
Labour Force Statistics ♦ October 1999

HIGHLIGHTS

- **A decrease in the B.C. labour force participation rate in October was largely due to a decline in the number of unemployed.** This pushed down the unemployment rate to 7.4 per cent in October from 8.0 per cent in September.
- **October's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate is the lowest experienced in B.C. since September 1981.** Actual average employment in B.C. in the first ten months of 1999 compared to the same period in 1998 is up by 46,000
- **The decrease in the seasonally adjusted number of unemployed persons in October followed a similar decline in September, and most of these persons appear to have dropped out of the active labour force.** Employment grew in September and was little changed in October.
- **Full-time seasonally adjusted employment (three month moving average) for the most recent three months ending in October is up by 11,000 over the previous three month period ending in July.** Part-time employment is down by 3,000 over the same period.

Selected Statistics (SA)*	Oct 1999	Sep 1999	Oct 1998
B.C. Unemployment Rate	7.4%	8.0%	8.0%
Canada Unemployment Rate	7.2%	7.5%	8.0%
B.C. Help Wanted Index (1996=100)	133.0	131.0	120.0
B.C. Employment - Monthly Change	-0.1%	0.4%	-
B.C. Labour Force - Monthly Change	-0.7%	-0.3%	-
B.C. Participation Rate	64.2%	64.7%	64.8%

* 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) 952-6776.

B.C. Full-time and Part-time Employment in the 1990s

Summary . . . Between 1976 and 1989 part-time employment grew at about twice the rate as full-time employment and this trend has continued in the 1990s. However, full-time employment still accounts for over three quarters (78 per cent) of all employment.

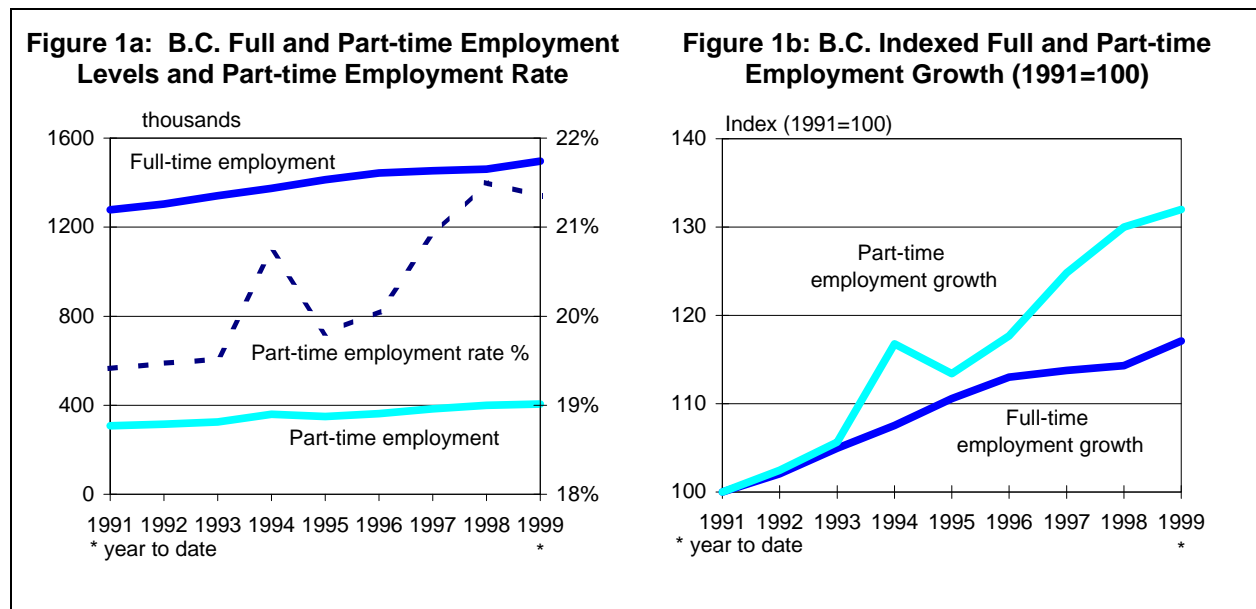
Part-time employment has increased more rapidly than full-time work through most of the latter part of the 1990s, and grew slightly faster for men than women. Between 1991 and 1998 the fastest growth in part-time employment have been by women aged 45+, men aged 45+ and men aged 25 to 44. Yet the largest increases in part-time employment rates have been seen by youth aged 15 to 24.

Definition . . . Employment is often thought of as either full or part-time work. These labels simply measure hours of work per week. For the purposes of measurement, Statistics Canada classifies those who normally work 30 hours or more per week at their main job as full-time workers, and those who work less than 30 hours per week as part-time workers.

Employment . . . Since 1991 both full and part-time employment has grown, however, part-time employment has grown faster. Stronger growth in service sector employment has in part driven the faster expansion of part-time work. The portion of all employment that is part time is increasing. For the first ten months of 1999 the part-time employment rate of 21.3 per cent was up from 19.4 per cent in 1991 (see Figure 1a). This is well above the 14.9 per cent part-time employment rate in 1976.

