BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate rose three-tenths of a percentage point to 8.4% (seasonally adjusted) between February and March.** Almost 16,000 fewer people had jobs last month than in February–a 0.8% decline. At the same time, the number of people in BC who were either working or looking for work fell 0.5%, to 2.09 million. Newfoundland (+2.1 points, to 17.6%), BC (+0.3 points) and Alberta (+0.1 points, to 5.9%) were the only provinces where the jobless rate rose. Canada's unemployment rate was unchanged at 7.8%, as a downturn in employment (-29,200) was offset by a net withdrawal of 35,700 people from the labour force. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **All of the job losses in BC last month were among women.** There were 16,800 fewer women employed in March than in February, while 900 men found work. Despite this, the unemployment rate among women (7.6%) was well below that for men (9.1%). *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **In the regions, unemployment rates ranged from a low of 7.3% (3-month moving average) in Northeast to a high of 15.6% in Cariboo.** Kootenay (11.3%) and Thompson/Okanagan (10.9%) were the only other regions where the jobless rate exceeded ten percent. Mainland/Southwest residents continued to benefit from a lower-than-average unemployment rate (7.9%). The Victoria CMA's unemployment rate was 6.4% in March, almost three percentage points lower than in the same month of 1998.

  Unemployment rates in the Northeast region have doubled during the last year. At the beginning of 1998, the region's jobless rate was hovering around the three percent mark. The region still compares favourably with other parts of the province, but is showing the effects of a slowdown in the oilpatch. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The value of wages, salaries and benefits earned by British Columbians remained unchanged (at $5.2 billion, seasonally adjusted) in January.** Average weekly earnings in the province were lower than in December, but this was offset by an increase in employment.

  Nationally, labour income edged down 0.2% between December and January, with earnings falling in six of the twelve regions. NWT (-2.6%), Alberta (-1.2%) and Yukon (-1.1%) posted the largest declines. The downturn in Alberta was the first since March of 1998. Labour income fell in all three Prairie provinces, and in Quebec (-0.4%). It was flat in both Ontario and BC, and rose in Atlantic Canada. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **The number of help-wanted ads in BC newspapers declined in March.** The province's help-wanted index dropped from 122 (seasonally adjusted, 1996=100) in February to 119 last month. Alberta (-3 points, to 127) and Nova Scotia (-2 points, to 155) were the only other provinces where the index declined. Nationally, the help-wanted index was unchanged at 148. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Economy

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities increased 7.4% (seasonally adjusted) between January and February, due to a sharp rise (+28.2%) in planned non-residential construction activity.** Offsetting this was a 1.6% decline in residential permits issued.

  Nationally, the residential market was up (+2.4%) while the value of non-residential permits fell 10.2%. As a result, Canadian permits were 3.4% lower than in January. BC, Ontario (+6.9%) and

Report **Changes in Employment, 1988–98**

Did you know...
The average daily cost of housing an inmate in a federal prison was $140 in 1997/98.
In provincial/territorial institutions, the average daily cost was $120 per inmate.

PEI (+129.3%) were the only regions where the value of building permits increased.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **There were 7,327 consumer bankruptcies registered in the province last year, 0.5% less than in 1997.** Consumer bankruptcies in December were 7.0% higher than a year earlier.

  Business bankruptcies rose in 1998, increasing 15.2% to 1,031. Business bankruptcies were up 19.8% in December, marking the eighth consecutive month in which the number of business bankruptcies has increased, and the seventh time since April 1998 that they have risen at double-digit rates. *Source: Industry Canada*

Legal Aid

- **Legal aid expenditures in the province totalled $85.3 million during 1997/98, 12.1% less than in the previous year.** Legal aid spending was down in most parts of the country, declining 15.2% (to $454.6 million) nationally, and falling in all but three regions. Ontario (-25.3%, to $186.9 million) led the way, cutting back expenditures by a quarter.

  BC's 12.1% decline was the second-largest in the country. The drop in legal aid costs occurred in part because 7.4% fewer applications for assistance were approved in 1997/98. In Ontario, where spending plunged, there were 3.3% more applications approved in 1997/98 than in the previous year, indicating that the average payment for legal aid services declined significantly. On a per capita basis, legal aid spending in both Ontario ($16.66) and BC ($18.50) was well above the national average ($13.64). Per capita costs in other provinces ranged from $3.53 in PEI to $13.24 in Quebec. *Source: SC, The Daily*

Prison Population

- **On any day during 1997/98, an average of 157,766 Canadian adults were under the supervision of correctional agencies.** Most (124,796, or just under 80%) of these offenders were receiving some form of community supervision. The remaining 32,970 were housed in correctional facilities.

