
Labour Force Statistics ♦ March 1999

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The unemployment rate for B.C. rose to 8.4 per cent in March from 8.1 per cent in February.** This resulted from an increase in the number of unemployed persons coupled with a decrease in employment.
- **Despite the pause in employment growth in March, seasonally adjusted employment in the first quarter of 1999 was up 1.7 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1998.** Full-time employment was up 36,600, while part-time employment was down 3,600.
- **First quarter 1999 seasonally adjusted employment for youth (aged 15 to 24) rose by 2.7 per cent from the fourth quarter of 1998, compared to a rise of 1.6% per cent for adults aged 25+.** The youth unemployment rate dropped to 13.8 per cent in the first quarter, down 1.4 percentage points from the fourth quarter of 1998.
- **Seasonally adjusted employment in March for Canada edged down by 0.2 per cent from February.** Employment was flat or negative in all but two provinces (P.E.I. and Manitoba).

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Mar 99	Feb 99	Mar 98
B.C. Unemployment Rate	8.4%	8.1%	9.9%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.8%	7.8%	8.4%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	119.0	122.0	114.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	-0.8%	0.4%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	-0.5%	0.4%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	66.0%	66.4%	65.0%

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

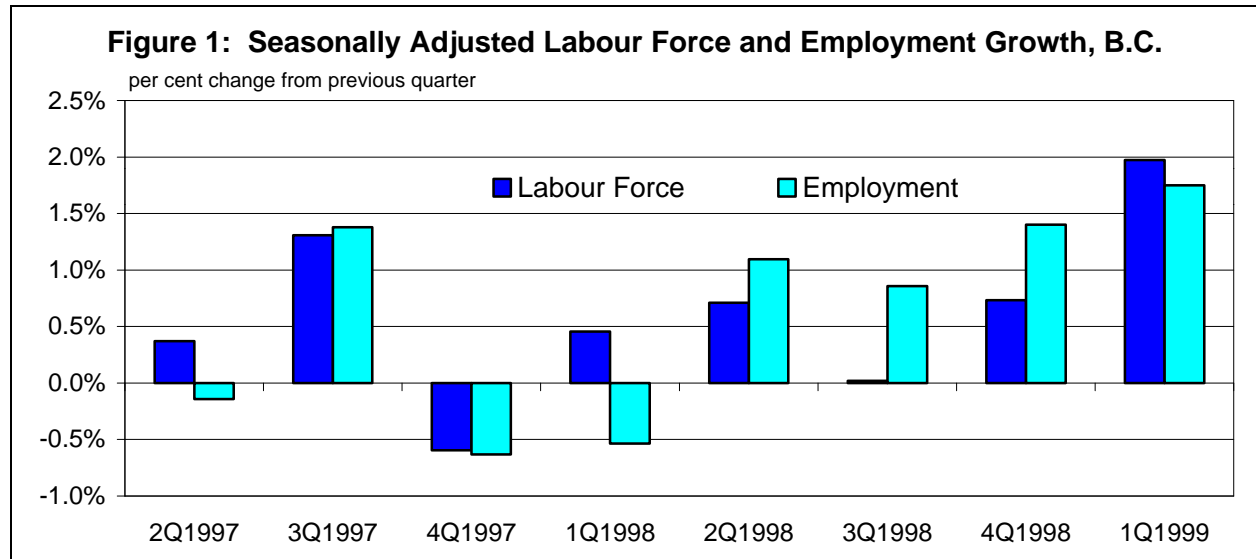
Labour Force Statistics is a joint compilation and review by BC STATS of the Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations and the Research, Evaluation and Accountability Branch of the Ministry of Advanced Education, Training and Technology of the results of the monthly Labour Force Survey conducted by 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 1999

Summary . . . Seasonally adjusted **employment** in British Columbia in the first quarter of 1999 increased from the fourth quarter of 1998 by 1.7 per cent. This is the fourth consecutive quarter of employment growth. For the fourth quarter in a row there were gains in **full-time employment**, while part-time employment has been declining for the past two quarters. There were employment gains in all **classes of workers** in the first quarter of 1999 with private sector employees showing the largest net gain (up 19,400) adding to gains seen in the fourth quarter of 1998 of 24,500. The number of those actively looking for work in the first quarter of 1999, **the unemployed**, rose by 7,500 after a dramatic decline of 32,400 in the previous three quarters. The seasonally adjusted **unemployment rate** rose to 8.2 per cent during the first quarter of 1999 from 8.0 per cent in the previous quarter.

