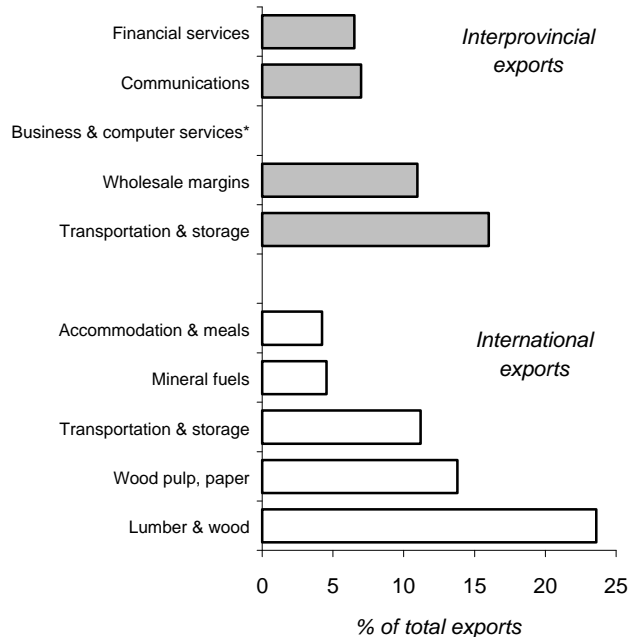


Current Statistics ♦ June 2000

Two of BC's top five international exports, and all five of BC's most important interprovincial exports in 1998 were services



*data suppressed by Statistics Canada

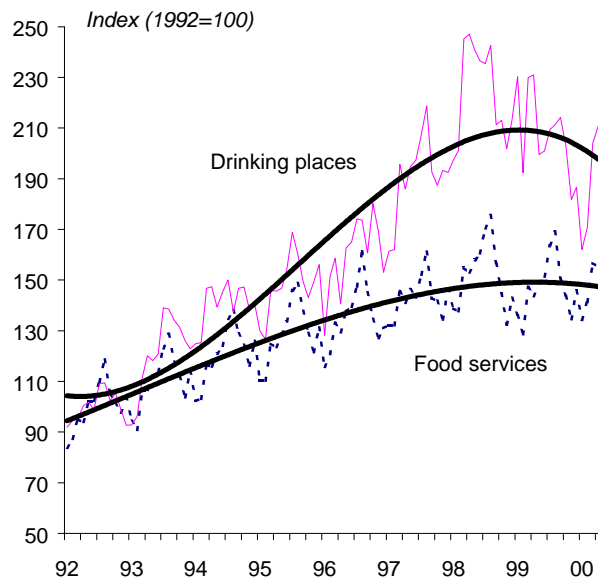
- In 1998, two of BC's top five international exports were services.** Transportation and storage services accounted for \$3.6 billion of the \$32.1 billion of goods and services exported by BC to other countries, more than any other commodity except lumber and wood (\$7.6 billion) or pulp and paper (\$4.4 billion). Mineral fuels (\$1.5 billion) were the fourth most important export commodity, while accommodation services and meals purchased by foreigners pumped \$1.4 billion into the province's economy. Together, these five commodities accounted for 57% of BC's total international exports in 1998.

BC also does a brisk trade in service exports to other provinces, largely by virtue of its location as the main port of entry and exit for goods being shipped between Canada and the Pacific Rim. Transportation and storage (\$2.2 billion) was BC's most important interprovincial export, followed by wholesaling (\$1.5 billion), busi-

ness/computer services, communications (\$1.0 billion) and financial services (\$0.9 billion). Together, they accounted for about half of the province's \$13.8 billion in interprovincial exports during 1998. *Source: SC, Catalogue 15-546-XPE*

- Retail sales in the province edged up 0.2% (seasonally adjusted) between March and April.** The modest increase was the third in as many months, suggesting that retail sales in the province may be starting to stabilize after seeing up and down during the last two years. *Source: Statistics Canada*
- Receipts at food service establishments and drinking places in the province were 6.5% higher this April than in the same month of 1999.** Food service receipts continued to improve, advancing for the third straight month (+8.1%) after slumping during most of 1999. However, drinking places have not yet turned the corner. Their receipts were down 8.8%, marking the 14th time in the last 15 months that they have fallen. *Source: Statistics Canada*

