
Labour Force Statistics ♦ March 2000

HIGHLIGHTS

- **B.C. seasonally adjusted employment and the estimated number of unemployed persons both were down slightly in March from February.** These slight decreases held the B.C. unemployment rate at 7.0 per cent in March, unchanged from February.
- **B.C. seasonally adjusted employment in the first quarter of 2000 saw a jump from the fourth quarter of 1999 (up 1.5 per cent).** Full-time employment (up 2.3 per cent) accounted for all of the growth in employment in the first quarter of 2000, while part-time employment decreased by 1.7 per cent.
- **First quarter seasonally adjusted employment for youth (aged 15-24) rose from the fourth quarter by 7,000 (up 2.5 per cent).** The youth unemployment rate stood at 12.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2000, down from 13.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1999 and 14.2 per cent in the third quarter of 1999.
- **Seasonally adjusted employment in March for Canada overall was little changed (up 0.2 per cent).** Most provinces saw little change in employment in March except for gains in Ontario and Nova Scotia.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Mar. 2000	Feb. 2000	Mar. 1999
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.0%	7.0%	8.6%
Canada Unemployment Rate	6.8%	6.8%	7.9%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	147.0	148.0	121.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	-0.2%	0.7%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	-0.2%	0.5%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	64.9%	65.1%	65.4%

* Unless otherwise indicated, all labour force variables are seasonally adjusted.

Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations and the Research, Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by Statistics Canada. For more information, call BC STATS (250) 387-0327 or R,E&A (250) 952-6111.

The British Columbia Labour Market - First Quarter 2000

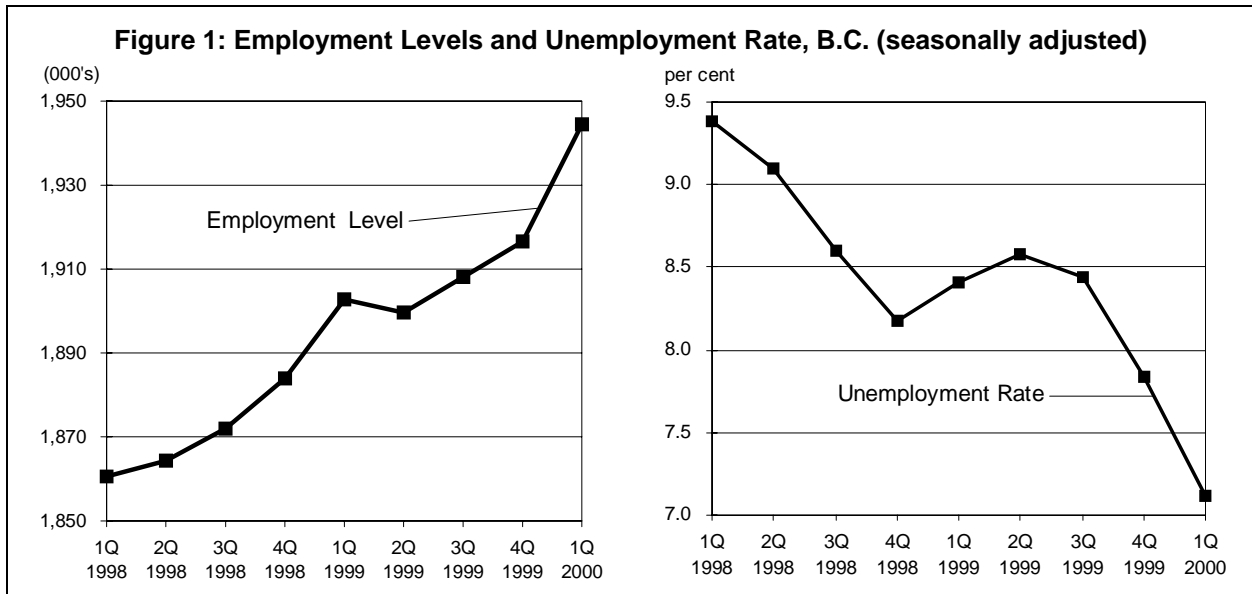
Summary . . . Seasonally adjusted employment in British Columbia in the first quarter of 2000 rose sharply by 1.5 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1999. Employment in B.C. has increased steadily over the last eight quarters, with only a slight pause in the second quarter of 1999. Employment growth in the first quarter of 2000 was led by women (up 1.8 per cent) who saw gains in both full and part-time work. Employment for men overall rose by 1.1 per cent, but men saw very strong growth in full-time work (up 3.0 per cent) which was partly offset by decreases in their part-time employment levels. This suggests both new additional full-time jobs and some conversion of previously part-time jobs to full-time hours for men. Goods sector employment grew by 2.6 per cent in the first quarter, while services grew by 1.2 per cent. Ongoing gains in manufacturing in each of the last three quarters have paced the strong full-time employment gains by men. Overall gains in employment in the first quarter was shared by increases in the number of private sector employees (up 15,000) and self-employed workers (up 12,000). The number of those actively looking for work in the first quarter of 2000, the unemployed, fell by 14,000 from the fourth quarter of 1999. The seasonally adjusted

