

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Labour Force

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate increased 0.1 percentage point between November and December, rising to 7.1% (seasonally adjusted).** The marginal increase in the jobless rate was mainly due to an expansion of the province's labour force, with 11,600 (+0.5%) more people either working or looking for work in December. This offset a 0.4% rise in the number of people with jobs.

Canada's unemployment rate edged down 0.1% to 6.8% in December as a 0.1% increase in the labour force was absorbed by a similar rise (+0.2%) in employment. Five of the ten provinces posted lower unemployment rates. The biggest fall was in Prince Edward Island (-2.0 percentage points), followed by Nova Scotia (-0.6), New Brunswick (-0.5), Quebec (-0.3) and Alberta (-0.1). Unemployment rates were flat or rose marginally in the rest of the country.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **Self-employment in BC increased (+2.9%, seasonally adjusted) for the first time since September.** This was the main reason for last month's job growth. The number of public sector jobs also rose (+0.3%, seasonally adjusted), but private sector employment decreased 0.2%.

Full-time employment was up for the fifth consecutive month, rising 0.7%. However, there were 0.5% fewer part-time jobs in December than in the previous month.

The unemployment rate for young workers (those aged 15-24) fell from 14.2% to 13.7% between November and December. Among more experienced workers (aged 25 or more), the jobless rate rose slightly, increasing 0.2 percentage points to 5.8%. *Source: Statistics Canada*

North Coast/Nechako (11.6%, 3-month moving average) and Kootenay (11.4%) had the highest unemployment rates in the province. In both regions, the rates were well above December 1999 levels. In contrast, Mainland/South-west (5.4%) and Northeast (5.8%) unemployment rates were lower than in 1999. The same pattern was also seen in Vancouver, where the jobless rate fell from 6.7% in December 1999 to 5.2% last month.

The number of jobs in the Vancouver Island/Coast region fell (-7.2%, year-over-year) for the sixth month in a row. All other regions, including Cariboo (+0.1%), where employment was up for the first time since April, posted increases.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **During 2000, an average of 1.95 million people were employed in British Columbia.** This was 2.2% more than in the previous year. Employment increased in most parts of the country during 2000, rising 2.6% at the national level. The strongest job gains were in PEI (+5.3%) and Ontario, where the number of people with jobs rose 3.2% to 5.87 million. Ontario, PEI and Nova Scotia (+2.7%) were the only provinces where employment grew more than the national average. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*
- **BC's unemployment rate averaged 7.2% last year, 0.4 percentage points higher than the Canadian annualized rate of 6.8%.** Manitoba (4.9%) and Alberta (5.0%) were the provinces with the lowest average jobless rates. Newfoundland (16.8%), PEI (12.1%) and New Brunswick (10.1%) continued to experience double-digit unemployment rates during 2000. *Source: Statistics Canada & BC STATS*

Did you know...

British Columbians like to light up—their fireplaces, that is. Two out of every five homes in BC have fireplaces. The national average is one in three.

The Economy

- **Exports of BC products fell 3.0% between September and October (seasonally adjusted).** Shipments to the US were down 5.9%, offsetting a 2.4% increase in the value of exports to other countries. Exports from the forest sector fell slightly (-0.8%), with larger declines seen in exports of agriculture and fish (-17.8%), mining (-7.5%), and other (-3.6%) products. The drop in forestry exports occurred despite a 0.8% increase in shipments to the US, as overseas exports of forest products were down 2.9%. In contrast, lower US-bound exports of other products offset improvements in exports of these goods to the rest of the world.

Source: BC STATS

- **Department store sales in BC and the north were up for the first time in a year in November, as sales increased to 4.6% over the November 1999 level.** Department store sales rose in every region of the country except Nova Scotia, where they fell 6.1%. Nova Scotia and BC are the only regions where sales have been relatively weak during most of the last year. Canadian sales were up 6.3%, with increases in other regions ranging from a low of 0.9% in New Brunswick to a high of 10.2% in Alberta.

