

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Market

- **The number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits continued to fall in July, dropping 4.8% to 60,820 (seasonally adjusted).** The latest decline brought the number of regular EI recipients down to its lowest level since August 1981. Nationally, there were an estimated 496,920 EI recipients in July, 3.0% less than in the previous month. This was the lowest number since 1975, the first year for which these statistics are available. The decline in the number of EI recipients has occurred despite an expanding labour force, and is largely due to changes in the EI program (most notably tougher eligibility requirements for EI beneficiaries) rather than better labour market conditions. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*
- **Most of the 838,000 Canadians who were unemployed in 1998 but had worked in the previous year had been laid off (469,200) or fired (36,400).** Among the 233,300 who had quit their last job, the reason most often given for leaving was that they were dissatisfied with their job (26%). One in four (24%) left work to go to school, while 17% had sold or closed down their business. Other reasons commonly cited included a change of residence (12%), illness or disability (9%), and personal or family responsibilities (9%). *Source: SC, Catalogue 71-005-XPB*
- **Unemployed Canadians looking for work use a variety of job search techniques, but the most common one is to contact prospective employers directly.** Seventy-one percent of unemployed Canadians used this method in 1998. Youth (76%) and men aged 25–54 (72%) were most likely to make direct contact, while women

aged 25–54 (66%) and people who were 55 or older (62%) were less apt to do so.

About half (49%) of job seekers checked ads, one in three (33%) used a public employment agency, one in four (24%) contacted friends or relatives, and one in five (21%) placed or answered job ads. Private employment agencies (6%), unions (2%) and various other methods (5%) were used less frequently.

Source: SC, Catalogue 71-005-XPB

The Economy

- **International exports of BC products declined slightly (-0.3%, seasonally adjusted) between June and July.** The modest drop in the value of exports followed two months of expansion. Sales to the US continued to bolster BC's export performance. The value of US-bound exports climbed 5.1% between June and July, posting the sixth increase so far this year. Exports to other parts of the world did not fare as well, declining 11.6%. *Source: BC STATS*
- **The province's coal production increased in July for the first time in more than a year, rising to 2.2 million tonnes.** This was more than a third (+35.1%) higher than in the same month last year, when coal production plunged to 1.6 million tonnes. Nationwide, coal production totalled 6.2 million tonnes in July, up 5.2% from the same month last year. The increased production was attributed to strong demand from Asian countries (to which BC is a major supplier). Canadian coal exports reached 3.4 million tonnes (+16.1%) in July, with 1.9 million tonnes (+11.9%) going to Japan. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- **Department store sales in British Columbia and the two territories were 8.5% higher this August than in the same month last year.**

Did you know...

Matthew, Joshua and Nicholas were the names most commonly chosen for boys born in 1998, while Emily, Sarah and Emma were the most popular names for baby girls. A hundred years ago, the most popular boys' names were William, John, and George. Girls born between 1872 and 1898 were most likely to be christened Mary, Margaret or Annie. Clarence, Mabel and Gertrude were also in the top 50.

However, the province continued to trail the rest of the country. Canadian sales were up 12.3%. Ontario (+15.6%) led the way, followed by the Atlantic provinces (+13.1%) and Alberta (+11.4%). BC, Manitoba (+8.8%) and Quebec (+9.0%) were the only regions where department store sales increased less than ten percent.

Source: Statistics Canada

Births and Deaths

- **BC's birth rate reached its lowest level since 1950 last year, at 10.7 live births per 1,000 population.** This was less than half the rate in the 1950s, and marked the first time that the province's birth rate has fallen below 11.0. There were 42,909 live births in 1998, down 3.3% from 44,388 in the previous year. Another 279 babies were stillborn, down from 335 in 1997. The province's fertility rate (number of births for every woman of childbearing age) was 1.43 last year. At its peak in 1959, the total fertility rate was 3.96. *Source: Vital Statistics Agency, 1998 Annual Report*

- **One thousand and fifty three twins and 65 triplets (excluding stillbirths) were born in BC during 1998.** A twin was born in one of every 41 live births and a triplet, in of every 660. Or to put it another way, on a typical day last year, 3 of the 118 live births were multiple births—either twins or triplets.

