

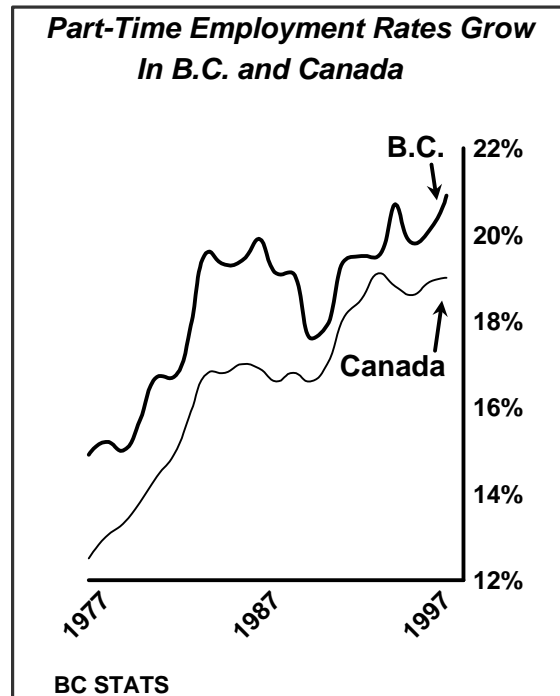
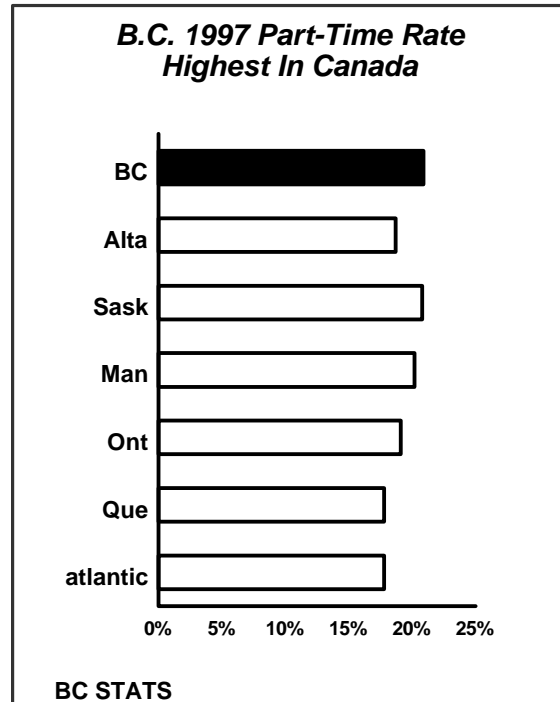
**Business Indicators ♦ December 1998**

**British Columbia Part-Time Employment Highest In Canada**

Part-time work is more common in British Columbia than in any other province. Part-time workers are defined as those who work less than 30 hours per week at their main or only job. There were 384 thousand in British Columbia in 1997, amounting to 20.9 per cent of all employed people. The province's part-time employment rate was the highest in Canada, slightly greater than the 20.8 per cent part-time employment rate for Saskatchewan, and substantially higher than the 19.0 per cent for Canada as a whole.

Part-time rates have been rising everywhere in Canada for at least twenty years and have accelerated during the 1990s. They have accelerated particularly sharply in British Columbia, where rates have risen from 17.9 per cent in 1990 to 20.9 per cent in 1997 - a 3.0 percentage point gain over seven years. The rise for Canada as a whole over the same period was 2.0 percentage points.

Having higher part-time rates than the rest of Canada is not new for British Columbia. Since 1976, the earliest year for which statistics are available, the province's part-time rates have been among the top three in Canada, along with Saskatchewan and Manitoba.



The persistence of higher than average part-time rates over more than 20 years in these three provinces suggests causes associated with industrial or demographic features, more than shortages of full-time employment opportunities.

This interpretation is supported by statistics on involuntary versus voluntary part-timers. In 1997, only 27 per cent of British Columbians working part-time did so involuntarily. For Saskatchewan and Manitoba the ratios were 25 per cent and 24 per cent respectively. These were the three lowest ratios for involuntary part-time work in Canada. For Canada as a whole, the ratio of involuntary part-timers to all part-timers was 31 per cent. In Newfoundland and New Brunswick, it reached 57 per cent and 43 per cent, respectively.