Source: Statistics Canada

- **The wages, salaries and benefits received by BC workers remained unchanged at \$5.7 billion (seasonally adjusted) in October.** British Columbia, Alberta (+0.4%) and the North (+0.9%) were the only regions where labour income did not decline. The Canadian total fell 0.7% between September and October, as wages and other earnings decreased in Ontario (-0.5%), Quebec (-1.2%), Atlantic Canada (-2.0%) and two of the three prairie provinces. The generalized downturn was the first since last spring.

Source: Statistics Canada

Summer Weddings

- **Summer weddings outnumbered spring nuptials two-to-one last year.** There were 10,752 marriages registered in the province between July and September 2000, a 7.6% increase over the same period in 1999 and 12.8% more than in 1997. By contrast, less

than half as many weddings (5,267) took place between April and June of 2000.

The number of summer weddings in BC has increased steadily over the past four years. At the same time, spring weddings (those occurring between April 1st and June 30th) have become less common. The number of spring marriages declined 4.2% last year.

Source: Vital Statistics Agency, Quarterly Digest

Births

- **There were 43,072 live births in BC during 1998, 3.4% less than in the previous year.** The number of live births fell in every region except Alberta, where 2.7% more children were born in 1998 than in 1997. Nationally, the number of live births dropped 1.8%, to 342,318 in 1998.

Source: Statistics Canada

Abortions

- **During 1998, BC women received 15,482 hospital and clinic abortions.** This was down slightly from the previous year, when 15,582 women had abortions. One out of every three women who had abortions used the services of a private clinic, which was comparable to the national average. There were 36 abortions for every 100 live births in BC during 1998, suggesting that one in four pregnancies was medically terminated. Nationally, the number of abortions fell from 111,819 to 110,520 between 1997 and 1998, as most regions reported a slight decline in the number of women terminating their pregnancies. Quebec (+4.7%) was the only province where there was a significant increase.

BC continued to have one of the highest abortion rates (number of abortions for every 1,000 women between the ages of 15 and 44) in the country, at 17.1 in 1998. The only province with a higher rate was Quebec (19.4). The national average was 16.1, with rates in the rest of the country varying from a low of 4.9 in PEI to 16.4 in Ontario. Yukon (19.2) and NWT (18.0) also had higher than average abortion rates.

Source: Statistics Canada

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Infoline Report: Trends in full-time and part-time employment in British Columbia