  Source: SC, Juristat, catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No 4

- **During 1997/98, the total number of *admissions* to provincial custody in BC was 10,583, a decline of 8.2% from 1996/97.** Out of every 10,000 adults charged in BC, 1,431 ended up serving some time behind bars. This compares to an admission rate of 1,964 per 10,000 charged for the country as a whole. Rates in other parts of the country ranged from a low of 548 in Manitoba (where the numbers exclude some types of admissions) to 4,741 in NWT

  Source: SC, Juristat, catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No 4

- **Nine of every ten (93%) offenders sentenced to provincial custody in BC during 1997/98 were male.** Alberta (89%) was the only province where less than ninety percent of the inmate population was male. Shares in other regions ranged from 91% in Saskatchewan and Ontario to 97% in NWT. The national average was 91%. In federal prisons, 95% of all inmates were male.

  Source: SC, Juristat, catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No 4

- **Aboriginals were also disproportionately represented among the incarcerated.** They accounted for 16% of the prison population in BC, but three out of every four (72%) prisoners in Saskatchewan. Aboriginal inmates also made up a significant share of the prison population in Manitoba (61%), Yukon (41%) and Alberta (39%). In the rest of the country, aboriginals represented anywhere from 1% (Quebec) to 9% (Ontario) of the prison population. The national average was 17%.

  Source: SC, Juristat, catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No 4

- **In 1997/98, there were 356 British Columbians who served time in jail because they were either unable or unwilling to pay fines imposed on them by the courts.** Fine default admissions were highest in Quebec (14,817), which accounted for over two-thirds of the 21,716 admissions in Canada during 1997/98. Alberta (4,780) also had a significant number of prisoners who were behind bars because they had not paid a fine.

  Source: SC, Juristat, catalogue 85-002, Vol 19, No 4

For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

April 9, 1999 *Infoline Report:*

Changes in B.C. Employment by Industry, Occupation, and Class of Worker

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Originally published in February 1999 issue, *Labour Force Statistics.* Annual subscription: $60 + GST

Introduction . . . This article expands upon [Infoline Report, Issue 99-09 of March 5] which noted that the Labour Force Survey has changed to different classification systems for reporting industry and occupational data. Here we look at what the new classification systems and change in definition for Class of Worker suggest about how B.C. employment has changed in the last ten years.

Industry Employment Changes . . . Figure 1 provides a table of employment changes between 1988 and 1998 by the main **North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS)** sectors. Services overall grew faster than goods, and now account for 78 per cent of all employment. Services accounted for 90 per cent of the net employment gains between 1988 and 1998.

Within goods, employment decreased in Agriculture and in the Other Primary sectors (Forestry, Fishing, Mining and Oil and Gas). Construction grew close to the average of all industries, while Manufacturing grew slower than overall employment.

All NAICS industry sectors in services increased in employment since 1988. Professional, Scientific and Technical Services grew by 82 per cent led by growth in the accounting and tax preparation, computer systems design, and scientific and technical services components. The smaller Management, Administrative and Other Support sector saw the fastest growth (87 per cent). This sector includes establishments engaged in managing companies and those supportive of day-to-day operations of other organizations.

Above average employment growth was also seen in Information, Culture and Recreation (54 per cent). This includes publishing, including software publishing, motion picture and broadcasting industries, telecommunications, and information services and data processing. (con't on Page 3)

Figure 1: Employment by Industry (NAICS) for British Columbia - Changes from 1988 to 1998

	Employment Level 1998 ('000's)	Net Change '88-'98 ('000's)	% Change '88-'98	Distribution 1988	Distribution 1998
All Industries	**1,860.5**	**416.2**	**28.8%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Goods-Producing Sector	**404.2**	**41.1**	**11.3%**	**25.1%**	**21.7%**
Agriculture	27.3	-6.8	-19.9%	2.4%	1.5%
Forestry, Fishing, Mining, Oil and Gas	50.1	-4.7	-8.6%	3.8%	2.7%
Utilities	12.8	4.1	47.7%	0.6%	0.7%
Construction	120.5	25.5	26.8%	6.6%	6.5%
Manufacturing	193.6	23.0	13.5%	11.8%	10.4%
Services-Producing Sector	**1,456.2**	**375.1**	**34.7%**	**74.9%**	**78.3%**
Retail and Wholesale Trade	299.1	50.7	20.4%	17.2%	16.1%
Transportation and Warehousing	102.4	20.6	25.2%	5.7%	5.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate & Leasing	111.4	9.4	9.2%	7.1%	6.0%
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	131.0	59.2	82.4%	5.0%	7.0%
Management, Administrative and Other Support	67.1	31.3	87.6%	2.5%	3.6%
Educational Services	121.2	36.3	42.8%	5.9%	6.5%
Health Care and Social Assistance	200.3	64.7	47.7%	9.4%	10.8%
Information, Culture and Recreation	91.1	31.8	53.5%	4.1%	4.9%
Accommodation and Food Services	147.9	41.8	39.4%	7.3%	7.9%
Other Services	92.2	19.3	26.5%	5.0%	5.0%
Public Administration	92.6	9.8	11.9%	5.7%	5.0%