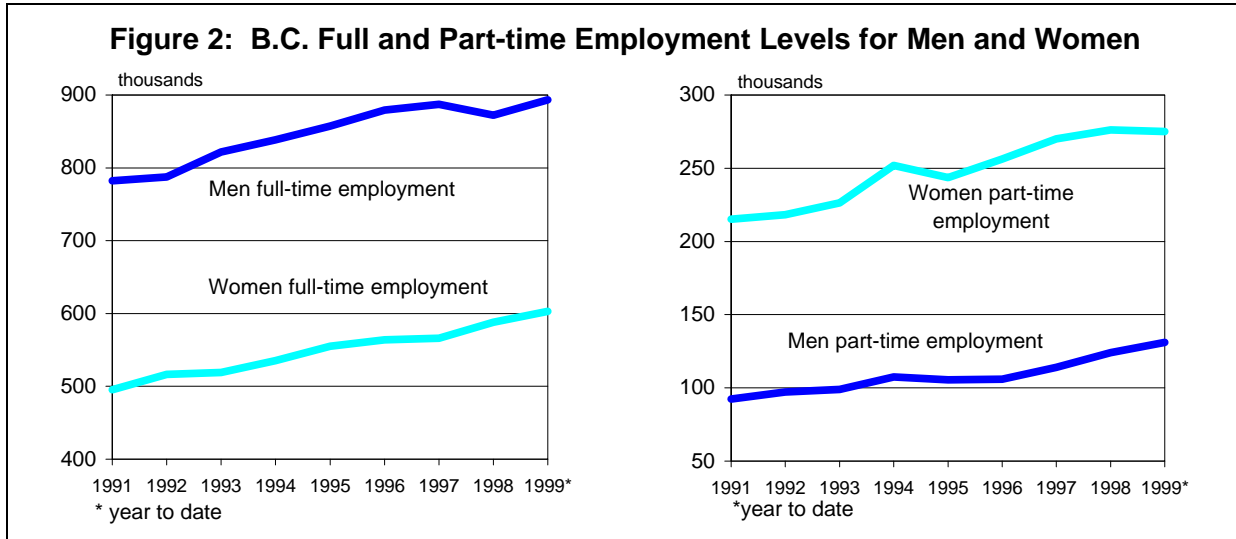
The rate of growth for full-time and part-time employment is noted in Figure 1b. When indexed to 1991=100, we see that both part-time employment and full-time employment generally grew at the same rate in the early 1990s. However, beginning in 1993, the rate of part-time employment growth exceeded the pace of full-time employment growth.

Though not fully shown in Figure 1b, it should be noted that full-time employment growth (2.5 per cent) slightly exceeded part-time employment growth (2.4 per cent) when comparing the first ten months of 1999 to the January to October average for 1998.



Employment by gender . . . Figure 2 shows levels of full and part-time employment by men and women in B.C. The largest net gains seen by both women and men have been in full time work. Between 1991 and the average of the first ten months of 1999, full-time employment for women increased by 108,000 (up 16.7 per cent).

Full-time employment for men increased by 111,000 (up 13.4 per cent). The fastest *growth rate* was seen for men working part time. Between 1991 and year-to-date 1999 part-time employment for men grew 35.0 per cent (up 38,000), and most of that increase occurred in the most recent three years (23.7 per cent).



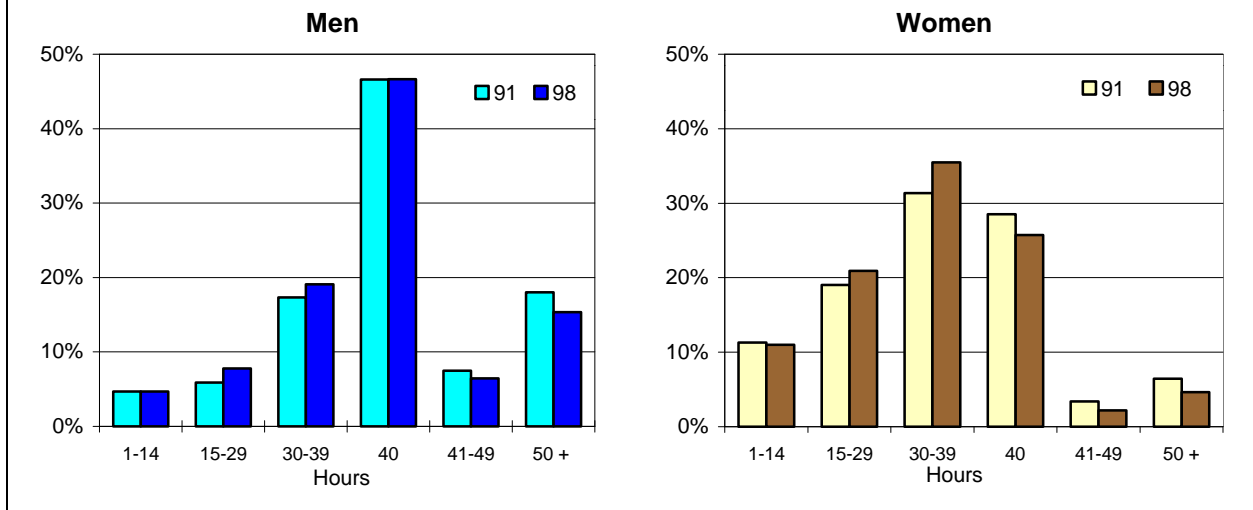
Employment by hours of work . . . Figure 3 shows the distribution of total employment broken down for men and women by usual working hours per week. For men, the most typical work week continues to be 40 hours per week for nearly 1 of 2 male employed workers. This share (47 per cent) has not changed since 1991. However, since 1991 the share of men working more than 40 hours per week has declined while the share working less than 40 hours per week have increased. While the number of male workers in all hourly categories did increase in size, those in the greater than 40 hours per week group experienced slower than average growth.