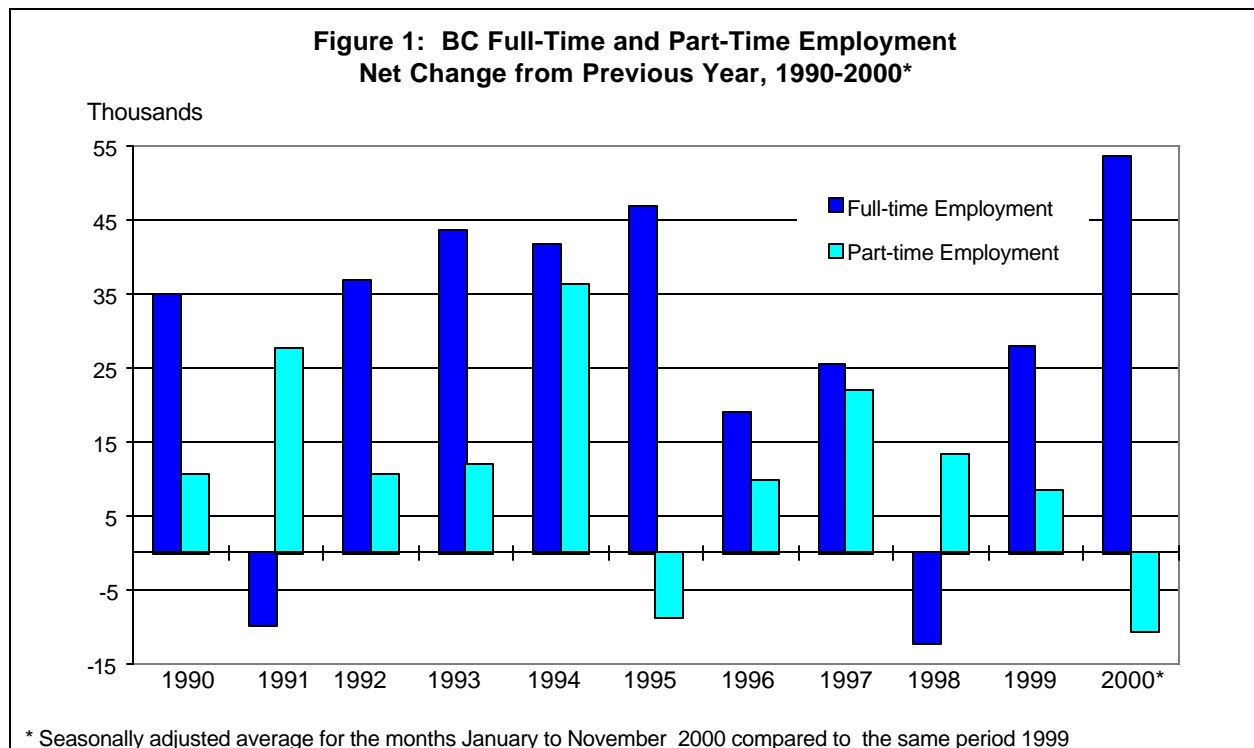
Contact: Sharon Churchill / (250) 952-6776

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

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Introduction . . . Employment is often thought of as either full or part-time. These labels simply measure hours of work per week. For purposes of measurement, Statistics Canada classifies those who normally work 30 hours or more per week at their main job as full-time workers, with those less than 30 hours as part-time workers. Over the past twenty years in BC part-time employment has grown faster than full-time work, but both have grown.

As noted in Figure 1, the majority of the net gain in employment in BC in 1999 came from additions to full-time employment. Based on the first eleven months