Paced by B.C.'s strong population growth seen through most of the 1990's, above average employment growth was seen in Health Care (48 per cent), Education (43 per cent) and Accommodation and Food Services (39 per cent). By contrast, Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Leasing, along with Public Administration saw employment growth well below the all-industry growth average. Figure 1 allows one to contrast growth with distribution and net change. For example, the large Retail and Wholesale sector in 1998 stood at twice the size of the Professional, Scientific and Management sector, yet the latter saw a greater net increase in employment over the past ten years.

Changes by Industry Subsectors . . . Figure 2 provides a view of selected subsectors which saw some of the fastest employment growth over the last ten years. Most of these subsectors fell under the fastest growing three aggregate sectors noted in Figure 1. Overall, the selected 11 subsectors in Figure 2 accounted for 25 per cent of the total net gain in employment in B.C. in the last ten years. These subsectors reflect some key economic and societal trends seen in the last decade - growth in knowledge-based services, expansion of small service businesses catering to large businesses and directly to consumers, large increases in the North American entertainment and leisure markets, and the ongoing expansion in commercial training institutions and professional development services.

- The 'computer systems design,' 'management, scientific and technical', 'architectural, engineering' and 'specialized design' subsectors - reflect the rise in knowledge-intensive services and information technology.
- The travel, motion picture, performing arts, and broadcasting subsectors reflect employment gains due to growth and expansion in leisure and entertainment by consumers. In the case of motion picture and television production and tour operators, much of the work involves export services for the province.
- Business support services (which include desktop publishing, telephone call centres, office support services) and building services are two areas which have fast grown to serve larger organizations which have tended to focus on their core businesses and contract out ancilliary operations.
- Other schools and educational support (includes commercial computer and business and professional development training and educational counselling) has grown three time as fast as overall Education Services.

Figure 2: B.C. Employment Change in Selected Subsectors, 1988-1998

Selected Subsector	Employment Level 1998	% Change 1988-1998	Net Change 1988-1998
Computer and Electronic Product Manufacturing	8,000	170.3%	5,000
Computer System Design Services	19,600	164.3%	12,200
Travelling Services	9,500	164.2%	5,900
Business Support Services	6,600	150.6%	4,000
Management, Scientific and Technical Services	20,500	150.4%	12,300
Other Schools and Educational Support	14,900	144.9%	8,800
Motion Picture and Sound Recording Industries	6,000	110.9%	3,200
Performing Arts, Spectator Sports & Related	19,500	108.3%	10,100
Building Services	33,000	104.4%	16,900
Architectural, Engineering and Design Services	35,900	63.7%	14,000
Broadcasting and Telecommunications	28,000	41.6%	8,200

Occupational Employment Changes . . . Figure 3 provides a view of employment changes since 1988 for the ten main occupational groups classified by the **1991 Standard Occupational Classification (SOC91).** Occupation refers to the main duties and functions carried out by workers, unlike industry which reflects the main activity of an organization or business.

There have been increases in all major occupational groups with the exception of Occupations Unique to Primary Industries which saw a decline of 7 per cent between 1988 and 1998. The strongest growth was seen in Natural and Applied Sciences Occupations (up 55 per cent) and Occupations in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport (up 71 per cent).

The Business, Finance and Administrative Occupational group saw slower than average employment growth. Within this group, very slow growth in administrative assisting and clerical occupations contrasted to well above average growth in professional occupations.

Below average employment growth was seen in the three primarily blue-collar occupation groups. Trades, Transport and Equipment Operators, Occupations Unique to Primary Industry and Occupations Unique to Processing, Manufacturing and Utilities all saw their share of overall employment fall between 1988 and 1998. These reflect slower growth seen in goods sector businesses relative to services.

Increases within the large Sales and Service Occupations group were led by the childcare and home support worker component and skilled sales representatives in wholesale trade, insurance and real estate, and retail and wholesale buyers.

Within the group of occupations in Social Science, Education, Government Service and Religion, growth was led by legal, social work and marketing occupations. Slightly slower growth was seen in teaching occupations, while the weakest growth was in government administration occupations.

