



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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 Employment in Canada surged ahead during the last four months of 2003, salvaging at least a modest improvement from 2002. On average, just over 15.7 million people were employed last year, up 2.2%.

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Perspectives on Labour and Income

January 2004 online edition

The January 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, available today, features three articles. The first is "The labour market in 2003," *Perspectives'* yearly analysis of employment trends. The next article, "Retirement plan awareness," is a look at how well permanent employees in the private sector understood their retirement pension plan coverage in 2001. The final article, "A C/QPP overview," uses a question and answer approach to provide basic information about the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans, emphasizing recent changes that may not be well understood. Also discussed is the increasing importance of C/QPP benefits for seniors in recent decades and the interaction of the plans with other income support programs.

The January 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (75-001-XIE, \$6/\$52) is now available. See *How to order products*. For more information, contact Henry Pold (613 951-4608; henry.pold@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.



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MAJOR RELEASES

Labour market year-end review 2003

Employment in Canada surged ahead during the last four months of 2003, salvaging at least a modest improvement from 2002.

On average, just over 15.7 million people were employed last year, an increase of about 334,000, or 2.2%, from 2002. This average represented 62.4% of the working-age population, the highest annual rate of employment on record.

The year got off to a slow start. Job gains during the first eight months were minimal. Over the year, the economy was rocked by a rapidly rising Canadian dollar, and probably to a lesser extent by war in Iraq, the SARS scare and the mid-August power blackout. The last time such a sustained period of labour market weakness occurred was in 2001, when Canada only narrowly avoided a recession.

For 2003 as a whole, the unemployment rate averaged 7.6%, down slightly from 7.7% in 2002. With participation rates also at record highs throughout the year, the unemployment rate rose at the start of 2003, when job gains were weak. By the end of the year, the rate was down.

After a spectacular job-creating performance in 2002, the manufacturing sector fell prey to the rising dollar, among other factors, which made Canadian goods more expensive for American customers. On average, 2.3 million people were employed in manufacturing in 2003, down by 32,000, or 1.4%, from 2002.

Much of the country's employment gains during the last four months came in full-time work. For the year, there were 253,000 more full-time workers than in 2002, a 2.0% increase. Part-time employment increased 81,000, or 2.8%.

Weakness in manufacturing concentrated in high-tech, transportation

The decline in manufacturing employment had a significant effect on the country's overall employment trend. In fact, gains in employment outside manufacturing rolled along at 2.9%, a pace similar to the previous year.

The weakness in manufacturing was concentrated in computer and electronic equipment, as well as in transportation equipment.

For the first 10 months of 2003, cumulative new motor vehicle sales were 4.2% below the level for the same period of 2002, which was a record year for sales.

Shipments of computer and electronic equipment fell 14.3% in the first 10 months of 2003. The value of computer and electronic equipment shipments was half the 2000 level, when high-tech production was at its peak.

Youth and core-age workers (25 to 54) were hit hardest by the manufacturing slump. On average, 15,000 fewer young people and 26,000 fewer core-age people worked in manufacturing in 2003.

However, the labour market was buoyed by housing construction, where activity was robust. On average, more than 931,000 workers were employed in construction last year, up 49,000, or 5.5%, from 2002.

As a spin-off, gains in finance, insurance, real estate and leasing amounted to 41,000, or 4.5%, most occurring in real estate.

Added construction and real estate jobs led to a second consecutive gain in self-employment. On average last year, 2,400,000 people were self-employed, up 67,000, which followed a gain of 37,000 in 2002. Prior to these back-to-back gains, self-employment had been on a downward trend.

With health care spending tracking upward, health care and social assistance employment continued to grow in 2003, much of it concentrated in Ontario and Quebec. Another big source of jobs in 2003 was public administration, where employment surged by 37,000.

Older workers lead job gains for third consecutive year

While all major groups managed employment gains in 2003, it was the third consecutive year for older workers to lead the way. The median age of retirement in 2003 was nearly 62, up from just under 61 in the late 1990s.

Employment among men aged 55 and older rose by 88,000, or 8.3%, while employment among women in this group rose by 102,000, or 14.2%.