After peaking in 1998, revenues at drinking places in the province have been falling since the beginning of 1999



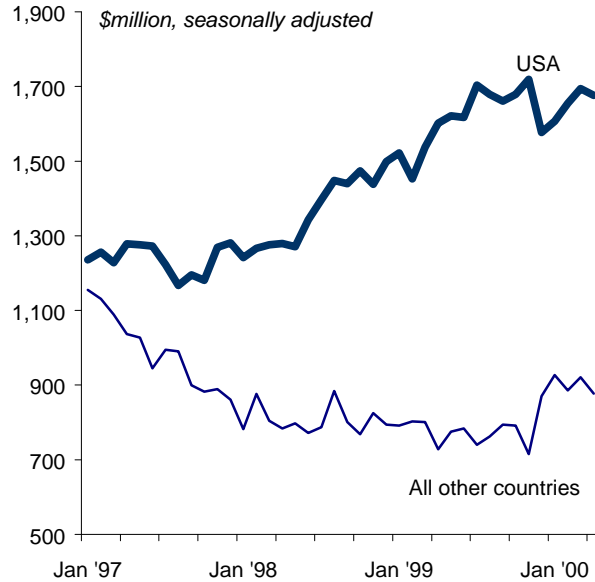
- **Wholesale sales in BC fell 0.6% (seasonally adjusted) in April after advancing 2.2% in the previous month.** Canadian sales were flat (-0.2%) after posting a healthy 2.0% gain in March. Building suppliers continued to feel the crunch, as sales of lumber and building materials (-8.5%) fell sharply. Wholesalers of metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies (-3.4%) were also affected by softer demand for their products and farm machinery and equipment sales were off 5.4%. A brisk trade in consumer products such as computers and software (+4.2%) and household goods (+2.8%) helped offset this weakness.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **Department store sales in British Columbia and the territories were down 0.5% in April, compared to the same month last year.** The drop in sales, the sixth in as many months, marked the longest downturn for department stores since 1993. Nationally, department stores sales were up 3.9% from April 1999, as sales advanced in all but two regions.
Source: Statistics Canada

- **During the first quarter of this year, BC gained a total of 6,497 people as a result of net migration from all sources.** This compares to an increase of 3,104 in the first quarter of 1999. There was a net outflow of 3,215 people from BC to the rest of Canada, with a net loss of 2,553 people to Alberta and 662 to Ontario. Atlantic Canada (309) and Manitoba (190) also drew more people from BC than they lost to this province during the first quarter. Although the outflow of people from BC to other provinces was smaller than at the beginning of last year, interprovincial migration to BC has fallen off after showing signs of a recovery in the second half of 1999.

Net international migration to the province increased by 23% from the first quarter of 1999, with a net inflow of 9,712 people. An unusually large increase in the number of non-permanent residents (e.g., foreign students living in the province on a temporary basis) was responsible for much of the increase.
Source: BC STATS

Exports to both US and overseas markets declined in April



- **Exports of BC products fell 2.4% (seasonally adjusted) between March and April.** Shipments to the US, BC's biggest market, were down 1.1%, while exports to other countries were off 4.8%. Forest product exports edged up 1.5% in March, as both US (+0.6%) and overseas (+3.0%) markets for BC forest products improved. However, export markets for other goods softened. The value of mineral product exports was down 26.0%, while international shipments of agriculture, food and fish products fell 1.4% and exports of other goods decreased 0.9%. The drop in mineral product exports reflected lower shipments overseas (-44.6%); exports to the US were up slightly (+1.8%) in April.
Source: BC STATS

- **The number of regular employment insurance (EI) recipients in British Columbia fell 2.0% (seasonally adjusted) between March and April.** There were 51,460 people receiving regular benefits in April. Nationally, the number of beneficiaries was down 1.3%, falling to 465,470 as the number of people receiving EI benefits declined in all but three regions.
Source: Statistics Canada