of 2000, the net gain in employment this year is poised to see a greater net gain than any year during the 1990s. The net gains in full-time employment in 1999 and 2000 are the strongest consecutive gains seen since 1994 and 1995.



Full and Part-time Levels and Rate of Growth

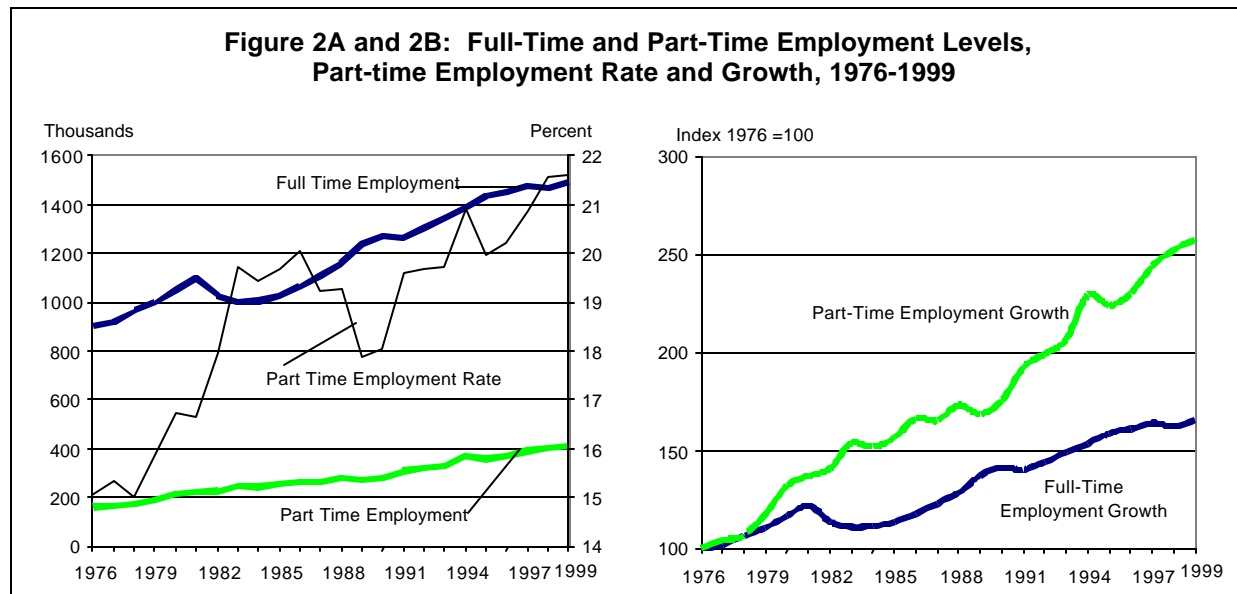
. . . Figure 2A shows that while both full-time and part-time work have been generally increasing since 1976 in BC, full-time employment still outnumbers part-time workers by almost 4 to 1 in 1999. Full-time employment can be shown to be more sensitive to downturns during recessionary periods such as 1981/82. In a similar fashion, though to a lesser extent, part-time employment tends to grow stronger during recessionary periods or years with weaker economic growth.

