strength of the dollar compared to European currencies. Total re-entries by Canadian residents through BC in 1997 increased 14.1%. On the other hand, the weak Canadian currency relative to the US dollar is deterring many Canadians from travelling to the US. Re-entries from the US decreased 2.9%, to 12,660,219, the lowest level in ten years.

…but stay home to buy

- Canadian same-day auto trips to the US are often taken to be a measure of cross-border shopping. In 1997, same-day trips to the US fell to an eleven year low for BC and a ten year low for Canada. There were 6.1 million fewer same-day trips to the US from BC in 1997 than in the peak year of 1991 (15.4 million), a drop of 39.6%.

Text Table 3. 1997 Traveller Entries

	% chg	Total
American visitors		
Total	+ 7.2	5,892,560
Same-day	+ 7.3	2,799,364
Overnight	+ 7.3	3,093,196
Overseas visitors		
Total	+ 1.3	1,430,238
Europe	- 3.9	449,140
UK	- 7.9	173,229
Asia	+ 2.5	797,978
Hong Kong	- 26.8	95,089
Japan	- 7.2	317,339
Oceania	+ 4.9	122,053
Canadian re-entries		
Total	- 2.1	13,427,527
From overseas	+ 14.1	767,308
From US	- 2.9	12,660,219
Auto Same-day	- 4.8	9,328,581

(Statistics Canada)

SPECIAL FOCUS: BC Gateway to the Pacific Rim remains open

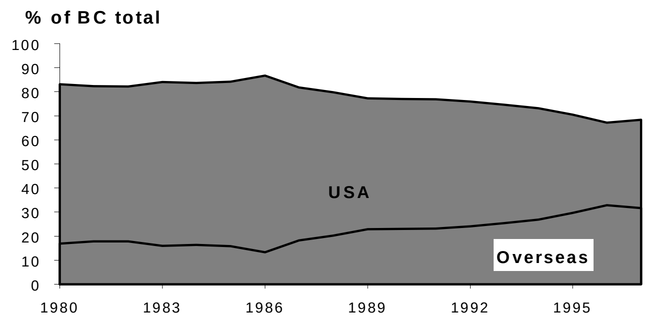
Visitor entries to BC: 1980-1997

In 1997, nearly one third of all visitor entries into Canada by residents of overseas countries were to BC. Visitors from the US* entering BC represented almost one quarter of all American entries to Canada. British Columbia continues to grow in importance as a major point of entry for international residents.

Overseas residents increase BC share

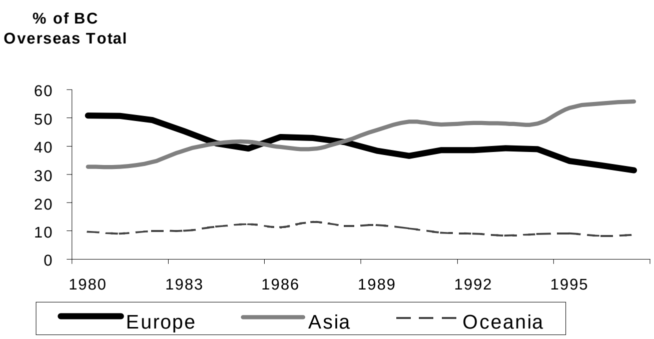
Since 1980, the composition of visitor entries to BC has shifted. In 1980, 83% of BC entries were US residents and 17% were from overseas. By 1997, however, only 68% of BC entries were US residents. By contrast, 32% of all BC visitor entries in 1997 were from overseas.

Overseas residents expand share



BC overseas traveller entries are almost twice as likely to be from an Asian country as from Europe. In 1980, European visitors represented 9% of the BC total, compared to only 5% for Asian residents. In 1997, Asian residents represented 18% and European visitors 10% of BC entries.

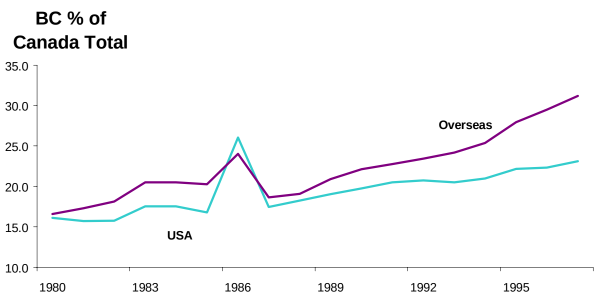
Asians now outnumber European travellers



BC Pacific Rim contribution to Canada growing

The increase in overseas residents choosing BC as their preferred point of entry into Canada is reflected in BC's share of Canadian entries. In 1980, BC attracted 17% of total overseas Canadian entries. By 1997, this share jumped to 31%.

BC increases share of Canadian entries



Asians entering through BC now represent 52% of all Canadian Asian entries. This is a dramatic rise from 1980 when only 30% of Asian travellers to Canada entered through BC. By contrast, BC's share of European visitors has increased only moderately from 13% in 1980 to 19% in 1997.

Residents of Hong Kong and Japan have remained consistent in their preference for BC. Hong Kong visitors to BC in 1980 represented 61% of all Hong Kong entries, and 62% in 1997. Japanese growth in the same period has been from 42% to 51%. The most significant growth has occurred in entries from other Asian countries, such as Taiwan and South Korea. This reflects both the expansion of the economies in these Asian countries, and BC's position as the Pacific gateway to Canada.

The data in this report is based on the number of trips taken by international residents into Canada by province of entry, as reported by Statistics Canada.
**Only those US residents who stayed at least one night (overnight) in Canada are included.*
Entry data does not include inter-provincial travel by domestic or international residents.
Overseas residents include persons from any county except USA.

Infoline

June 26, 1998

fax transmission information service from **BC STATS**

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

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Apr 1/98	% change on one year ago
BC	3,958.7	1.4
Canada	30,488.9	1.0
GDP and INCOME		% change on
(BC - at market prices)	1997	one year ago
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.) Apr	2,738	-9.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Apr	1,909	-19.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Apr	2,811	1.5
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	May '98	one year ago
BC	110.3	0.3
Canada	108.7	1.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	May '98	one year ago
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 24/98	June 25/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.55	5.20
- 5 year	6.95	7.00
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jun 24/98	June 25/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4697	1.3948
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.6804	0.7169
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Apr '98	one year ago
BC	612.18	-0.2
Canada	608.94	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

Tourism Room Revenue is one of BC STATS' statistical periodicals. Regular issues feature current data each month while an Annual issue summarizes trends over the longer term. A new addition is a page on Traveller Entries.

In place of the **Report**, this issue of *Infoline* includes the interpretive pages from the soon to be released ***Annual 1997 Tourism Room Revenue***. Only subscribers will receive the complete report, including the twelve pages of statistical tables.

Want to know more about tourism ? Go to:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/tourism.htm

For a look at a monthly issue, see:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/pubs/pr_tour.htm

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To subscribe, contact Kris Ovens at (250) 387-0359.

For analysis and technical information, contact Kevin Perrault at (250) 387-0360.

Oops! The Canada population figure reported here in ***BC at a glance . .*** and **highlights** last week, relied on incorrect data loaded onto CANSIM.

Released this week by BC STATS
- Consumer Price Index, May 1998
- Business Indicators, June 1998
- Current Statistics, June 1998

Next week
- Exports, April 1998