Almost half (19,299, or 45%) of the babies born last year were firstborn children, while more than a third (15,488) were their mother's second child. On the other end of the spectrum, 36 children were born to mothers who already had at least eight other children. Four new mothers were 13 or younger, while 35 (including 6 first-time moms) were 45 or older.

Source: Vital Statistics Agency, 1998 Annual Report

- **The province's infant mortality rate reached a record low of 4.0 deaths for every 1,000 live births in 1998.** 173 children did not live to see their first birthday last year. The infant mortality rate has been falling steadily, and is currently about a fifth as high as it was thirty years ago.

Source: Vital Statistics Agency, 1998 Annual Report

- **The total number of deaths in BC rose from 27,255 in 1997 to 27,791 last year, leaving the**

death rate (number of deaths per 1,000 population) unchanged at 6.9. The 42,909 births and 27,791 deaths in BC during 1998 produced a rate of natural population increase of 3.8 per 1,000 people.

Source: Vital Statistics Agency, 1998 Annual Report

College Enrollment

- **During the 1998/99 school year, 38,212 students were enrolled full-time at community colleges in the province.** This was 7.0% more than in the previous year, when enrollment reached 35,719. Enrollment increased more in BC than in any other province except PEI (+19.8%, to 1,940) and Alberta (+10.1%, to 32,594). Nationwide, the number of full-time college students rose 2.7%, to 409,848. Three out of four Canadian college students studying full-time were enrolled in career programs, but in BC, college students were just as likely to be working toward a university degree (19,533) as a college diploma (18,679). *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Nation

- **Canada's economy continued to expand in July as real GDP advanced 0.4% (seasonally adjusted) between June and July, marking the 12th straight month in which the economy has grown.** For the second month in a row, a strong performance (+0.6%) by the goods-producing industries, which grew at double the rate (+0.3%) in the service sector, was the main driver of economic growth. This was largely due to a 0.8% expansion in manufacturing, where output has risen in all but one month since March, combined with strong growth in logging (+1.0%) and utilities (+1.5%). In the service sector, communications (+1.0%), business services (+0.9%), retail (+0.9%) and wholesale (+0.8%) trade picked up speed.

Source: Statistics Canada

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October 1, 1999

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Research, Evaluation & Accountability
Min. of Advanced Education, Training & Technology

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

Summary . . . This article focuses on recent labour force activity of full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. during the month of July. Overall summer employment conditions did improve somewhat in July 1999 for older students aged 20 to 24 who saw a drop in their unemployment rate from July 1998. Students aged 15 to 19 experienced little change in their unemployment rate this July from a year earlier, though their employment level rose by 3,200 over last July.

1. Introduction

The monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada provides information on labour market characteristics of full-time students in B.C. A supplement to the Labour Force Survey conducted in the months of May to September focuses on the labour market performance of recent full-time students during the summer months.

Many post-secondary students are available for summer employment (especially full-time work) from May through August, while secondary school students will be more likely available for jobs (especially full-time work) in only July and August. This article focuses upon the month of July only, when both secondary and post-secondary students are available for summer work.

2. Definitions and Issues Associated With Student Labour Force Data

Full-time students . . . Youths (aged 15 to 24) are given the status of "full-time student" if they reported that they were attending school full-time in March of the current calendar year.

Returning and not returning . . . Students are further categorized by their intentions to return or not return to school full-time in the Fall or if they are unsure of their intentions. The number of all full-time students aged 15 to 24 has risen by just over 45 per cent from 221,000 in July 1977 to 321,500 in July 1999. The number of

returning students rose over this period by 52 per cent, but only increased by 19 per cent for not-returning students (including students who are not sure if they are returning). Most of these increases in numbers of students have taken place in the 1990's. The returning students category remains significantly larger in numbers and proportion than the "not sure/not returning" category. The proportion of returning students to total students stood at 83 per cent in July 1999.

