

THE LABOUR FORCE SURVEY FOR MARCH 2008

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B.C. GAINS 15,000 JOBS IN MARCH

B.C. gained 15,000 jobs in March on a seasonally adjusted basis, an increase of 0.6% in just one month. Over half the employment gain was in full-time work, and was split between private sector jobs and self-employment; public sector employment took a small loss. The increase from the previous month came in construction and manufacturing, and in some services sectors, but there was a drop in financial and real estate services.

Despite the month to month increase in employment, the unemployment rate paradoxically rose from 4.1% last month to 4.3% in March. This occurred because the labour force expanded even faster than employment. This type of trend shows up as an increase in the participation rate, which rose nearly half a percentage point to 66.9% in March, the highest level since March of 1995.

Compared to a year ago, employment has increased by 55,000 jobs, or 2.4%. Almost all of the increase was full-time work, and was made up of gains in paid employment, mostly in the private sector; there was a decrease in self-employment. Construction was the major contributor to this increase, supplying 28,000 more jobs, an impressive 15% gain bringing employment in that sector to a record 219,000. Several other sectors experienced significant increases as can be seen in Table 2 overleaf, including agriculture, utilities, professional and scientific services, business and building services, "other" services, and public administration.

Alberta and British Columbia employment gains

Alberta and British Columbia were the only provinces with notable employment gains in March. These provinces also set new records, as British Columbia's employment rate reached a high of 64.0%, and Alberta's participation rate hit 74.7%, the highest of any province.

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British Columbia led employment gains in March with an estimated increase of 15,000 (+0.6%), **pushing the employment rate to a new record high of 64.0%**. Employment gains were widespread across several industries. With higher participation, the province's unemployment rate edged up 0.2 percentage points to 4.3% in March. Over the last 12 months, employment in British Columbia was up 55,000 (+2.4%), with half of the gains in construction.

Source: Statistics Canada Daily, April 4th, 2008

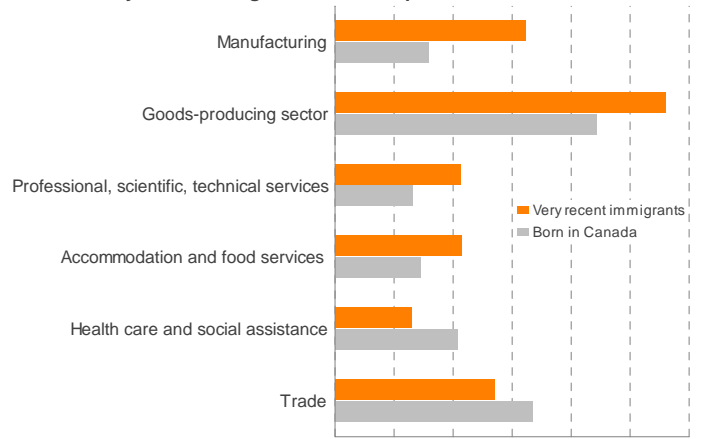
There have been significant year to year employment declines in two areas, financial and real estate services, down by 15,000 jobs, and manufacturing, down by 22,000 jobs. The decline in manufacturing may be a result of Canada's rising exchange rate. Comparing the First Quarters of 2007 and 2008, there has been a fall of 8,000 in wood products employment and a fall of 16,000 across an aggregate of non-resource based manufacturers. One bright spot has been increases in electrical and transport equipment manufacturers, who together added 6,500 jobs from the First Quarter of 2007 to the First Quarter of 2008.

VERY RECENT IMMIGRANTS - INDUSTRIES

Very recent immigrants, those who have come to Canada in the previous five years, tend to be concentrated in the goods producing industries and in two major service sectors. Comparing employment by industry for very recent immigrants with that of those born in Canada shows some differences. Over the last year, of roughly 2.3 million people employed in B.C., nearly 600 thousand were landed immigrants, and of these just over 70 thousand had arrived during the previous five years.

Very recent immigrants were more likely than the Canadian born work force to be in the goods-producing industries, where 28% of them found their jobs compared to 22% for the Canadian born, and they were especially well represented in manufacturing, with 16% of their employment in that sector compared to just 8% for workers born in Canada. Very recent immigrants also had a larger than average share of their employment in professional and scientific services (11% compared to 7%) and accommodation and food services (also 11% versus 7%). Very recent immigrants tended to be under-represented in health services and wholesale and retail trade.

Where very recent immigrants work compared to those born in Canada



Statistics Canada, LFS annual average for Mar/07 - Feb/08