unemployment rate dropped to 7.1 per cent in the first quarter of 2000 from 7.8 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1999.

Employment and Unemployment Rate . . .

Figure 1 shows quarterly levels for seasonally adjusted employment and the unemployment rate since the first quarter of 1998. Employment is continuing to rise in B.C. and growth accelerated in the first quarter of 2000. Women accounted for three-fifths of the latest quarterly increase. B.C. employment now stands 29,000 above the level in the last quarter of 1999, and almost 42,000 above the level seen in the first quarter of 1999.

The number of estimated unemployed persons fell to 149,000 in the first quarter of 2000, down from 163,000 in the fourth quarter of 1999 and 175,000 one year ago. These declines in unemployed persons with gains in employment, have been pushing down the provincial unemployment rate. In the first quarter of 2000 it fell significantly to 7.1 per cent from 7.8 per cent in the fourth quarter 1999, and down from 8.4 per cent in the third quarter of 1999. The unemployment rate in the first quarter of 2000 for men was 7.5 per cent and for women it was 6.7 per cent.



Employment by Industrial Classification . . .

Figure 2 shows seasonally adjusted quarterly employment levels for the first quarter of 2000 by industrial classification. Net changes in employment over the previous quarter are noted for each of the last four quarters, as well as the summary net change and percentage change between the first quarter of 1999 and the first quarter of 2000.

While the goods sector only accounts for about one-quarter of all employment, its strong growth rate of 5.7 per cent in the last year yielded over half of the total net employment gains (22,300). This improvement by the goods sector overall appears to be supported by a number of economic indicators like manufacturing shipments which have generally been growing since the middle of 1999. Manufacturing and other primary sectors provide not only direct employment but also provide indirect and induced employment impacts in a number of service sectors, like transportation.

The *goods sector* in the latest quarter saw gains in all of its subsectors. Manufacturing has shown ongoing gains in each of the last three quarters, standing some 15,700 above levels of one year ago. Other primary (which includes logging, fishing, mining and oil&gas) saw some additional gains in the first quarter of 2000 following a strong gain of 5,300 in estimated employment in the fourth quarter of 1999. Construction saw a gain of 2,400 jobs in the first quarter of 2000, which substantially reverses the employment decreases in that sector seen in the last three quarters of 1999.

Employment in the *services sector* in the first quarter of 2000 rose by 17,500 after remaining relatively flat for the previous three quarters. For the latest quarter, services were up in most subsectors except for finance, insurance and real estate and other services (which includes repair, maintenance, laundry and personal services). Over the past four quarters, notable gains were seen in education services, health and social services, and transportation.

