

highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

The Economy

- **British Columbia's retail sales rose 1.5% between January and February (seasonally adjusted), more than making up for the 1.0% drop seen in the previous month.** Shoppers spent \$3,113 million in stores. BC was the only province in which there were increased sales in February, although Yukon (+13.9%), NWT (+3.0%) and Nunavut (+1.1%) also saw rises. The greatest drops were posted in Nova Scotia (-4.7%), Newfoundland (-0.9%) and New Brunswick (-0.9%). Nationally, retail sales fell 0.3% to \$23.6 billion.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of people receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits in BC decreased 5.8% between February 2000 and the same month this year.** The actual number of recipients fell by 4,210 to 68,760. Declines were seen all across the country, except in Ontario where there was a 0.8% increase in beneficiaries. The number of recipients in all of Canada fell 3.7% to 641,020.
Source: Statistics Canada

Agriculture

- **Sales of greenhouse, sod and nursery products grown in BC reached \$403 million last year, up from \$349 million in 1999.** BC's greenhouse, sod and nursery industry is the second-biggest in the country, after Ontario, where sales fell shy of the one billion dollar mark (\$933 million) in 2000. The national total was \$1.7 billion.

Ornamental plants and flowers accounted for the biggest share of total revenues, with sales adding up to \$266 million last year. The primary markets for these products were domestic wholesalers (\$69 million), mass market chain stores (\$67 million) and retail florists (\$26 million). Twenty-three million dollars worth of flowers and plants were sold directly to the public, while exports of these

products reached \$21 million in 2000. Greenhouse vegetable sales (primarily tomatoes, peppers and cucumbers) by BC producers were valued at \$137 million in 2000.
Source: SC, Catalogue 22-202

- **The 7,570 farm families in the province had an average income of \$60,786 in 1998.** This was virtually unchanged from 1997. Alberta (\$65,158) and Ontario (\$64,530) were the only provinces where incomes were higher. The national average was \$61,108. In BC, the highest incomes went to families who ran dairy farms (\$94,739, a 7.1% increase over 1997), followed by egg and poultry farmers (\$93,155, an increase of 1.6%). This was well above the Canadian average of \$64,801 for dairy farms and \$78,607 for producers of poultry and eggs. The lowest income went to BC families with hog farms (\$41,522). These families also saw their income fall significantly (-44.5%) in 1998. Nationally, hog farmers had an average family income of \$42,165, down 23.6% from the previous year. Income also fell for BC families running cattle, livestock combination and fruit and vegetable farms.

Most (\$54,452) of the income received by farm families in BC came from off-farm activities. Farm families in the province reported the highest average off-farm income (wages and salaries, investment, pension, and other income) in the country. The Canadian average was \$43,677.
Source: Statistics Canada

Work Injuries

- **Last year, the Workers' Compensation Board accepted 140,020 work injury claims made by workers in the province.** Another 11,211 were disallowed, and 2,144 were rejected. The injury rate (number of short-term claims per 100 person-years of employment) fell to a historic low of 4.0% in 2000. The rate had been 5.7 at the beginning of the decade.
Source: WCB Annual Report 2000

Did you know...

Buying a Big Mac chewed up an average \$2.14 (US) last year. Canadians spent less than their neighbours to the south, where the average price was \$2.54. Burger lovers travelling overseas forked over the least in the Philippines (\$1.19). Big Macs cost the most (\$3.65) in Switzerland, where it's now possible to buy the treat at a Golden Arches hotel.

Health

- **By the end of 2001, it is estimated that the number of new cancer cases diagnosed in BC will reach 17,200, with slightly more men (8,900) than women (8,300) having the disease.** Age-standardized incidence rates for major cancer sites (lung, pancreas, stomach etc) in BC men are estimated at 446 per 100,000 men this year, slightly higher than the national average (444). It is estimated that 321 of every 100,000 BC women will be diagnosed with cancer, 23 less than the Canadian average of 344. Prostate cancer is predicted to be the most commonly diagnosed cancer among BC men, with an estimated rate of 163 per 100,000. In women, the highest rate is predicted for breast cancer (102). Lung cancer is estimated to have the second highest incidence rate this year in both men (58) and women (46).

The total number of deaths due to cancer is forecast to reach 8,200 in 2001. Nationally, it is anticipated that 65,300 Canadians will succumb to the disease this year. *Source: Health Canada*

- **BC males had the highest age-standardized rate of death from AIDS in the country in 1996.** There were 9.8 AIDS deaths for every 100,000 males in BC, compared to a national average of 7.4. The rate for BC women was zero, compared to a national figure of 0.7 per 100,000 population. The highest rates in the province were found in the Vancouver (38.5 AIDS deaths for every 100,000 males) and Capital (9.2) health regions.

Source: SC Catalogue 82-221-XIE

Cruise Ships

- **The number of non-Canadians arriving in BC by cruise ship rose 11.2% in 2000, increasing to 486,517.** Most (92%) of these people cleared customs in Vancouver last year. Victoria seaport saw a 37.4% increase in the number of international arrivals compared to 1999, with 46 cruise ships dropping anchor in the city's port. In total, 38,236 international passengers arrived in the capital in 2000. These figures exclude Canadian residents, as well as passengers who did not disembark at the ports, and were therefore not cleared through Canadian customs.