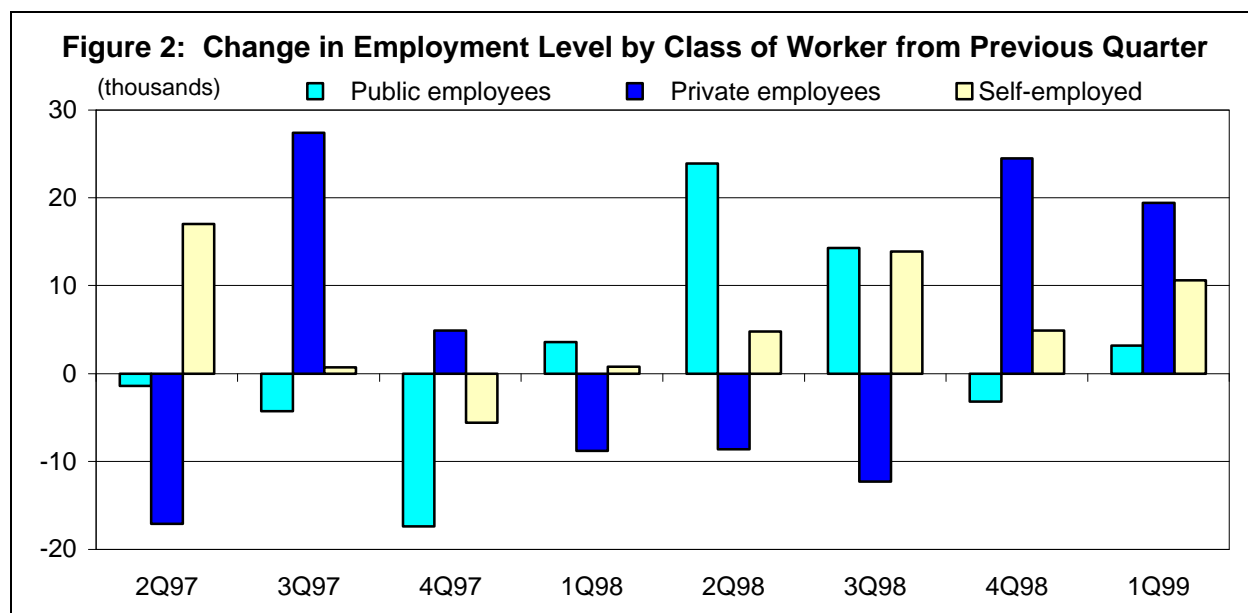
Labour Force and Employment . . . The seasonally adjusted estimate of the B.C. labour force (the number of persons working or actively looking for work) increased by 2.0 per cent (up 40,600) from the fourth quarter of 1998 (see Figure 1). The increase was shared equally by both men and women.

Figure 1 also provides a view of quarter to quarter changes in seasonally adjusted employment. Employment growth has been positive in the last four quarters with total net gains of 95,300 since the first quarter of 1998. For the last three quarters of 1998 employment growth exceeded labour force growth pushing down unemployment rates. In the first quarter of 1999 employment grew by 1.7 per cent (up 33,100).



