

## highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

### Prices

- **British Columbia's consumer price index (CPI) rose 0.4% during the twelve-month period ending in June, giving the province the second-lowest overall price increase in the country, after Newfoundland (+0.1%).** Canadian consumer prices were up 1.0%, with the largest increases occurring in Saskatchewan (+1.8%), Alberta (+1.6%) and Quebec (+1.4%). PEI continued to experience deflation. The province's CPI fell (-0.7%) for the fourth straight month.  
*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **BC's persistently low inflation rate has been driven by falling prices for owned accommodation, which were 4.2% lower than in June 1997.** The cost of owned accommodation dropped only moderately (-0.4%) at the national level. Gasoline prices in BC decreased (-8.8%) for the eighth straight month, and as a result average transportation costs were 0.9% lower than a year earlier.

Despite BC's low overall inflation rate, prices for some commodities have increased more than in the rest of Canada. The cost of food was up 2.5%, compared to a 2.1% increase nationally. Fresh vegetable (+15.3%) and fruit (+16.6%) prices surged, reflecting the effects of a weak Canadian dollar and unusual weather in the southern US. BC consumers also experienced higher-than-average increases in the cost of clothing (+0.9%), footwear (+2.8%), and household operations (+5.4%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

### Mobility of Low-Income Earners

- **Between 1993 and 1995, more than a quarter (27.3%) of BC workers who had a low-paying job (earning less than \$404.16 weekly) were able to increase their income.** Workers who

moved out of low paying jobs were those whose weekly earnings rose to at least \$455.25—10% above the low weekly earnings threshold of \$413.86—by 1995.

Low income earners in BC were more successful than other Canadians at moving out of low paying jobs. Nationally, 21.1% of low-income earners improved their situation, with rates in other provinces ranging from 11.1% in Manitoba to 24.7% in Ontario.

*Source: SC, Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics*

### The Economy

- **Exports of BC products continued to decline in May, dropping to 13.5% below the May 1997 level.** BC's exports have been falling steadily since the middle of last year, but May's decline was not as sharp as in the previous month (-19.5%). Canadian exports rose only moderately (+1.7%) in May, as weak commodity prices and retooling shutdowns in the automotive sector dampened export growth. Low energy prices continued to pull down the value of exports from Alberta (-9.3%) and Saskatchewan (-11.6%). Ontario's exports of autos and industrial goods were down slightly, and as a result that province posted its lowest increase (+3.8%) since June of 1997.  
*Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Year-to-date, BC's exports were down 13.5% from the first five months of 1997.** The major factor in the province's weak export performance continued to be faltering international sales of BC forest products, which have remained at about eighty percent of last year's levels since the beginning of 1998. Exporters of industrial goods have also been hard hit. However, some exporters in the province are doing considerably better than in 1997. Sales of automotive products were up 19.4% year-to-date, and consumer goods

### ***Did you know...?***

***The Bank of Canada estimates that \$2.7 million of counterfeit notes were in circulation last year, almost double the value (\$1.7 million) in 1996. During the last ten years, the value of counterfeit notes circulating in Canada has skyrocketed. In 1987, there were an estimated \$35,000 worth of counterfeit bills in circulation.***

exports remained fairly strong (+6.2%). Machinery and equipment exports rose 1.5%, continuing a pattern of slower growth after posting gains of about twenty percent during most of last year. Asia is a major market for many BC products, and the lingering economic weakness in that part of the world has affected BC more than most other provinces. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in BC fell 3.2% (seasonally adjusted) between April and May, after declining 3.7% in the previous month.** Most industries in the sector slowed or posted only moderate gains. The exceptions were the textile products (+7.2%), primary metals (+6.9%) and printing and publishing (+3.4%) industries. The decline in manufacturing was part of a nation-wide trend. Canadian shipments were down 1.0% in May, and shipments fell in all but two provinces—New Brunswick (+5.1%) and Nova Scotia (+3.3%). *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Year-to-date, manufacturing shipments from BC were down 7.6% from the first five months of 1997.** Shipments by wood (-18.6%), paper (-11.4%) and food (-7.2%) manufacturers plummeted. However, some of the province's emerging value-added industries increased their shipments to well above 1997 levels. Manufacturers of transportation equipment (+33.8%), electrical and electronic equipment (+19.2%), furniture and fixtures (+15.0%), clothing (+12.2%), and machinery and equipment (+10.4%) increased their shipments by more than ten percent. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **The number of new vehicles sold in the province was down for the fifth straight month in May (-8.3%).** Car (-11.5%) and truck (-5.2%) sales fell, bringing year-to-date sales to 9.8% below last year's level. Year-to-date sales were also off in Saskatchewan (-9.0%), Manitoba (-5.8%) and PEI (-5.0%), but rose 3.3% nationally. *Source: Statistics Canada*