Source: SC Catalogue 87-003

- **Nine out of every ten international passengers (both the east and west coasts) were American residents.** However, overseas residents taking cruises in Canada account for a growing share (12%, up from 8% in 1990) of international cruise ship passengers. One out of every five Americans who visited the Port of Vancouver last year en route to (or returning from) Alaska was a California resident. Florida, Washington, New York and Texas each contributed about 7% of the total.

Source: SC Catalogue 87-003

- **Alaska is the third most popular cruise destination in the world, after the Caribbean and Europe.** Most Alaska-bound cruises involve seven nights on board, though some itineraries include up to 14 nights. Vancouver is the home port for many of the ships sailing to Alaska, due in part to US regulations which prohibit foreign-owned ships from carrying passengers between US ports. Last year, more than one million Canadian and international cruise ship passengers arrived at the port.

Source: SC Catalogue 87-003

- **Cruise passengers tend to be an older crowd.** Four out of ten American cruise passengers who visited Vancouver in 2000 were 65 or older, and three out of ten were between the ages of 55 and 64. However, cruising is also becoming more popular with families. In the Alaskan cruise market, families made up 11% of all American passengers. Adults travelling alone or in groups of three or more made up 21%, with the remaining 68% of passengers travelling as couples. Among American passengers, the female/male ratio was three to two.

Source: SC Catalogue 87-003

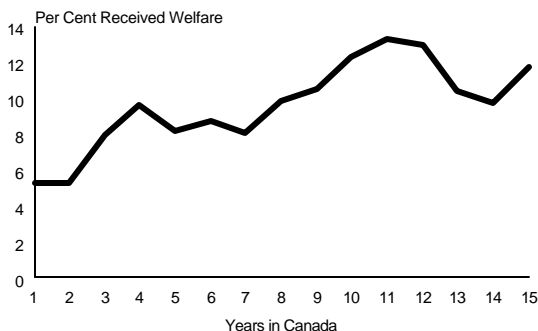
highlights, Issue 01-17
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Contrary to the general belief that immigrants are more likely to depend on welfare benefits during their initial settlement period, statistics show that immigrants who have been in Canada between 10 and 12 years are more likely to receive welfare benefits...

Approximately 8.4 per cent of the B.C. immigrant population (aged 15+) who came to Canada between 1980 and 1995 received welfare benefits during the 1995 tax year. This proportion was much lower than the 14.2 per cent observed for the immigrant population in the whole country. The average annual welfare income reported during 1995 was \$6,226 for immigrants in B.C. and \$7,216 for immigrants in Canada. Welfare programs are primarily administered under provincial or municipal jurisdictions and hence cross province comparisons are sometimes not valid. As a result, this article focuses mainly on characteristics of the portion of B.C. immigrant population who reported any welfare income for the 1995 tax year and who arrived in the country during the 1980-1995 period.

The degree to which immigrants depend on welfare benefits is affected by a number of factors. These may include the background of immigrants upon arrival in Canada

Per Cent B.C. Immigrants on Welfare in 1995
By Year in Canada after Landing



New Data Makes Studies of Mobility and Performance after Landing Possible

New studies are made possible by using data available from the Longitudinal Immigration Database (IMDB) developed jointly by Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. This database is created by combining income tax records from Revenue Canada and immigration records for a sample of immigrants who arrived in Canada between 1980 and 1995. By comparing an immigrant's province of initial landing and the province of residence as indicated on the same immigrant's tax return, inter-provincial mobility of this immigrant can be determined. Also, indicators can be developed to examine certain characteristics of immigrants, such as their earnings, for a period after they arrived in Canada.

The sample in the database is large enough to be representative for the general immigrant population who landed between 1980 and 1995. For example, the actual number of immigrants aged 15 and older who landed in B.C. between 1980 and 1995 was about 347,789 persons. The sample contained within the IMDB was 194,565 immigrants, about 56% of the actual total landings. This is the fifth feature article utilizing the IMDB.

and changes in their financial, family and health status while in Canada, as well as the state of the economy and job market. In general, immigrants who have been in Canada for about 10 to 12 years are relatively more likely to receive welfare benefits than those who have been in Canada for a shorter or longer period.

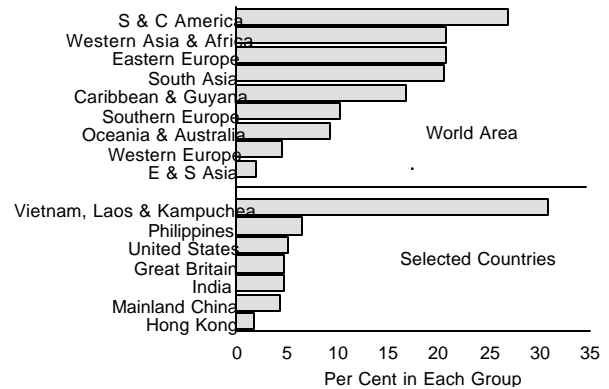
It is generally believed that immigrants in the refugee and designated classes tend to rely more on welfare benefits than those in other classes due to a possible lack of financial assets, supporting relatives or even job skills. However, examining how long the immigrant welfare recipients have been in Canada reveals an interesting fact about

welfare usage by different classes of immigrants. While a very high percentage of refugee immigrants received welfare benefits initially after landing, refugee immigrants gradually became less dependent on welfare payments as they become more established in Canada.