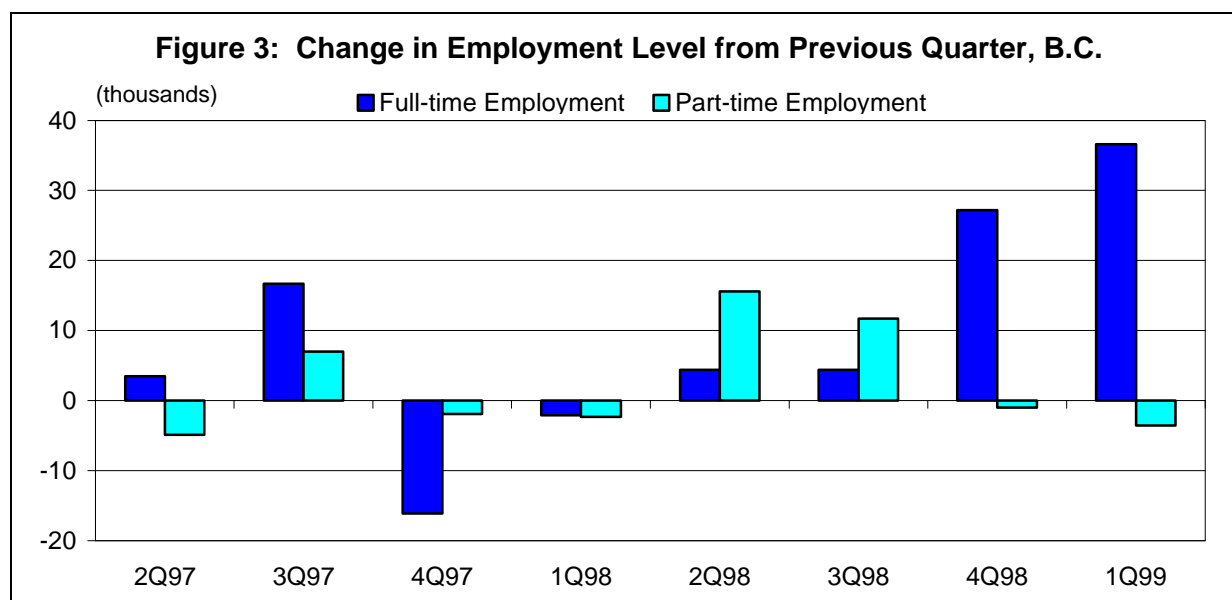
Employment by Class of Worker . . . Figure 2 compares seasonally adjusted quarterly net changes in employment by class of worker (public sector employees, private sector employees and self-employment). Overall labour market gains in the first three quarters of 1998 were from public sector employees and the self-employed. This changed by the fourth quarter of 1998 when private sector employees

led net employment gains, which continued into the first quarter of 1999. Employment growth in the private sector exceeded the combined gains in public sector employment and the self-employment. Increases in private sector employees in the last two quarters totaled 43,900 - more than offsetting the declines seen in the first three quarters of 1998.



Full and Part-time Employment . . . Figure 3 shows the quarterly seasonally adjusted net changes in full-time and part-time employment. Coinciding with the public sector and the self-employment gains, employment gains in the first three quarters of 1998 were lead by part-time

employment. This trend was reversed in the last two quarters where full-time employment has increased by 63,800 and part-time employment decreased by 4,600. Increases in private sector employees have contributed to this rise in full-time employment.