However, at least some part-time employment in all provinces is linked to the scarcity of full-time jobs. In British Columbia, and in other parts of Canada, part-time employment rates rise faster when unemployment rates are on the rise. This is what would be expected when more job seekers involuntarily take part-time work to tide them over while they are looking for full-time jobs.

### **Most Part-Timers in Service Industries**

Part-time workers are mainly concentrated in service industries. Service industries accounted for 340 thousand out of all 384 thousand British Columbia part-time workers in 1997, 89 per cent. The largest group within this category were the 124 thousand part-time clerks and sales people working mainly in retail stores, restaurants, hotels or motels.

Other, more skilled workers included 17 thousand part-time managerial employees, and 87 thousand part-time professional workers. Together, managerial and professional employees made up 28 per cent of all part-time workers in the province.

Teaching offers considerable opportunities for part-time work in British Columbia. Among the 87 thousand professional part-time employees were 30 thousand instructors of one sort or another. These included, for example, night school instructors, tutors of all types, and high school substitute teachers.

Health and medicine is another field that has produced a great many part-time positions. In 1997, there were 24 thousand professional part-time workers in this sector engaged in activities ranging from nursing, to home care work, to ultra sound technology.

### **Some Industries Rely More On Part-Time Workers Than Others**

The accommodation, food and beverage industry, including hotels, motels and restaurants, relied more on part-time labour than any other in British Columbia. In 1997, the part-time employment rate for this industry was 36.7 per cent. Although this was the highest rate for any industry in the province, it was low by national standards. The accommodation, food and beverage industry part-time rate for Canada as a whole was 39.3 per cent. Rates for other provinces reached as high as 44.0 per cent in Ontario and 41.7 per cent in Manitoba.

Retail trade was another industry relying heavily on part-time labour, both in British Columbia and throughout the rest of Canada. Retail industry part-time employment rates in 1997 were 29.1 per cent for British Columbia, and 32.2 per cent for Canada as a whole.

The educational services industry also relied heavily on part-time labour in British Columbia, where its part-time employment rate was 30.9 per cent. Elsewhere in Canada, the industry made much less use of part-time labour. In Canada as a whole, the part-time rate for educational services was 24.1 per cent.

Agriculture is another industry that relies more heavily on part-time labour in British Columbia than elsewhere in Canada. The

part-time employment rate for agriculture in British Columbia was 26.4 per cent in 1997, the highest in Canada. It compares to a rate of 21.3 per cent in the rest of Canada. The exceptionally high part-time rate for agriculture in British Columbia could be at least partly attributable to the relatively large number of small farms in the province, some of which are operated on a part-time basis.

Relatively little part-time work is available in British Columbia's traditional forestry, fishing and mining industries. The part-time employment rate for logging and other primary forestry was 6.4 per cent in 1997. For fishing and mining it was virtually zero. In the manufacturing industry as a whole the rate was 7.0 per cent. This includes the province's paper mills and sawmills, as well the growing range of more diversified manufacturing enterprises established mainly around the lower mainland and southern Vancouver Island.

### Education Helps, If You Want Full-Time Employment

University educated people are less likely than others to be working at part-time jobs.

For example, the British Columbia part-time rate for all post secondary certificate/diploma holders was 17.1 per cent, compared to 19.8 per cent for people with just high school graduation, and 33.3 per cent for those with some high school but no graduation.

More university education appears to further increase chances of finding full-time work. The lowest part-time employment rate for any educational group was for people with graduate degrees - 16.5 per cent