Age of students surveyed . . . The two age groups of full-time students covered include those aged 15 to 19 (a good portion of whom would be secondary school students) and those aged 20 to 24 (most likely attending either a public or private post-secondary institution). In terms of relative size, the age 15 to 19 group of full-time students is three times as large as the age 20 to 24 group.

Older students not covered in survey . . . Full-time students covered in the Statistics Canada supplemental summer survey are limited to students between the ages of 15 to 24. However, persons aged 25 and older are a growing and significant component of overall full-time post-secondary students in B.C. For example, the estimated number of full-time students in B.C. aged 25 to 29 more than doubled from 9,400 in November 1990 to 20,100 in November 1998.

Part-time students not surveyed . . . Students aged 15 to 24 who attend, or recently attended school part-time are not reported in the data published by Statistics Canada. However it should be noted that there are significant and growing numbers of part-time students of all ages, especially persons aged 25 and older.

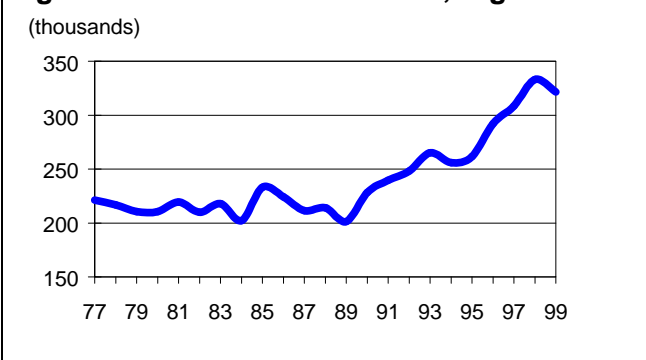
Semester systems and co-op programs may also complicate generalisations about the length and timing of the school year for those in post-secondary studies. Those on different semester

systems who are not attending school full-time in March or are on a work placement program, may not be covered by the survey.

3. Developments in Student Summer Employment for the Month of July

As seen in Figure 1, the estimated number of total full-time students aged 15 to 24 in B.C. (both returning and other), remained relatively unchanged during the 1980's. While the population of this age group fell, student numbers held as participation rates in education rose. The number of full-time students during the 1990's has risen steadily due to both increased population and education participation increases. This large increase in numbers of students in the 1990's has likely increased the competitiveness of the summer student job market relative to the situation in the late 1980's. The estimated decline in the number of all full-time students aged 15 to 24 in July 1999 from July 1998, was all accounted for by those aged 20 to 24.

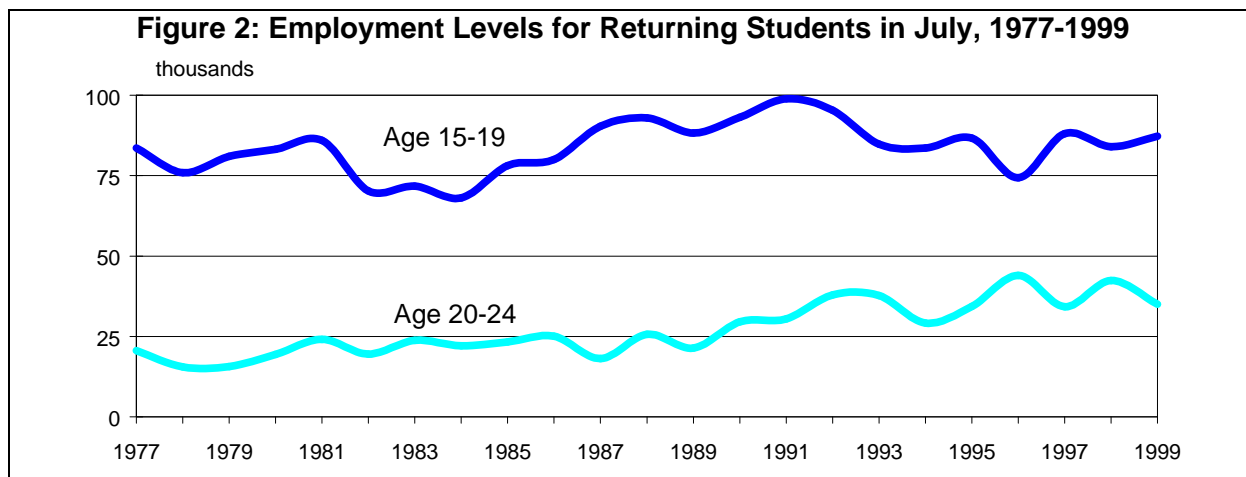
Figure 1: All Full-time Students, Age 15-24



