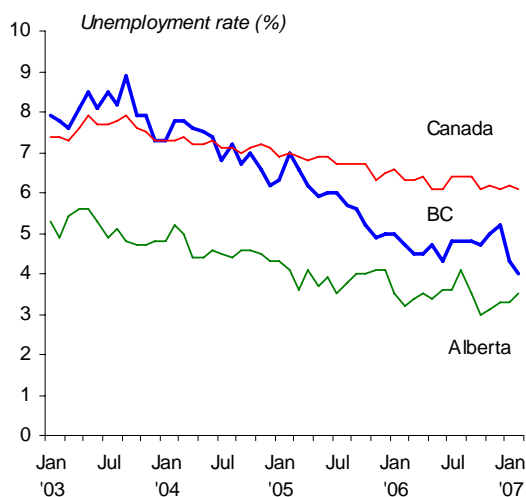


## Labour Force Statistics ♦ March 2007

### HIGHLIGHTS

All labour force statistics are seasonally adjusted, unless otherwise indicated

#### BC's unemployment rate falls to new low in March



British Columbia's unemployment rate fell to a new low<sup>1</sup> of 3.9% in March, as job growth (+0.6%) continued to outpace the increase in the number of people who were either working or looking for work (+0.4%). BC's net gain of 12,500 jobs in March was second only to that in Quebec, where an additional 29,200 people (+0.8%) found work last month. Although Alberta (3.6%) continued to have the lowest jobless rate in the country, its unemployment rate is starting to creep up.

#### Goods industries rebound; job growth stalls in service sector

Job growth in the province's goods industries resumed in March, bouncing back

(+1.9%) after slumping (-1.9%) in the previous month. The growth was concentrated in just two industries: construction (+2.4%) and manufacturing, which posted a substantial 5.3% increase. Other goods industries did not fare as well. Employment in utilities shrank (-11.8%) and there were also fewer people working in forestry, fishing & mining (-6.4%) and agriculture (-6.2%).

Employment gains in the service sector were modest (+0.2%), as five industries, including retail & wholesale trade (-1.1%) and transportation & warehousing (-4.3) pared down their workforce. At the same time, finance, insurance & real estate took on more workers (+6.6%), and a significant increase was also seen in information, culture & recreation services (+6.3%). Health care (+2.2%), education (+1.9%) and public administration (+0.9%) also expanded their work force.

Despite the strong job growth in goods industries, which remain largely male-dominated, the number of employed men in the province edged down marginally (-0.2%) in March. This likely reflects job losses in primary industries such as forestry and agriculture, together with some key service sector industries such as transportation and warehousing where many of the workers are men.

The number of women with jobs advanced 1.4%. Women make up a sizeable share of total employment in some of the industries (such as financial services, health and education) that posted big gains last month.

Public sector employment advanced 1.1%, while the number of people working in the private sector rose 0.3%. Self-employment was

<sup>1</sup> Since 1976, the first year for which comparable labour force statistics are available.

up 0.8% in March. Part-time workers made big gains (+3.5%), but there were fewer people with full-time jobs (-0.2%).

The youth (aged 15 to 24) unemployment rate dropped to 7.3%, the second-lowest level in more than 30 years (the rate had reached 6.7% in November 2005). For more experienced workers (aged 25 and over), the jobless rate was a very low 3.2%.

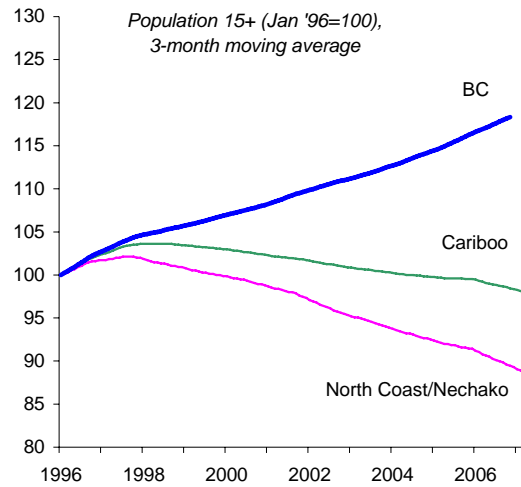
**Jobless rates improve in most regions, but for different reasons**

Jobless rates in most regions of the province were below March 2006 levels. Northeast (3.2%<sup>2</sup>, 3-month moving average, unadjusted) and Mainland/Southwest (3.8%) had the lowest jobless rates. The incidence of unemployment in most other parts of the province was between five and six percent. North Coast/Nechako was the only region that stood out from the rest of the province, with a substantially higher unemployment rate of 8.3%.

Both Cariboo and North Coast/Nechako continue to see employment decline. However, there has been an even bigger drop in the size of the labour force as people migrate to other parts of the province or the rest of Canada. As a result, jobless rates in both regions have been improving. In the rest of the province, falling unemployment rates reflect job growth that has been outpacing an expanding labour force.

<sup>2</sup> BC Stats estimate based on data supplied by Statistics Canada

**The working age population in North Coast/Nechako and Cariboo is shrinking**



Victoria’s unemployment rate edged up 0.2 percentage points to 3.1%, while the unemployment rate in Vancouver dropped from 4.1% to 3.7% between February and March.

**The Nation**

Canada’s unemployment rate was unchanged at 6.1% in March as employment (+0.3%) and the labour force (+0.4%) grew at similar rates. BC, Saskatchewan and Quebec were the only provinces to see an improvement in the jobless rate last month.

| Selected Statistics                         | Mar-07 | Feb-07 | Mar-06 |
|---|--------|--------|--------|
| BC Unemployment Rate (%)                    | 3.9    | 4.0    | 4.5    |
| Canadian Unemployment Rate (%)              | 6.1    | 6.1    | 6.3    |
| BC Employment ('000)                        | 2,265  | 2,253  | 2,187  |
| BC Labour Force Participation Rate (%)      | 66.4   | 66.2   | 65.6   |
| March % change in employment relative to:   | -      | 0.6    | 3.6    |
| March % change in labour force relative to: | -      | 0.4    | 3.0    |