### ***Tourism***

- **The number of visitors entering Canada via British Columbia was 2.8% higher this May than in the same month of 1997.** American visits to the province were up 6.8%, with same-day trips rising 7.8%, and the number of overnight visits increasing 5.9%. Visits to BC from the rest of the world fell 13.1% as the number of Asian visitors entering Canada via BC continued to dwindle (-23.4%). European entries were also down (-3.9%). *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **BC has benefited more from increased American travel, and been less severely affected by the slowdown in Asian traffic, than the rest of the country.** Year-to-date, US entries into all other provinces were up 5.4%, but entries into BC were 11.2% higher than in the first five months of 1997. At the same time, visitor entries from Asia to other parts of the country have dropped off 40.5%, compared to a 19.9% decline in BC. Similarly, the number of visits from Europe to BC were up 2.0% even though they edged down 0.1% in the rest of the country. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Passenger traffic through Vancouver International Airport was 5.4% higher in May than in the same month last year.** The increase was largely due to a 14.5% gain in the number of passengers travelling to or from the US. Domestic traffic was up 3.7%, but there were 0.9% fewer passengers arriving or departing on international flights. *Source: Vancouver International Airport*

### ***New Home Tax Rebates***

- **Eligible new home builders and purchasers in the province received an average GST rebate of \$4,246 for a home with a fair market value of \$194,235 in 1996.** Nationally, the average fair market value of new or substantially renovated homes was considerably lower (\$159,024) and the rebate was commensurately lower, at \$3,706. More than 600,000 GST housing rebates have been claimed since 1992. *Source: SC, catalogue 64-507-XIE*

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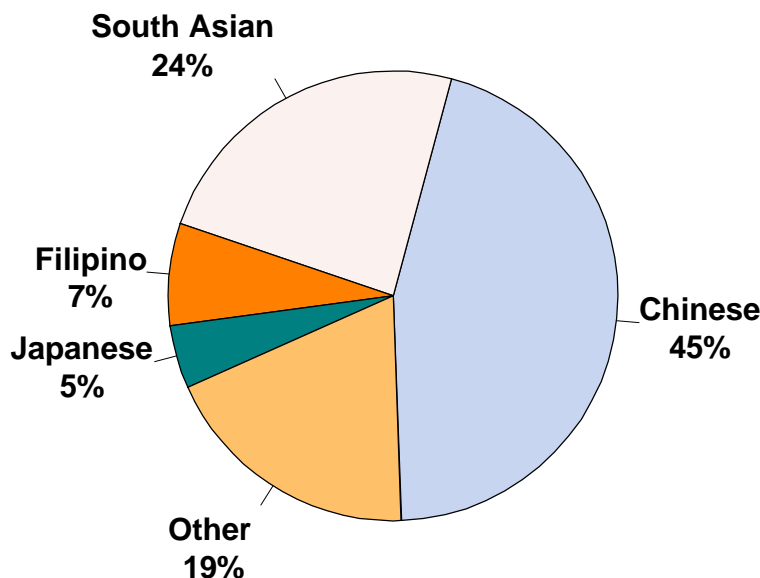
**Focus on BC Visible Minorities: *Identity***

**A New Question on Visible Minority Identity Was Added to the 1996 Census**

***Is this person:***

- White
- Chinese
- South Asian (e.g., East Indian, Pakistani, Punjabi, Sri Lankan)
- Black (e.g. African, Haitian, Jamaican, Somali)
- Arab/West Asian (e.g., Armenian, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Moroccan)
- Filipino
- South East Asian (e.g., Cambodian, Indonesian, Laotian, Vietnamese)
- Latin American
- Japanese
- Korean
- Other Please Specify \_