Employment for Returning Students . . . As seen in Figure 2, employment levels in the month of July for returning students in B.C. during the 1980's saw slow but steady increases. In part this reflected the extended recovery of the economy from the 1981/82 recession. Beginning in 1991, the number of employed students aged 15 to 19 started declining back to levels seen in the mid 1980's. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 has been generally rising since 1987.

More recently, employment levels for returning students aged 15 to 19 increased to 87,000 in July 1999 from 84,000 in July 1998, but remain well below their high of 95,000 in 1991. Employment for returning students aged 20 to 24 was estimated at 35,000 in July 1999, down from 42,000 in July 1998. In part this reflects a decline in the estimated population of full-time returning students aged 20 to 24 by Statistics Canada compared to last July, as well as a drop in their active labour force participation rate.

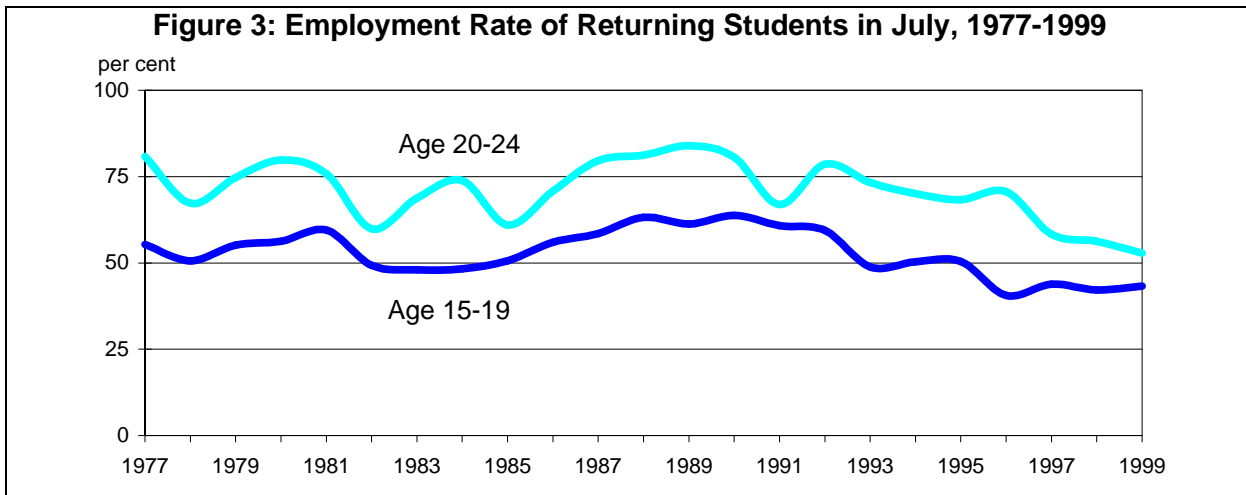
This drop in estimated numbers of older full-time returning students in itself may reflect the growing trend by persons aged 20 to 24 to combine part-time schooling with part-time work. Such students are not included in this survey of summer labour market activities of full-time students.



Employment Rates for Returning Students ... Figure 3 displays the employment rate (employment to population ratio) for returning students in the month of July. After a period of relatively steady employment rates in the late 1980's, this variable has declined for both age groups in the 1990's, particularly for those aged 15 to 19. The employment rate for returning students aged 15 to 19 was up slightly at 43 per cent in July of 1999 from 42

per cent in July 1998. For those between the ages of 20 to 24 the employment rate was down to 53 percent from 56 percent in July 1998, its lowest level in the 1990's.