The part-time employment rate by men has risen gradually from 10.6 per cent in 1991 to 12.8 per cent in 1998. The part-time employment rate for women has seen little change over this period but remains well above that for men (standing at 31.3 per cent in 1998).

The largest share of women work 30-39 hours per week, are counted as full-time employment by Statistics Canada. By 1998 the share of women in this group increased 4 percentage points from 1991 to 35.5 per cent. Since 1991, like men, the distribution in hours of work by employed women have seen a trend away from employment in the longer work week categories.

When employment for men and women is examined by age groups, there are a number of notable differences. In 1998 over 90 per cent of employed men aged 25 or older worked full time hours, but less than two-thirds of male youth aged 15 to 24 work full-time hours. By comparison, 70 per cent of employed women aged 25 and over in 1998 worked full time, but young women's employment is split almost 50/50 between full-time and part-time work. Youth part-time employment rates have risen considerably due to a slight growth in part-time employment levels and declines in full-time employment levels between 1991 and 1998. In large measure, this has been due to increases in the participation by youth in full-time education and training during the 1990s.

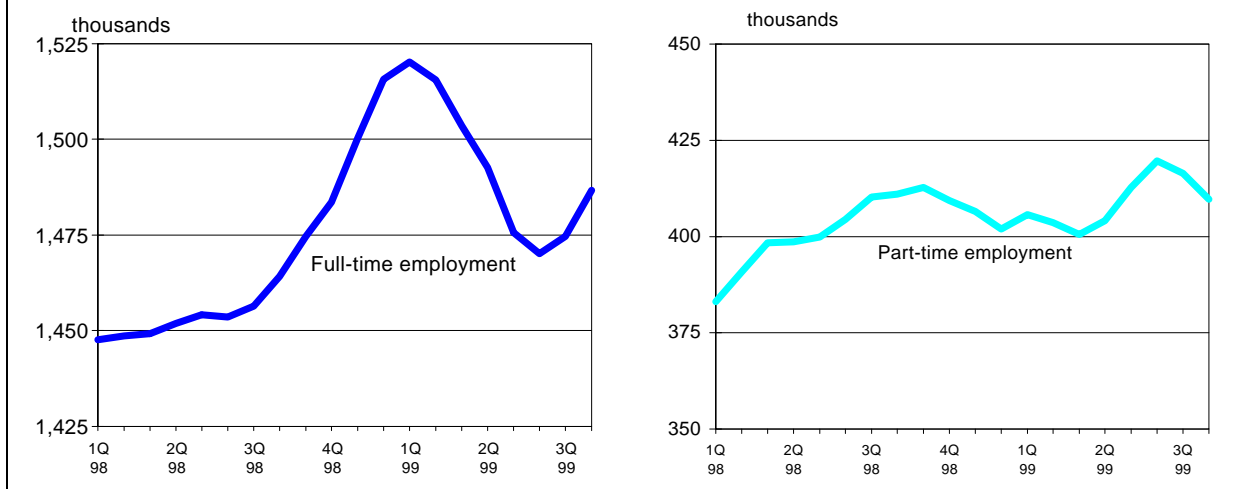
Figure 3: Distribution in the Share of Usual Weekly Employment Hours for B.C. Men and Women, 1991 and 1998



Recent trends . . . As noted in Figure 4, we see that seasonally adjusted full-time employment levels have risen from the first quarter 1998 to the latest three month period ending in October 1999 by almost 39,000 or 2.7 per cent. Over the same period, part-time employment has risen almost 27,000 or 7.0 per cent. This more recent data suggests a continuation of the longer term trend of faster growth in part-time employment than full-time employment.

Reasons for part-time employment fall into two main categories. The majority (70 per cent) of part-time workers in 1998 indicated they were working part-time because they were attending school, family or children responsibilities or personal preference. Thirty per cent indicated general economic reasons prevented them from obtaining full-time work, though only one-third of persons in this category indicated they looked for full-time employment.

Figure 4: B.C. Levels of Full and Part-time Employment
(seasonally adjusted 3 month moving average, labels note seasonally adjusted quarterly averages)



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