The share of all employment that is part-time, sometimes called the part-time employment rate, is also displayed in Figure 2A (with the scale on the right hand axis). Although full-time employment has been growing, part-time employment has seen faster growth. The part-time employment rate has been ratcheting upwards in times of weaker economic activity then settling back down in years of stronger economic growth (e.g. 1989/90, 1995), but at a higher level than subsequent low points. This suggests there has been a structural increase in the part-

time employment rate in BC once the impacts of business cycles are removed.

During the past 20 years, part-time employment has grown about twice as fast as full-time employment. This is clearly apparent in the Figure

2B, which shows that considerable growth in part-time employment has taken place in the 1990s. However owing to its greater size in overall employment, the full-time component generally continues to produce most of the absolute net gains in paid work.

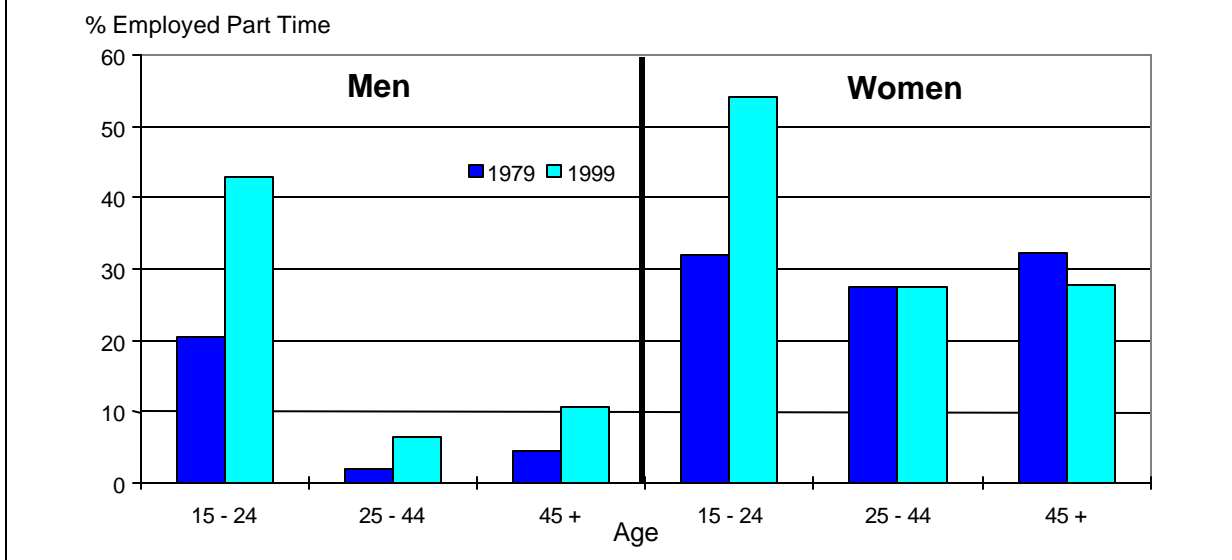


Full and Part-time Employment for Men and Women . . . The share of all employment in B.C. that is part-time has increased from 15 per cent in 1976 to 22 per cent in 1999. Yet, as shown in Figure 3, there are considerable differences in part-time employment rates for men and women depending on age. Only women aged 45 and older saw a decline in their part-time employment rate between 1979 and 1999. They, like other women, have a much higher incidence of part-time employment than men of the same age group. Men aged 25 and older continue to have a part-time employment rate of below 11 per cent, compared to almost 30 per cent for women aged 25 and older. Figure 3 also shows that Youths (aged 15 to 24) consistently have the highest part-time employment rates, and their rates have grown faster than that

of any other age cohort. Part-time employment rates for male and female youths were 21 and 32 per cent respectively in 1979. These rates grew to 43 and 54 per cent respectively by 1999. Much of the rise in part-time employment rates for youth is due to their large increase in post-secondary participation.

Against these changes in part-time employment rates, there has also been strong growth for those working more full-time hours. This has been referred to as a polarization of work hours. For example, in terms of actual hours worked, the share of all employment in BC accounted for by those working 50 hours or more per week and those who worked between 1 to 29 hours per week, has risen from 28% in 1976 to 45% in 1999.

Figure 3: BC Part-Time Employment as a Share of Total Employment, by Gender and Age, 1979 and 1999