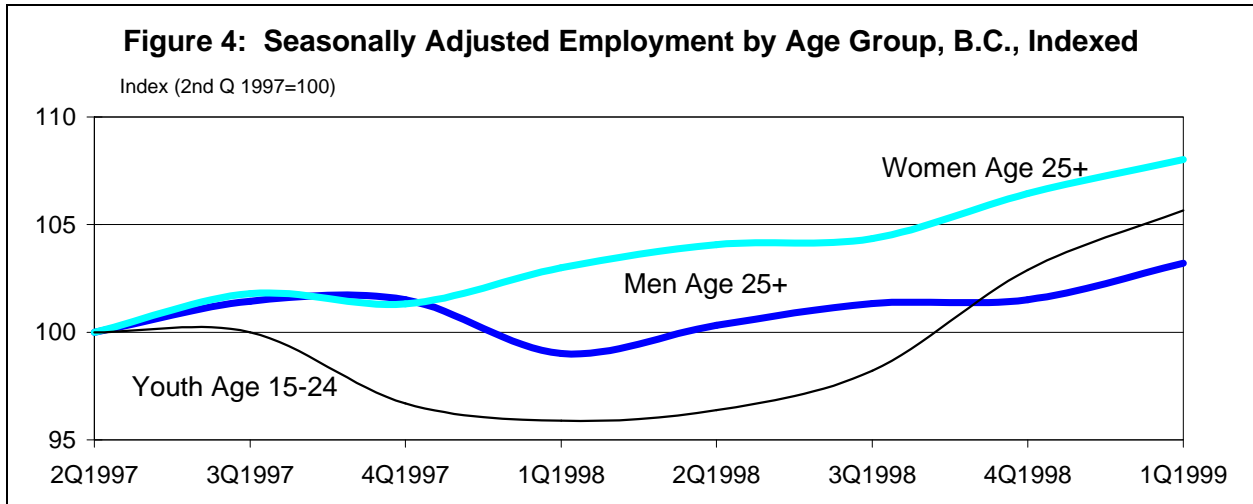


Employment Changes by Age Group . . . Employment for youth, adult men and adult women is indexed in Figure 4 (second quarter of

1997=100). There has been an increase in employment for all three categories in the last two quarters. The strongest recovery was seen

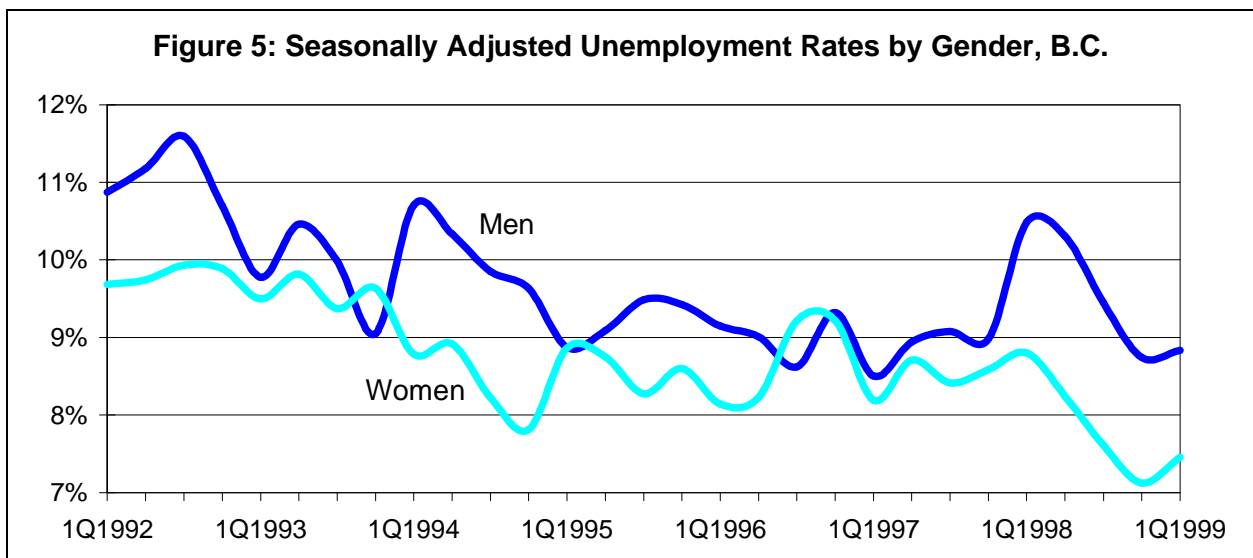
in youth employment. Following declines in 1996 and 1997, employment levels for youth are now approaching those last seen in 1995. Employment growth for adult women has generally exceeded that of adult men in the past

two years. However, following the decrease seen by adult men in the first quarter of 1998, their employment levels have grown steadily and now exceed the previous peak seen in the fourth quarter of 1997.



Unemployment . . . There was a slight increase in the B.C. seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in the first quarter of 1999 following three consecutive quarterly declines. Looking at Figure 5, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for men in the first quarter of 1999 was 8.8 per cent, up only 0.1 percentage point from the fourth quarter of 1998. It remains well down

from the high of 10.5 per cent in the first quarter of 1998. The unemployment rate for women was 7.5 per cent in the first quarter of 1999, up from 7.1 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1998. Unemployment rates for women in the last three quarters were their lowest seen in any quarter in the last ten years.



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