

## Earnings and Employment Trends ♦ December 1998

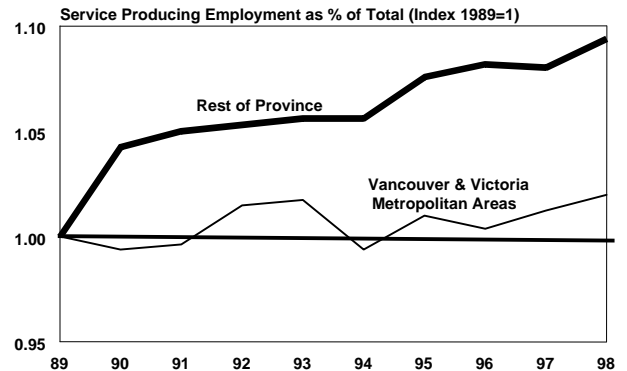
### Are the Non-Metropolitan Regions of BC Becoming more Economically Diversified?

For analytical purposes, it is sometimes more meaningful to divide British Columbia into two labour market areas, one being the "metropolitan area" (Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Capital Regional District) and the other, the "non-metropolitan area" (the rest of the province). Historically, these two areas have had very different economic structures, generally characterized as the metropolitan area being the service provider for the province and the outlying areas being the natural resource producer.

In the 1990's, significant changes have occurred in much of the non-metropolitan region. Importantly, population growth has been more concentrated there --- the Development Region with the greatest population growth over the last ten years has been the Thompson-Okanagan and continuing strong growth has been recorded in Central Vancouver Island, Squamish-Lillooet, the Fraser Valley and the Sunshine Coast.

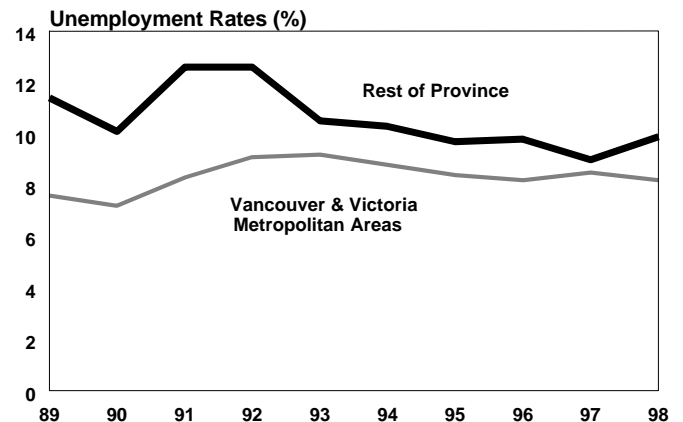
Changes to the non-metropolitan labour market are also evident. The importance of the resource industries in these economies has been declining gradually, so today many regions of the province are more economically diversified than ten years ago.

### The Importance of the Service Producing Industries Has Been Increasing in the Regions



The service producing industries are considerably less cyclical and seasonal in nature than the goods producing industries and hence provide more stable jobs. The increasing importance of these service industries has led to a reduction in the extreme volatility of the non-metropolitan economies and hence lower, and less volatile, unemployment rates.

### The Non-Metropolitan Regions of the Province Always Register a Higher Unemployment Rate Than the Metropolitan Areas, but this Gap Has Moderated in Recent Years



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