Among older women, the largest gains occurred in health care and social assistance. For older men, gains were in education, construction and real estate.

Among core-age workers, women were the main beneficiaries of public sector hiring. On average, employment in 2003 among core-age women was up 59,000, or 1.1%, from 2002. Over three-quarters of this gain occurred in health care, and social assistance and public administration.

Employment among core-age men also rose, largely the result of the construction boom. Overall, employment for core-age men was up 46,000, or 0.8%.

While youth employment fell through much of the year, their average level of employment remained high. Youth employment averaged 2.4 million in 2003, up 40,000, or 1.7%, from the year before.

Strongest employment gains in Alberta and Ontario

Employment increased in every province in 2003 except New Brunswick.

Employment growth has been strong in Alberta for over a decade. In 2003, employment increased a further 48,000, or 2.9%, from its average a year earlier, driven by hiring in the oil patch and in retail and wholesale trade. On average, the unemployment rate in Alberta was 5.1% last year, down from 5.3% in 2002. Oil patch employment was up 9,000.

In Ontario, employment gains at the outset and end of the year helped push employment up 160,000, or 2.6%, from 2002. This occurred despite weakness during the summer months in the Toronto area. Ontario's unemployment rate averaged 7.0% in 2003, down 0.1 percentage points.

Almost all the decline in manufacturing across the country occurred in Ontario and Quebec. In Ontario, just under 1.1 million people were employed in manufacturing, down 28,000, or 2.5%, from 2002. In Quebec, manufacturing employment fell 17,000 after a gain of 13,000 in 2002.

Following a strong 2002, employment growth slowed last year in Quebec. On average, employment was 57,000, or 1.6%, higher than in 2002, just under half the increase in 2002.

Driven by gains in Vancouver, the average employment level in British Columbia was 50,000, or 2.5%, higher than in 2002. Employment in Vancouver was up 34,000, or 3.2%. British Columbia's unemployment rate was 8.1% in 2003, down from 8.5% the year previous.

In Newfoundland and Labrador, employment was up for the third consecutive year. In 2003, its average employment level rose 4,000, or 1.8%. Although lower than a decade earlier, unemployment remained stubbornly high in Newfoundland and Labrador. Its average unemployment rate was 16.7%, about the same in 2002.

The only province where average employment fell was New Brunswick. Following a gain of 3.3% in 2002, employment edged down 0.2%. This was enough to cause the unemployment rate to inch up 0.2 points to 10.6%. Employment was down mostly in accommodation and food.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 3701.

The article "The labour market in 2003" is available in the January 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (75-001-XIE, \$6/\$52). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325; geoff.bowlby@statcan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division. ■

OTHER RELEASES

Study: Workers' knowledge of retirement plans

2001

Many Canadian workers do not have a clear understanding of their retirement plans, and in particular, the distinction between two key retirement income programs, according to a new study.

The study showed that in 2001, an estimated 390,000 full-time permanent employees in the private sector, or 4% of the total, thought they had a retirement plan, but in reality did not. They were working in firms that offered neither a registered pension plan (RPP) nor a group registered retirement savings plan (RRSP).

The corresponding proportion was twice as high among immigrants who arrived in 1991 or later. Data from the 2001 Workplace and Employee Survey showed that among these immigrants, 9% reported, contrary to their employer, that they had at least one retirement plan.

An RPP is an employer-sponsored pension plan to which the company must contribute by law. A group RRSP is simply a collection of individual accounts set up through the employer. The employer may or may not contribute to it.

The poorer knowledge of retirement plans among recent immigrants can be explained only partially by their lower seniority, and their under-representation in large establishments and in unionized jobs, where the incidence of misinformation appears to be minimal. Even after controlling for these factors, at least 70% of the difference between recent immigrants and Canadian-born workers remains.

In contrast, university graduates, unionized workers, workers in large establishments and those employed in finance and insurance, and communication and other utilities better understood their coverage in an employer-sponsored retirement plan.