Figure 3: B.C. Employment by Occupation (SOC91), Changes from 1988 to 1998

Occupation	Employ-ment Level 1988 ('000)	Employ-ment Level 1998 ('000)	Net Change ('000)	% Change 88-98	Distri-bution 1988	Distri-bution 1998
All Occupations	**1444.3**	**1860.4**	**416.1**	**28.8%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
Management Occupations	143.5	207.4	63.9	44.5%	9.9%	11.1%
Business, Finance and Administrative Occ.	273.8	327.4	53.6	19.6%	19.0%	17.6%
Natural and Applied Sciences and Related Occ.	66.2	102.4	36.2	54.7%	4.6%	5.5%
Health Occupations	75.1	98.3	23.2	30.9%	5.2%	5.3%
Soc. Science, Educ., Gov. Service & Religion	78.3	119.1	40.8	52.1%	5.4%	6.4%
Occupations in Art, Culture, Recreation and Sport	33.9	58.0	24.1	71.1%	2.3%	3.1%
Sales and Service Occupations	375.5	518.1	142.6	38.0%	26.0%	27.8%
Trades, Transport and Equip. Op. & Related Occ.	239	273.6	34.6	14.5%	16.5%	14.7%
Occupations Unique to Primary Industry	69.4	62.1	-7.3	-10.5%	4.8%	3.3%
Occ. Unique to Processing, Manuf. & Utilities	89.6	93.9	4.3	4.8%	6.2%	5.0%

Employment Changes to Class of Worker by Industry . . . Figure 4 examines employment changes and distribution for the overall goods and services industry aggregates by Class of Worker between 1988 and 1998.

Within the goods sector, three-quarters of employment continues to be private sector employees, which grew by 11.6 per cent. Public sector employees in the goods sector remains small, and grew the slowest of the three main types of class of worker between 1988 and 1998. Self-employed workers continued to make up 21 per cent of goods sector employment, growing by 11.3 per cent between 1988 to 1998.

Within services, employment growth was the fastest by the self-employed where employment almost doubled (up 99.2 per cent) between 1988 to 1998. Private sector employees in services grew by 25.4 per cent, while public sector employees grew by 20.4 per cent. Ninety per cent of the net increase in public sector employees within services was found in Education and Health.

Within services the greatest net gain came from private sector employees (up 169 thousand), yet self-employment accounted for 41 per cent (up 153 thousand) of the net employment increase between 1988 and 1998. The self-employed now account for 21 per cent of overall service sector employment, virtually the same as the share of public sector employees.

Looking more closely at the self-employed class of worker, there has been exceptionally strong growth in several service industry sectors. Within the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector, self-employment grew by 206 per cent between 1988 and 1998. This growth reflects a surge in the numbers of independent contractors and consultants in the high tech, computer and business areas.

Above average growth in the numbers of self-employed was also seen in Health Care and Social Assistance (up 182 per cent), Management, Administrative and Other Support (up 175 per cent) and Information, Culture and Recreation (up 151 per cent). The above four sectors accounted for over two-thirds of net gains in self-employment within services.

Figure 4: B.C. Class of Worker - Change from 1988 to 1998

	Good Producing Sector				**Services Producing Sector**			
	Private Sector Employees	Public Sector Employees	Self-Employed	Total	Private Sector Employees	Public Sector Employees	Self-Employed	Total
Level 1988 (000's)	273.4	12.7	77.1	363.2	668.0	259.3	153.8	1,081.1
Level 1998 (000's)	305.0	13.5	85.8	404.2	837.4	312.3	306.4	1,456.2
Net Change (000's)	31.6	0.8	8.7	41.0	169.4	53.0	152.6	375.1
% Change	11.6%	6.3%	11.3%	11.3%	25.4%	20.4%	99.2%	34.7%
Distribution 1988	75.3%	3.5%	21.2%	100.0%	61.8%	24.0%	14.2%	100.0%
Distribution 1998	75.5%	3.3%	21.2%	100.0%	57.5%	21.4%	21.0%	100.0%

Infoline

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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jan 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,021.4	0.7
Canada	30,418.1	0.9
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)*	24,775	0.1
Personal Disposable Income *($ 1992 per Capita)*	16,340	-2.3
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Jan	2,912	7.0
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jan	2,098	11.9
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jan	2,773	-2.6
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on
(all items - 1992=100)	Feb '99	one year ago
BC	110.1	0.5
Canada	109.1	0.7
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on
(seasonally adjusted)	Mar '99	one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,094	2.5
Employed - BC	1,918	4.1
Unemployed - BC	176	-12.8
		Mar '98
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	8.4	9.9
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	7.8	8.4
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 7/99	Apr 8/98
Prime Business Rate	6.50	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.45	6.30
- 5 year	6.95	6.75
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 7/99	Apr 8/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.5006	1.4245
US $ *(reciprocal of the closing rate)*	0.6672	0.7020
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change on
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jan '99	one year ago
BC	615.81	1.0
Canada	604.55	-0.1

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Statistics Canada

Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

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