

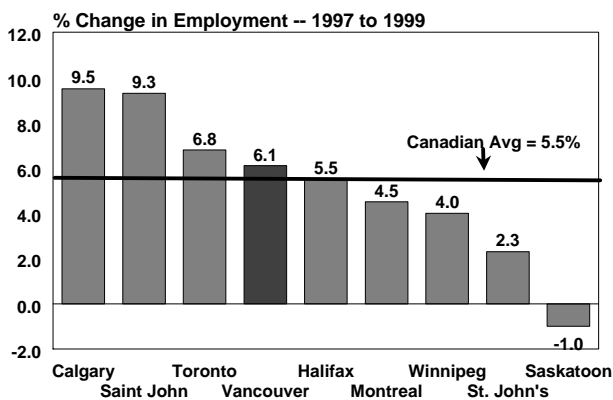
Earnings and Employment Trends ♦ October 1999

The Job Market in the Major Cities¹ across Canada

The Canadian economy has seen strong employment growth in the last two years. Both 1998 and 1999² recorded job increases in the 2.8 per cent range. Fortunately, most provinces have participated in the recovery. This year, job growth has exceeded the 2 per cent range right across Canada, with the exception of Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island.

Of interest is how the major cities have fared in the rebounding Canadian economy. For the purposes of this article, major cities are defined as the city with the largest job market in each province³.

Calgary has led Canada's employment growth over the last two years



Calgary's growth has been significant not only in the last two years, but since 1995. By 1998, Calgary had surpassed Edmonton as the largest labour market in Alberta. It is now the fifth largest in Canada after Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Ottawa/Hull and is quickly gaining ground on fourth place.

In the last two years, Vancouver's job growth has been substantial despite all the bad news regarding the BC economy. In fact, the 1999 growth rate is currently running at 4 per cent -- only twice over the last ten years, in 1994 and 1989, did Vancouver's job market appear so strong.

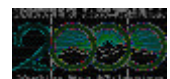
Toronto and the Maritime cities of Saint John (NB) and to a lesser extent Halifax have also seen strong growth. At the other end of the spectrum, Saskatoon appears to have stagnated over the past two years and Winnipeg has not benefited from the recovery to the same extent as most other cities.

The chart on the next page shows that some of the cities that have had high growth still have high unemployment and vice versa. For example, Winnipeg although its job creation has paled next to many of the other cities, their growth converted directly into a decline in the unemployment rate from 7.4 to 5.7 per cent, currently the lowest unemployment rate among the large cities

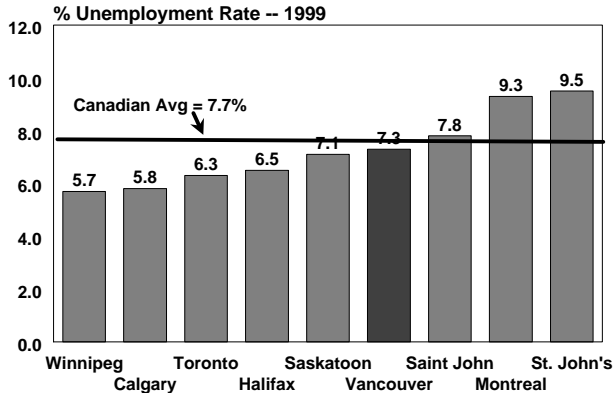
¹ Cities are defined as the Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA's) which comprise the main city plus surrounding areas. In the case of the Vancouver CMA, its boundaries are the same as the GVRD.

² All numbers for 1999 are estimates based on 10 months of data.

³ Charlottetown, PEI is not included because it is relatively small.



In general, most large cities have lower unemployment rates than Canada as a whole.



Montreal has a relatively high unemployment rate of 9.3 per cent. However, when compared to the 1997 rate of 10.9% per cent, the job market finally is showing signs of turning around after a decade of stagnation. Similarly, Vancouver with 7.3 per cent unemployed is at its lowest unemployment rate since 1990. But Saint John (NB) stands out the most. The current rate of 7.8 per cent is an undeniable achievement. In the past, the norm for this city has been double digit unemployment rates.

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