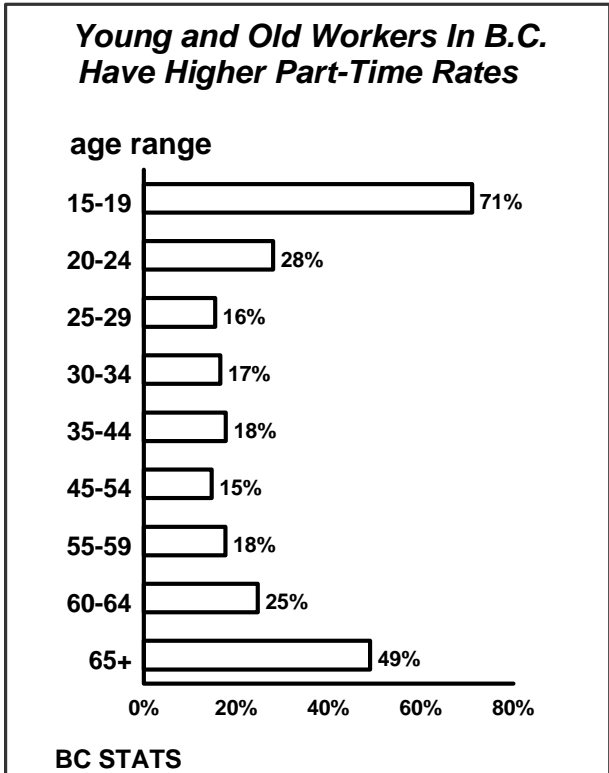
These patterns are similar in the rest of Canada, except that in other provinces there is an even stronger association between higher education and the likelihood that a person will work at a full-time job. The all Canada part-time rate for people with post secondary certificates or diplomas was 15.9 per cent, compared to 17.1 per cent in British Columbia. The all Canada rate for people with graduate

degrees was 12.4 per cent, compared to 16.5 per cent in British Columbia.

### Younger and Older Women Most Likely People to Be Working Part-Time

For both sexes, the people most likely to be working part-time are those under 20 years of age and those over 59. Women of all ages are much more likely to be working part-time than men.

The British Columbia part-time employment rate for women was 32.3 per cent in 1997, while the rate for men was 11.4 per cent – a very substantial gap of 20.9 percentage points. Differences between male and female part-time employment rates were slightly less severe elsewhere in Canada. For Canada as a whole, the rates were 29.4 per cent for women and 10.5 per cent for men – a gap of 18.9 percentage points.



Not surprisingly, the age range showing the highest part-time rates was 15 to 19 years. Many of these people were students who needed to fit part-time work around their classroom hours. Nor is it surprising that older people are also among those most likely to be working part-time. These include many who are voluntarily reducing their hours of work as they come closer to full retirement.

### **Some Voluntarily Part-Time, Some Not**

Most young and old people who worked part-time did so voluntarily in 1997. Across Canada, involuntary part-timers accounted for only 25 per cent of total part-timers in the 15 to 24 year age range. For older workers, those in the 55 years and older age group, involuntary part-timers accounted for only 16 per cent of all part-timers. The ratio was higher for middle range age groups. Forty per cent of people 25 to 44 years of age who worked part-time did so voluntarily. For those aged 25 to 54, the ratio was 39 per cent.

In general, women were much more likely to be working part-time voluntarily than men. Voluntary part-timers made up 76 per cent of the total for British Columbia women in 1997, and 70 per cent for Canada as a whole. Male part-timers were only 62 per cent voluntary in British Columbia, and 65 per cent voluntary in Canada as a whole.

The biggest reason for higher ratios of voluntary part-timers among women was their children. 'Caring for children' was cited as the main reason for choosing part-time work by 21 per cent of British Columbia women working part-time in 1997, and 16 per cent of women part-timers across Canada. By contrast, a negligible portion of male part-time workers cited this reason.

Women were also much more likely to let other personal or family responsibilities reduce their working hours. Personal and family responsibilities other than children were the main reason for working part-time cited by 8 per cent of female part-time workers in British Columbia, but only by 3 per cent of male part-timers.

### **Part-Time Work Linked To Other 'Non-Standard' Work Arrangements**

The fast growth of part-time work in British Columbia and elsewhere in Canada is part of a wider trend to less traditional work arrangements. As the proportion of part-time workers in the labour force has grown, so have the proportions of self-employed workers and multiple job holders. Multiple job holders are people stringing together two or three part-time jobs. These 'non-standard' working arrangements have steadily reduced the portion of the workforce engaged in the nine to five jobs that have been the standard for so many decades.

Nowhere in Canada have non-standard working arrangements become more established than in British Columbia. British Columbia has developed Canada's highest rate of part-time employment, its highest rate of non-agricultural self-employment, and one of its highest rates of multiple job holders.

To some extent, these developments are linked. For example, some newly self-employed people worked part-time, and sometimes at more than one job. The 119 thousand multiple job holders in British Columbia included 41 thousand people who were employees in their first jobs, and self-employed in their second jobs. British Columbia has the highest rate for this type of part-time entrepreneurialism in Canada.