Figure 2: B.C. Employment by Industrial Classification
First Quarter 2000 Levels and Changes, (seasonally adjusted)

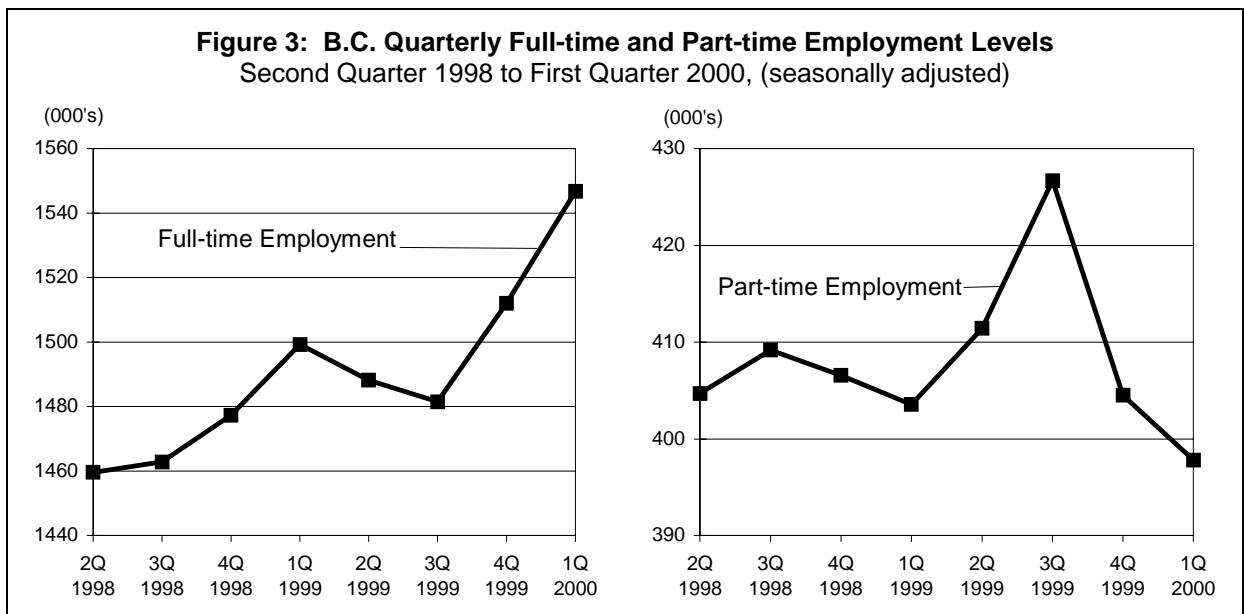
	Employment Level 1Q00 (000's)	Net Change from previous quarter				Net Change 1Q99 to 1Q00	Per Cent Change 1Q99 to 1Q00
		2Q99	3Q99	4Q99	1Q00		
Goods Sector	415,900	-2,100	4,000	10,000	10,400	22,300	5.7
Agriculture	30,200	600	700	300	900	2,500	8.9
Other primary	54,600	-1,700	800	5,300	1,600	6,000	12.3
Utilities	11,300	600	-200	-1,200	700	-200	-1.7
Construction	115,900	-1,800	-2,100	-400	2,400	-1,800	-1.6
Manufacturing	203,900	100	4,900	5,900	4,800	15,700	8.4
Service Sector	1,528,800	-1,100	4,400	-1,400	17,500	19,400	1.3
Retail & wholesale trade	305,100	-3,500	-4,700	-100	-300	-860	-2.7
Transportation & warehousing	121,000	5,200	5,600	-900	-300	9,600	8.6
Finance, insur. & real estate	115,600	-2,100	1,100	-2,600	-2,400	-6,000	-5.0
Prof. Scientific & technical	132,100	1,100	-2,800	-4,600	0	-6,300	-4.6
Management of Companies	68,000	400	2,600	-2,300	4,200	4,800	7.7
Education services	138,000	4,100	5,300	6,600	1,900	17,900	14.9
Health & social assistance	203,200	4,600	900	4,100	3,300	12,900	6.8
Information, culture & rec.	94,500	-3,200	800	-1,100	4,000	500	0.5
Accommodation & food	156,800	-4,700	-2,600	-1,500	7,500	-1,200	-0.8
Other services	101,900	-1,400	-400	-1,300	-1,800	-4,900	-4.6
Public administration	92,400	-1,500	-1,300	2,100	1,400	700	0.8

Full and Part-time Employment . . . Figure 3 notes quarterly seasonally adjusted full-time and part-time employment levels in B.C. Seasonally adjusted full-time employment in the first quarter of 2000 jumped up for the second consecutive quarter. These gains more than offset the modest full-time declines seen in the second and third quarters of 1999.

