

## Earnings and Employment Trends ♦ March 1999

### *Incidence of Low Income in British Columbia*

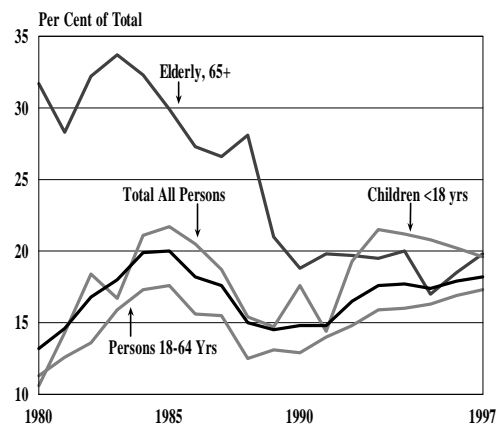
In 1997 the number of persons in British Columbia with incomes below Statistics Canada's low income cut-offs was an estimated 706,000, or 18.2 per cent of the total population, up from 17.9 in 1996. Incidence of low income in males increased 1.5 percentage points to 17.2 per cent while females experienced a decline of 1.0 percentage points to 19.0 per cent.

An estimated 174,000 children under 18 years of age, 19.6 per cent of all children in BC, lived in low income families in 1997 (families where the head of the household is less than 65 years old). Children living in single parent female families were almost four times more likely to be in a low income situation (52.3 per cent) than children in two-parent families (13.5 per cent). However, since 1980, rates for children living in single parent female families have remained fairly constant while those of children in 2 parent families has increased by 8.1 percentage points.

The low income rate for persons 65 years of age and over was 19.8 per cent in 1997, up from 18.5 per cent in 1996 but still continuing a downtrend from the 31.7 per cent recorded in 1980. Since 1980, low income rates for senior men has decreased 15.7 per-

centage points (from 28.7 to 13.9 per cent) and 8.8 percentage points for senior women (from 34.1 per cent to 25.3 per cent).

### Incidence of Low Income in BC



In 1997, British Columbia ranked fourth highest in Canada in the total "all persons" incidence of low income, with Quebec reporting the highest per cent at 20.4 and Prince Edward Island the lowest at 13.4 per cent.

The largest variance between provinces is in the category of children in female lone-parent families, where the incidence of low income goes from a high of 72.3 per cent in Newfoundland to a low of 52.3 per cent in British Columbia.

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