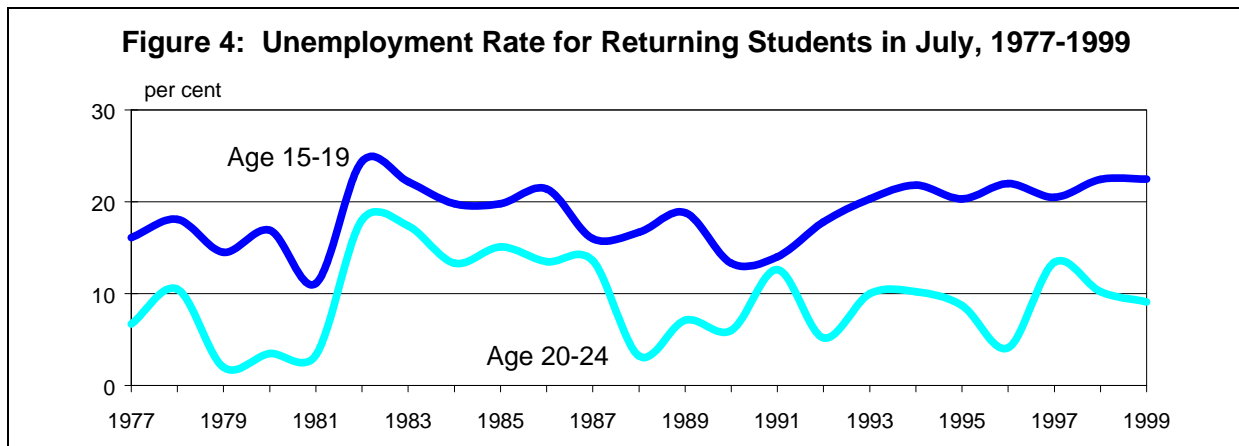
Overall, a smaller portion of full-time returning students in July 1999 (46 per cent) were engaged in summer employment compared to 1990 when 67 per cent were employed.



Unemployment Rates for Returning Students Figure 4 shows unemployment rates for returning students for both age groups in July. The unemployment rate has risen for full-time returning students aged 15-19 since the early 1990's, but has remained fairly level since 1994. For older students, unemployment rates have fluctuated during the

1990's, but remain half that of those full-time students aged 15 to 19.

Most recently, the unemployment rate for students aged 15 to 19 in July 1999 at 22.5 per cent was little changed from July 1998. For students aged 20 to 24, their unemployment rate dropped to 9.1 per cent in July 1999 from 10.2 per cent a year earlier.



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BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)		
	Apr 1/99	% change on one year ago
BC	4,028.3	0.7
Canada	30,482.9	0.9
GDP and INCOME		
(BC - at market prices)	1997	% change on 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.) Jul	3,075	10.6
Merchandise Exports (raw) Jul	2,491	9.0
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Jul	2,805	1.2
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
(all items - 1992=100)	Aug '99	% change on one year ago
BC	111.8	1.3
Canada	111.1	2.1
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
(seasonally adjusted)	Aug '99	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,071	1.4
Employed - BC	1,893	1.5
Unemployed - BC	178	0.6
		Aug '98
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	8.6	8.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.8	8.3
INTEREST RATES (percent)		
	Sep 29/99	Sep 30/98
Prime Business Rate	6.25	7.25
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.80	6.75
- 5 year	7.70	7.15
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE		
	Sep 29/99	Sep 30/98
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn \$	1.4637	1.5259
US \$ (reciprocal of the closing rate)	0.6825	0.6531
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Jul '99	% change on one year ago
BC	627.86	1.1
Canada	614.36	1.3

SOURCES:

Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, } Statistics
 Prices, Labour Force, Earnings } Canada
 Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics
 For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm

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- Current Statistics, September 1999

Next week

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- Migration Highlights, Second Quarter, 1999