Full-time work (up 2.3 per cent) accounted for all of the growth in employment in the first quarter of 2000, while part-time employment fell by 1.7 per cent. Three quarters of the full-time employment gains were by men (up

27,000), while full-time employment by women rose by 7,600 in the first quarter. Full-time employment is cumulatively up by 65,200 over the last two quarters.

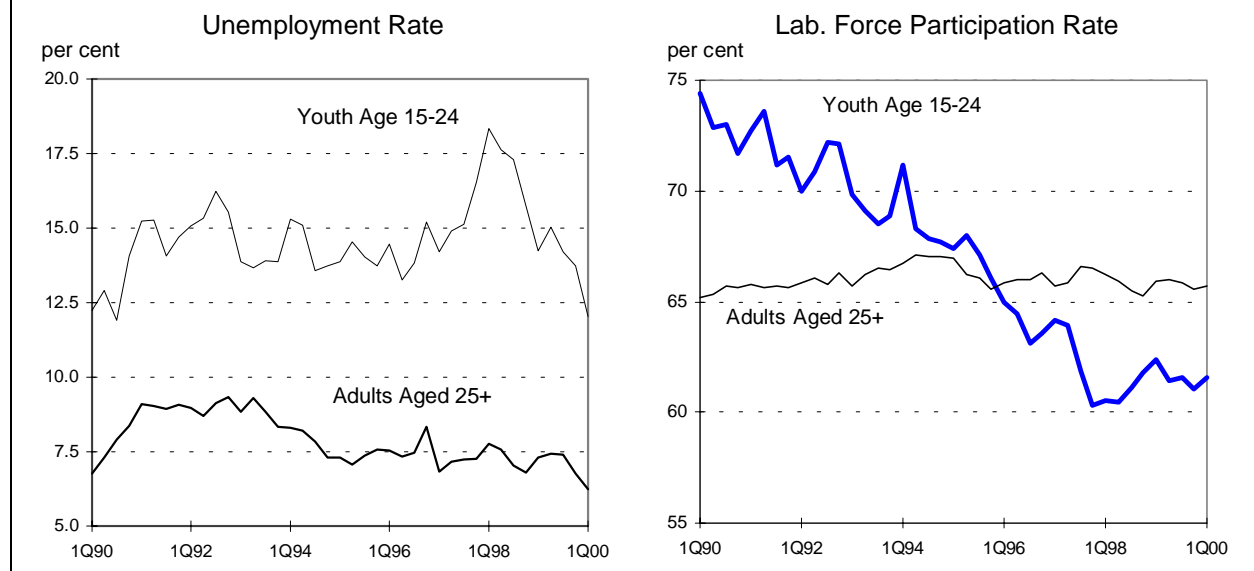
Part-time employment decreased by 6,800 in the first quarter of 2000, following a substantial decrease of 22,200 in fourth quarter of 1999. While part-time work for women increased by 8,600 in the first quarter of 2000, part-time work for men decreased by 15,400.



Unemployment and labour force participation . . . The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for adults aged 25+ in the first quarter of 2000 fell to 6.2 per cent (see Figure 4). The declining adult unemployment rate, which now sits below 7 per cent for the first time in twelve years, has come with no deterioration in the adult labour force participation rate. Youth unemployment rates in B.C. reached a peak during the 1990's of almost 19 per cent during early 1998, but have since fallen considerably, especially over the latest three quarters. The recent drop in the youth unemployment rate should be considered over the past ten years and in light of changes in youth labour force participation rates.