On the other hand, for immigrants in other classes, especially family classes, the proportion who were welfare recipients has grown larger the longer they have been in Canada. This observation might be explained in part by the fact that all immigrants admitted under the family classes were required to be sponsored by family members already in Canada. These family members are responsible for giving financial support for a period of up to ten years to the relatives that they sponsored. During this period, welfare benefits received by the immigrants are accumulated as debt owed to the government. This might also explain the trend discussed earlier where a higher proportion of immigrants became welfare recipients 10 to 12 years after landing.

Comparing the origins of immigrants indicates that a relatively higher proportion of immigrant welfare recipients came from Eastern Europe, Western Asia, Africa and South/Central America. These world areas have been the main sources of refugee and designated immigrants to Canada over the past few decades and hence represented a relatively higher proportion of welfare recipients. In particular, more than 30 per cent of immigrants from Vietnam, Laos and Kampuchea reported having received welfare benefits in 1995.

B.C. Immigrant Welfare Recipients By Source
1995 Tax Year - Landed 1980-1995



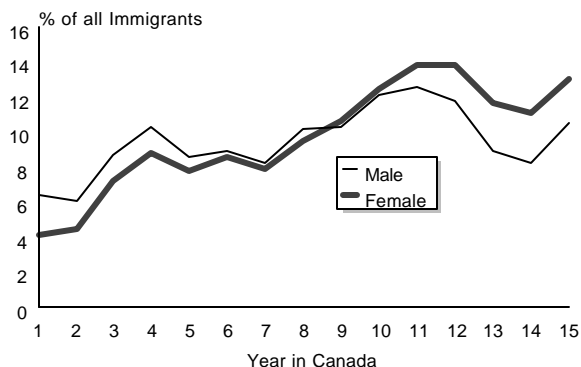
B.C. Welfare Receiving Immigrants By Class By Landed Year
1995 Tax Year



Male immigrants are slightly more likely than their female counterparts to have received welfare benefits. In 1995, 52 per cent of immigrants who received welfare were men and 48 per cent women. However, female immigrants received a higher amount of welfare income than their male counterparts. Average annual welfare income reported was \$6,667 for female and \$5,823 for male immigrants. Also, relative to female immigrants, a higher proportion of male immigrants received welfare in their earlier years of settlement and lower levels later. During the study period, it was after living about eight years in Canada when female immigrants became more likely than male immigrants to be welfare recipients.

Other characteristics that seem to relate to welfare usage include the education and English language ability of immigrants. Statistics show that immigrants who had lower education levels at the time of arrival tended to be more likely to receive welfare benefits. Compared to the overall average of 8.4 per cent of all immigrants who received welfare, 12.2 per cent of those who had less than 10 years of education received welfare. All other immigrants who had 12 years or higher education represented less than the overall average in the welfare recipient group. Also, comparing immigrants by official language ability, those who had no English language ability at time of landing tended to be more likely to receive welfare benefits.

Per Cent B.C. Immigrants on Welfare - 1995
By Gender By Years in Canada



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



BC at a glance . . .		
POPULATION (thousands)		% change on one year ago
	Jan 1/01	
BC	4,077.4	0.7
Canada	30,714.7	0.9
GDP and INCOME		% change on one year ago
<i>(BC - at market prices)</i>	1999	
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.) Dec	3,155	-4.9
Merchandise Exports (raw)	n/a	n/a
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Feb	3,113	6.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change on one year ago
<i>(all items - 1992=100)</i>	Mar '01	
BC	113.3	0.9
Canada	115.6	2.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change on one year ago
<i>(seasonally adjusted)</i>	Mar '01	
Labour Force - BC	2,111	0.9
Employed - BC	1,972	1.4
Unemployed - BC	139	-5.6
		Mar '00
Unemployment Rate - BC (percent)	6.6	7.0
Unemployment Rate - Canada (percent)	7.0	6.8
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Apr 25/01	Apr 26/00
Prime Business Rate	6.50	7.00
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	6.80	7.70
- 5 year	7.50	8.35
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Apr 25/01	Apr 26/00
<i>(avg. noon spot rate)</i> Cdn \$	1.5451	1.4735
US \$ <i>(reciprocal of the closing rate)</i>	0.6470	0.6779
AVERAGE WEEKLY WAGE RATE		% change on one year ago
<i>(industrial aggregate - dollars)</i>	Mar '01	
BC	650.17	3.1
Canada	630.47	3.9
SOURCES:		
Population, Gross Domestic Product, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Wage Rate } Statistics 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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