**In 1996, 660,540 Persons in BC Identified as a Visible Minority**



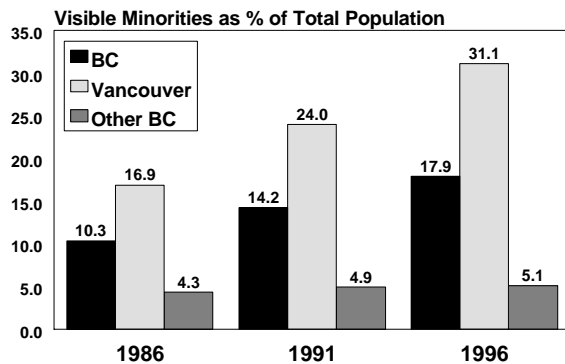
“Visible Minority” representation was 17.9 per cent of the total British Columbia population in 1996. Of those, three out of ten were born in Canada and the other 7 were immigrants. More than half of those were

new immigrants, that is they had arrived in Canada within the previous five years. This represents close to 5 per cent of the total BC population who were newly arrived visible minority immigrants.

In previous Censuses, the identification of Visible Minority persons was derived from a question on ancestry, namely, “*To which ethnic or cultural group(s) did this person’s ancestors belong?*” A person was considered a member of a visible minority if they responded with at least one ancestry that falls within the official “visible minority” definition.

Accordingly, in 1991 there were 462,465 visible minority persons in BC, a representation of 14.2 per cent of the total population. Although the method used to designate visible minorities differed considerably between 1986/1991 and 1996, the numbers indicate the two methods produce fairly consistent results<sup>1</sup>.

**The Dramatic Increase in the Visible Minority Population Over the Past 10 Years Occurred Primarily in Vancouver**



The large increase in the Vancouver Visible Minority population has been documented frequently from other data sources such as immigration data by country of origin, the ESL requirements in the education system, etc., as well as anecdotal evidence. The 96 Census confirms this trend. Of the 230,000 net new Vancouver residents between 1991 and 1996, 4 of 5 were visible minorities. On the other hand, in the remainder of the province, the visible minority population

growth was not much above that of the non-visible minority population.

Among ethnic groups that comprise the visible minority population of BC, the Japanese and the Black recorded the lowest rates of recent immigration. Almost 60 per cent of Japanese Canadians were born in Canada and only 7 per cent arrived in BC between 1991 and 1996. This 7 per cent compares to recent arrival rates of over one-third (33 per cent) for those of Korean, Chinese and Arab/West Asian origins. Persons with South Asian origins (primarily from India and Pakistan) had relatively low numbers of recent immigrants (only 18 per cent of total South Asians in BC).

Of the visible minority population, there are 21,000 non-permanent residents. Non-permanent residents consist primarily of students and to a lesser extent, those with temporary work permits. Among the total visible minority population, a very small percentage (3.2 per cent) are non-permanent residents. The exceptions to this are a relatively large proportion of persons with Japanese and Korean identity, (17 per cent and 13 per cent respectively).

The BC Korean community stands out as the group that has undergone the most change in the last five years. Assuming that non-permanent residents are new arrivees to Canada, almost one-half of the Koreans in BC arrived within the last five years.

Data on the economic and social characteristics of the Visible Minority population are scheduled to be released in the late fall of 1998.

<sup>1</sup> 1. As an example, the sum of 176,560 newly arrived immigrants added to the 1991 count of 462,465, results in 639,025, only 3 per cent lower than the actual 660,540 who identified as visible minorities in 1996. Other factors affecting the change in counts since 1991 (i.e. births, deaths, emigration and inter-provincial migration of visible minorities as well as changes in the number of non-permanent residents) likely net-out to relatively small positive numbers.