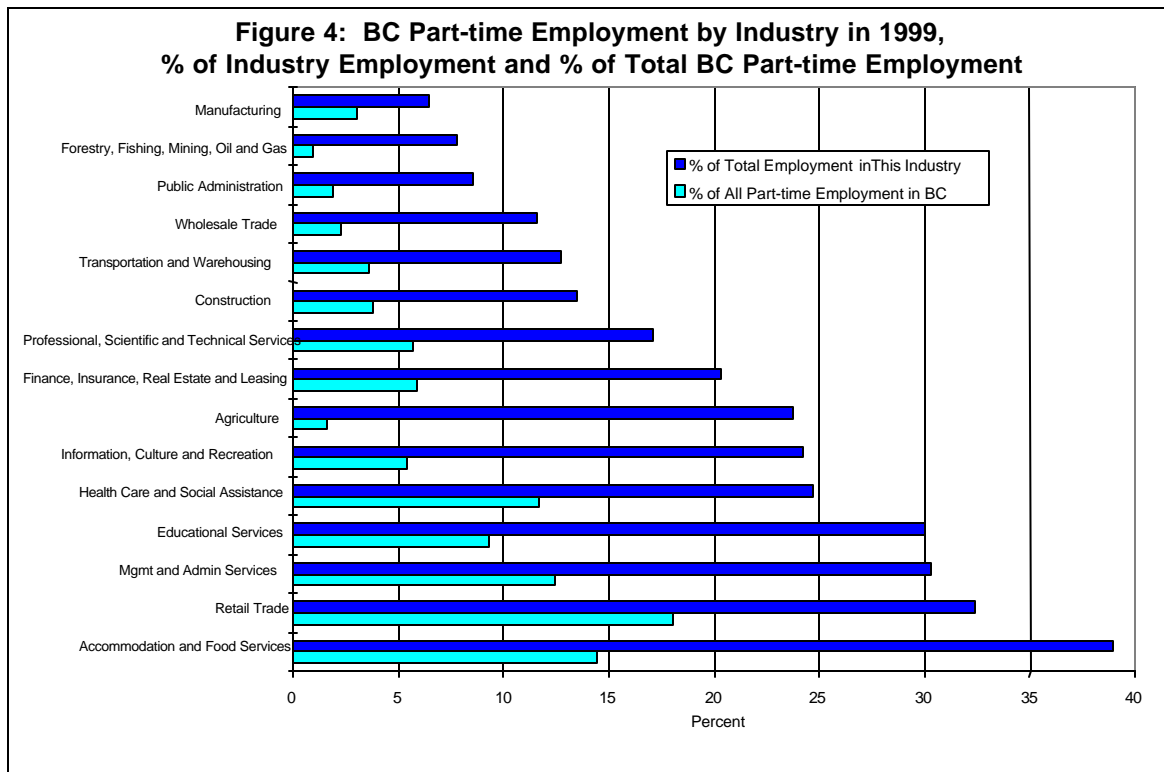


Full and Part-time employment by industry

Another dimension of examining full and part-time employment is to look at industry sectors. It is often believed that service sector employment is much more predominantly made up of part-time workers relative to the goods sector. Yet, as displayed in Figure 4, this is not always the case. For example, there was a higher proportion of part-time employment in Agriculture than in Wholesale Trade or Professional Scientific and Technical Services in 1999. However, Agriculture is the only industry in the goods sector that had a part-time employment rate of over 20 per cent.

The two industries at the bottom of Figure 4 (Retail Trade and Accommodation, Food and Beverage Services), saw the highest proportions of part-time employment in 1999. Together they accounted for nearly one-third all part-time employment in BC in 1999.

The growth in part-time work overall relates closely to growth in service sector employment, which has grown faster than goods sector employment. In the large and growing traditional service sectors like retail trade and accommodation and food, uneven levels of demand provide a strong incentive for utilizing part-timers. Such sectors also tend to employ a higher proportion of youth workers, so youth of both sexes tend to have higher than average part-time employment rates. Further, since goods sector employment has been dominated by men, weaker employment growth in that sector have contributed to a higher part-time employment rate for men. For women, who are more concentrated in services, part-time employment rates have stayed relatively constant, though still at a much higher level than for men.



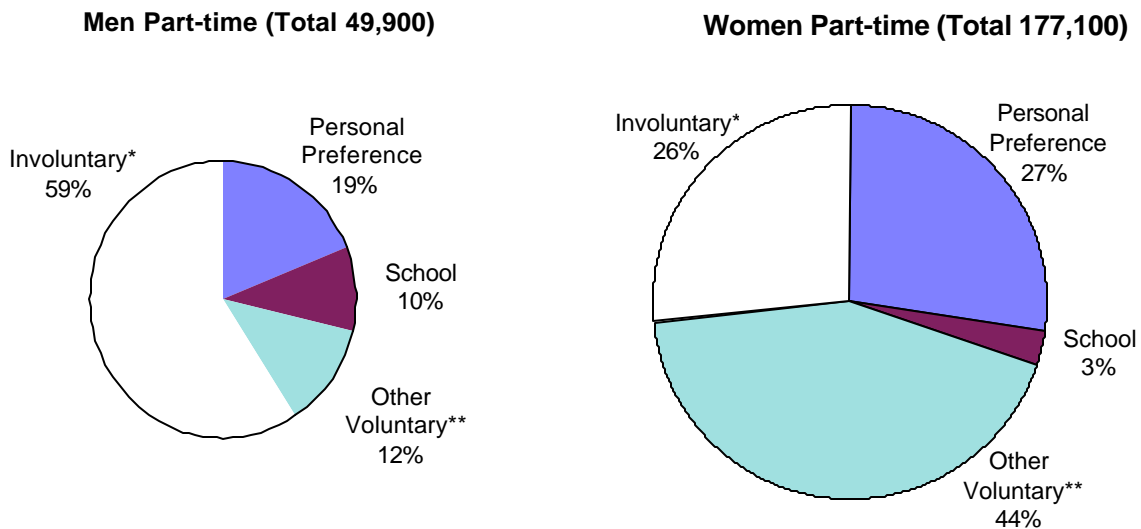
Reasons for Working Part Time . . . The rise in part-time employment has in some cases been voluntary to accommodate individual circumstances such as participation in full-time education or family responsibilities. In other cases it is involuntary in that workers are working part-time because they are unable to find full-time work.