Among workers who reported having a group RRSP but were in firms that did not have one, fully two-thirds had an employer that offered a registered pension plan (RPP) to at least part of the workforce. This suggests that many workers confuse group RRSPs with RPPs.

Accurate information about one's employer-sponsored retirement plan is crucial given that group RRSPs, contrary to many RPPs, require workers to decide whether to participate and, if so, how much to contribute.

At the end of 2001, about 5.5 million employees, representing 40% of all employees, including those in

the public sector, had an RPP in their job. This was down from 45% a decade earlier.

In total, Canadians had accumulated an estimated \$1.15 trillion in the three main retirement programs — RPPs, RRSPs, and the Canada and Quebec Pension Plans (C/QPP) — by the end of 2001. This was almost double the level of \$593.6 billion in 1990, when measured in constant (inflation-adjusted) dollars. Of the total assets in 2001, 69% were in RPPs, 25% in RRSPs (individual and group), and about 6% in the C/QPP.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2615.

The article "Retirement plan awareness" is now available in the January 2004 online edition of *Perspectives on Labour and Income*, Vol. 5, no. 1 (75-001-XIE, \$6/\$52). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact René Morissette (613-951-3608; rene.morissette@statcan.ca), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division. ■

Refined petroleum products

November 2003 (preliminary)

Data on the production, inventories and domestic sales of refined petroleum products are now available for November 2003. Other selected data about these products are also available.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2150.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; energ@statcan.ca), Energy, Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Postal code conversion file

June 2003

The June 2003 update of the *Postal Code Conversion File* (PCCF) is now available. This digital file links the six-character postal code with the standard 2001 Census geographic areas (such as dissemination areas, census tracts, and census subdivisions). It also

locates each postal code by longitude and latitude to support mapping applications.

The June 2003 update of the *Postal Codes by Federal Riding File* (1996 Representation Order) is also available. This product, a subset of the PCCF, provides a link between the six-character postal code and Canada's Federal Electoral Districts (commonly known as federal ridings). By using the postal code as a link, data from administrative files may be organized and/or tabulated by federal riding.

The *Postal Code Conversion File* (92F0153UCE, \$1,500) and the *Postal Codes by Federal Riding File* (92F0028UDB, \$500) are available in ASCII format on diskette or CD-ROM. The references guides for the *Postal Code Conversion File* (92F0153GIE, free) and the *Postal Codes by Federal Riding File* (92F0028GIE, free) are also available in electronic format.

For more information, or to order these files, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre. ■

Steel primary forms — weekly data

Week ending January 17, 2004 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending January 17 totalled 290 061 metric tonnes, down 7.4% from 313 109 tonnes a week earlier and 7.7% from 314 119 tonnes in the same week of 2003.

The year-to-date total as of January 17 was 724 207 tonnes, up 3.2% from 701 428 tonnes in the same period of 2003.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2131.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Infomat: A Weekly Review, January 23, 2004
Catalogue number 11-002-XIE (\$3/\$100).

Infomat: A Weekly Review, January 23, 2004
Catalogue number 11-002-XPE (\$4/\$145).

Perspectives on Labour and Income, January 2004,
Vol. 5, no. 1
Catalogue number 75-001-XIE (\$6/\$52).

**Postal Codes by Federal Ridings
(1996 Representation Order) File, Reference
guide**, June 2003
Catalogue number 92F0028GIE
(free).

**Postal Codes by Federal Ridings
(1996 Representation Order) File -
Update, 2001 Census (geography products:
attribute information products)**, June 2003
Catalogue number 92F0028UDB (\$500).

Postal Code Conversion File, Reference Guide,
June 2003
Catalogue number 92F0153GIE
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Catalogue number 92F0153UCE (\$1,500).

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Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 3, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.



MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 20 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was modestly weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

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The Daily, January 23, 2004

RELEASE DATES: JANUARY 26 TO 30

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
26	Wholesale trade	November 2003
27	Retail trade	November 2003
27	Employment Insurance	November 2003
29	Industrial product and raw materials price indexes	December 2003
29	Employment, earnings and hours	November 2003
30	Gross domestic product by industry	November 2003
