

## Earnings and Employment Trends

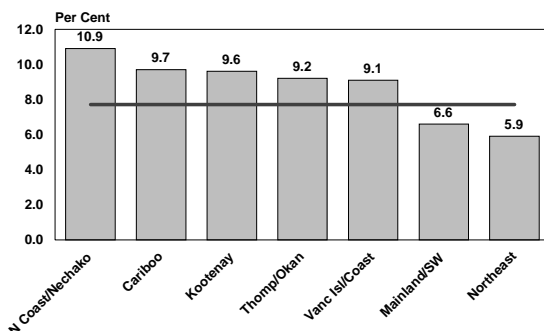
◆ February 2002

### Regional Comparisons of the Labour Force in British Columbia

In 2001, the number of people employed in British Columbia decreased 0.3 per cent over 2000 to 1,942,400. The largest employment decline was in the Vancouver Island/Coast region, where employment dropped by 6.3 per cent. The Northeast region experienced the largest growth in employment at 2.2 per cent, likely due to the rapid growth in the natural gas industry.

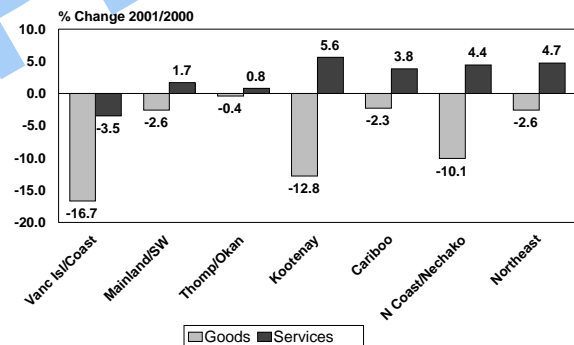
The unemployment rate in BC increased by 0.5 percentage points over the period 2000 to 2001. North Coast/Nechako had the highest unemployment rate of all of the regions at 10.9 per cent, a 0.7 percentage point increase over 2000. Kootenay region's unemployment rate, at 9.6 per cent, showed the most significant decline at 0.5 per cent.

Unemployment Rates in BC Regions - 2001



In 2001, employment in the **goods-producing sector** in BC decreased by 5.4 per cent and all areas of the province were affected. Vancouver Island/Coast goods sector employment declined the most with a loss of 16.7 per cent while the Thompson/Okanagan underwent the smallest decline at -0.4 per cent.

Change in Employment in BC Regions - 2001



The three most northern regions of the province are much more dependent on the goods-producing sector than the lower half of the province. In the three northern regions, the goods producing industries are responsible for just about one third of total employment; 33.4 per cent in Northeast, 30.1 per cent in the Cariboo and 30.0 per cent in the North Coast & Nechako region. The North Coast/Nechako region lost 10.1 per cent of its employment in the goods producing sector in 2001.

Fortunately, the BC **service producing sector** did show some growth (1.0%), particularly in the areas of the province that rely heavily on the production of goods. The eastern and northern parts of the province all showed employment growth of more than 3 per cent in their service sectors. These growth levels were adequate to offset the goods producing sector declines so all these regions showed either steady state levels of overall employment or minor increases. The only area to undergo a decline in its service sector was the Vancouver Island/Coast region (-3.5%). That decline, alongside the significant employment reduction in the goods sector (-16.7%), brought about a considerable jump in the unemployment rate from 7.8 to 9.1 percent.

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