Figure 5 shows some interesting differences between the reasons core aged men and women work part time. To partially control for younger persons who are more likely to be engaged in schooling, Figure 5 and this section refers to only part-time workers aged 25 to 54. Men represent less than one quarter of all part-time workers. The majority of them (59 per cent) state that they would prefer to work full-time. These workers are considered to be working part-time *involuntarily*. Women who would prefer full-time work represented only 26 per cent of all women who work part-time. However, because there are so many more women who work

part-time, there are also many more women working part-time involuntarily than men.

There are a variety of reasons why men and women choose to work part-time *voluntarily*. A large number of both men and women prefer to work part-time by personal preference (19 and 21 per cent respectively). Another reason cited for working part-time is so that individuals may attend school. Although nearly an equal number of men and women work part-time while attending school, this represents 10 per cent of men who work part-time, but only 3 per cent of women. Other reasons for choosing to work part-time include personal illness or disability, caring for children and other personal or family responsibilities such as attending to an elderly relative. This last group of "other reasons" represents the main reason why women work part time. Fully 77,000 (44 per cent) of women cited this reason for working part-time compared to 6,000 (12 per cent) of men.

Figure 5: Reasons for Part-time Employment for Men and Women Aged 25 to 54 in BC, 1999.



* Includes persons who looked for full-time work in the previous month but were unsuccessful due to economic conditions or other reasons. Also included are persons who would prefer to be working full-time but did not look for full-time work because of their perceptions of unfavourable economic conditions or for other reasons.

** Includes persons who chose to work part-time for health reasons, to care for children, or other personal or family responsibilities.

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January 5, 2001

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BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		
	Oct 1/00	% change on one year ago
BC	4,072.5	0.8
Canada	30,714.7	0.8
GDP and INCOME		
	1999	% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>		
Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$ millions)	118,783	4.2
GDP (\$ 1992 millions)	104,323	2.1
GDP (\$ 1992 per Capita)	25,899	1.3
Personal Disposable Income (\$ 1992 per Capita)	16,700	0.0
TRADE (\$ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Oct	3,108	-2.5
Merchandise Exports (raw) Oct	2,653	4.4
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Oct	2,977	5.4
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Nov '00	% change on one year ago
BC	114.5	2.7
Canada	115.0	3.2
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Dec '00	% change on one year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,123	1.5
Employed - BC	1,973	2.3
Unemployed - BC	150	-8.0
		Dec '99
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	7.1	7.8
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	6.8	6.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Jan 3/01	Jan 5/00
Prime Business Rate	7.50	6.50
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	7.70	7.35
- 5 year	7.95	8.25
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Jan 3/01	Jan 5/00
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$	1.4978	1.4513
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6672	0.6900
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Nov '00	% change on one year ago
BC	643.16	2.2
Canada	622.49	3.4
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade,	} Statistics } Canada	
Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate		
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics		
For latest Weekly Financial Statistics see www.bank-banque-canada.ca/english/wfsgen.htm		

Web site improvements

We have made some changes to our site that should help you locate information more efficiently. As always, we welcome your comments.

The **Search** tab on our top-level banner pages takes you to a new page that includes four different approaches to locating files or services:

A-Z is our renamed 'Detailed Subjects List', a handy way to find things like *Consumer Price Index*.

Subjects is our broad subject approach that partly follows the organizational structure of BC STATS.

Regions is a geographic based search that offers up our maps and data that are organized by location. Note that many of our tables available through **A-Z** have a geographic dimension but cannot be reached through **Regions**.

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- Business Indicators, December 2000
- Exports, October 2000

Next week

- Labour Force Statistics, December 2000