## Visible Minority Identity By Immigrant Status - 1996

<u>Visible Minority Identity</u>	<u>Total Population</u>		<u>Non-Immigrant Population</u>		<u>Immigrant Population</u>		<u>Recent Immigrants</u>			<u>Non-Permanent Residents</u>	
	<u>Number</u>	<u>% Distribution</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>as % of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>as % of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>as % of Total</u>	<u>as % of Immigrants</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>as % of Total</u>
<b>Total Population</b>	3,689,760	100.0	2,756,530	74.7	903,195	24.5	216,615	5.9	24.0	30,030	0.8
<b>Total visible minority population</b>	<b>660,540</b>	<b>17.9</b>	<b>185,565</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>454,115</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>176,560</b>	<b>26.7</b>	<b>38.9</b>	<b>20,860</b>	<b>3.2</b>
<b>Black</b>	23,275	0.6	11,565	49.7	11,050	47.5	3,500	15.0	31.7	655	2.8
<b>South Asian</b>	158,430	4.3	56,130	35.4	100,775	63.6	29,090	18.4	28.9	1,530	1.0
<b>Chinese</b>	299,860	8.1	68,320	22.8	225,360	75.2	102,445	34.2	45.5	6,175	2.1
<b>Korean</b>	19,055	0.5	2,515	13.2	14,005	73.5	6,715	35.2	47.9	2,535	13.3
<b>Japanese</b>	29,810	0.8	17,435	58.5	7,455	25.0	2,110	7.1	28.3	4,925	16.5
<b>Southeast Asian</b>	25,360	0.7	5,955	23.5	18,790	74.1	5,185	20.4	27.6	610	2.4
<b>Filipino</b>	47,080	1.3	10,630	22.6	34,525	73.3	13,610	28.9	39.4	1,925	4.1
<b>Arab/West Asian</b>	20,090	0.5	2,780	13.8	16,165	80.5	6,775	33.7	41.9	1,145	5.7
<b>Latin American</b>	17,655	0.5	2,840	16.1	13,815	78.2	4,265	24.2	30.9	1,005	5.7
<b>Visible minority, n.i.e.</b>	8,075	0.2	2,705	33.5	5,300	65.6	1,160	14.4	21.9	65	0.8
<b>Multiple visible minority</b>	11,845	0.3	4,690	39.6	6,875	58.0	1,705	14.4	24.8	285	2.4
<b>Non-Visible Minority Population</b>	<b>3,029,215</b>	<b>82.1</b>	<b>2,570,965</b>	<b>84.9</b>	<b>449,075</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>40,055</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>9,170</b>	<b>0.3</b>

Source: Statistics Canada, 1996 Census

Prepared by: BC STATS

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<i>BC at a glance . . .</i>		
<b>POPULATION (thousands)</b>		% change on one year ago
	Apr 1/98	
BC	3,958.7	1.4
Canada	30,488.9	1.0
<b>GDP and INCOME</b>		% 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
<b>TRADE (\$ millions)</b>		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) May	2,621	-10.4
Merchandise Exports (raw) Apr	1,909	-19.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Apr	2,811	1.5
<b>CONSUMER PRICE INDEX</b>		% change on one year ago
(all items - 1992=100)	Jun '98	
BC	110.4	0.4
Canada	108.8	1.0
<b>LABOUR FORCE (thousands)</b>		% change on one year ago
(seasonally adjusted)	Jun '98	
Labour Force - BC	2,041	1.9
Employed - BC	1,849	1.0
Unemployed - BC	192	11.7
		Jun '97
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	9.4	8.6
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	8.4	9.1
<b>INTEREST RATES (percent)</b>	Jul 15/98	July 16/97
Prime Business Rate	6.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.55	5.20
- 5 year	6.95	7.00
<b>US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE</b>	Jul 15/98	July 16/97
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.4848	1.3735
US \$ (reciprocal of above rate)	0.6735	0.7281
<b>AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS</b>		% change on one year ago
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Apr '98	
BC	612.18	-0.2
Canada	608.94	2.0
<b>SOURCES:</b> 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		

The importance of small business in the provincial economy is now well known. This has encouraged continued research into the small business sector, to improve overall understanding and to find ways to assist industries and accelerate overall growth. In a collaborative effort, Western Economic Diversification Canada, the Ministry of Small Business, Tourism, and Culture, and BC STATS have just released "A Profile of Small and Medium-Sized Exporters (SMXs)" for British Columbia. This monograph describes 13,700 SMXs in the province with \$3.7 billion of exports. The study presents industry and commodity breakdowns, comparisons with other provinces, and information on the destination markets for export shipments.

This is the first time such information has been assembled in a single place for British Columbia. You can download a free copy from the BC STATS website as

<http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/>  
[continued] [data/bus\\_stat/sm\\_bus/smx.pdf](http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/bus_stat/sm_bus/smx.pdf)

Alternatively, stop in to see us in Victoria, at 553 Superior 1st Floor, to pick up a printed copy.

Also check the website for the first of our collaborative papers on small business: *Small Business Employment and Growth in BC*, and an array of other materials concerning small business in the province. These can be found in the Business and Economics section, under Small Business.

### Released this week by BC STATS

- Labour Force Statistics, June 1998
- Exports, April 1998
- Tourism Room Revenue, March 1998

### Next week

- Consumer Price Index, June 1998
- Immigration Highlights, First Quarter, 1998
- Earnings & Employment Trends, April 1998