The B.C. youth labour force participation rate (proportion of all youth either in paid employment or actively looking for work) of 61 per cent for the latest quarter, remains well below the 70 to 75 per cent levels seen in the early 1990's. Increased participation by youth in schooling, especially post-secondary schooling, is estimated to only account for about one-third of the drop in the aggregate youth labour force participation rate since 1990. While the youth labour force participation rate has been slowly rising since about the third quarter of 1997, it remains well below levels in the early-1990's, even after accounting for the impact of increased youth schooling participation.

Figure 4: B.C. Youth and Adult Unemployment Rates and Labour Force Participation Rates
 First Quarter 1990 - First Quarter 2000 (seasonally adjusted)



Regional . . . Actual estimates for labour market levels and changes by development region are noted in Figure 5 comparing the first quarter of 1999 to the first quarter of 2000. On this quarterly year over year basis, employment growth has been strongest for the more rural development regions of the province. The strength in manufacturing and other primary sector employment noted earlier is reflected in the results for the more rural regions.

The three most urban regions saw more modest employment gains. The large Lower Mainland-Southwest region saw the weakest employment growth (up 0.5 per cent). The Thompson/Okanagan region which includes the urban centres of Kelowna and Kamloops saw slightly below provincial average employment growth (up 2.1 per cent). Two-thirds of the employment gains seen in the Vancouver Island/Coast development region (up 7.4 per cent), were seen outside of the large Victoria Metro area within this development region.

Actual unemployment rates in all regions were lower in the first quarter of 2000 from the same period in 1999. The Cariboo region saw a

significant drop in unemployment rate, down to 9.7 per cent from 15.7 per cent. For the Northeast region, the fall in unemployment rate to 3.5 per cent in part reflects a strengthening in labour market conditions, but may also partially reflect variability of the estimate size of unemployed persons used to calculate the unemployment rate for this small region.

Changes in employment to population ratios (employment rates) further confirm that the strongest improvements were seen in the more rural development regions. The Northeast, North Coast/Nechako, and Vancouver Island/Coast saw the strongest percentage point gains in employment rates. For the latter region, most of the gain occurred outside the Victoria Metro area. The Cariboo and Kootenay regions each saw a 2.5 percentage point rise in employment rate. Only the Lower Mainland-Southwest region saw an estimated decrease in employment rate, down from 61.0 per cent in the first quarter of 1999 to 60.2 per cent in the first quarter of 2000.

**Figure 5 - Regional Labour Market Changes,
First Quarter 1999 to First Quarter 2000, Actual**

Development Regions	Employment (000's)			Unemployment Rate			Employment/Pop. Ratio		
	1st Quarter 1999	1st Quarter 2000	% Change	1st Quarter 1999	1st Quarter 2000	Absolute Change	1st Quarter 1999	1st Quarter 2000	Absolute Change
Vancouver Island/Coast	310.1	332.9	7.4%	9.7%	7.9%	-1.8%	55.3%	59.3%	4.0%
Lower Mainland/S.W.	1,137.8	1,143.8	0.5%	8.0%	6.7%	-1.3%	61.0%	60.2%	-0.8%
Thompson/Okanagan	201.8	206.0	2.1%	11.0%	10.3%	-0.7%	53.9%	54.4%	0.5%
Kootenay	66.3	69.6	5.0%	11.1%	10.1%	-1.0%	54.1%	56.6%	2.5%
Cariboo	76.2	80.1	5.1%	15.7%	9.7%	-6.0%	57.3%	59.8%	2.5%
North Coast/Nechako	44.8	47.7	6.5%	9.3%	7.6%	-1.7%	59.4%	63.8%	4.6%
Northeast	30.7	33.0	7.5%	7.3%	3.5%	-3.8%	64.4%	68.9%	4.5%
B.C. Avg above	1,867.7	1,913.1	2.4%	9.1%	7.6%	-1.5%	58.7%	59.4%	0.6%

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