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Census snapshot: Canada's Changing Labour Force, 2006 Census



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As part of its contribution to dissemination of Census findings, Canadian Social Trends is highlighting some of the key trends observed in the 2006 Census of Population. In this issue, we present a brief adaptation of **Canada's Changing Labour Force, 2006 Census** (Catalogue no. 97-559).

Overview of Canada's changing labour force

Between 2001 and 2006, total employment in Canada increased at an annual average rate of 1.7%, the fastest rate increase among the Group of Seven (G7) nations. Italy's growth rate of 1.2% was second followed by France and the United States of America. According to data from the Labour Force Survey, Canada's strong employment growth has continued beyond 2006. Employment rose in every part of the country. However, growth was strongest in the West, especially in Alberta and British Columbia.

Goods industries

Fastest growth in mining and oil and gas extraction

Among the goods industries, the fastest growth in employment between 2001 and 2006 occurred in the mining and oil and gas extraction industry. Employment reached 222,700 by 2006, an annual average gain of 7.5%. This was almost four times the national average of 1.7%. Alberta alone accounted for 70% of the employment growth in this industry.

Employment increased a strong 4.5% per year on average in the construction sector, bringing total employment to 991,200 in 2006. The gain in construction employment in Alberta and British Columbia exceeded the increase in Ontario and Quebec.

Largest decline in manufacturing

On the downside, manufacturing shed 136,700 jobs between 2001 and 2006, equivalent to a 1.4% decline per year. Total employment fell from about 2,033,200 to roughly 1,896,500. These losses were concentrated in Ontario (77,700 manufacturing jobs) and Quebec (56,600).

Canada's cut and sew clothing manufacturing industry lost nearly 33,000 jobs during the intercensal period, a 9.3% average annual decline.

Employment in the computer and telecommunications (CT) sector fell by 28,200, and was acutely felt in Ottawa-Gatineau.

The pulp, paper and paperboard mills industries shed 14,400 jobs over the five-year period, and employment in the sawmills and wood preservation industry fell by 14,200, with roughly half of the decline occurring in British Columbia.

Service industries

In contrast to the goods industries, employment increased across the board among the industries in Canada's services sector. Census data showed that employment in Canada's big retail trade sector, the largest service industry, was approaching parity with manufacturing.

Employment increased by 1.8% a year on average in retail trade between 2001 and 2006, or a total of 155,800 workers. This put the number of retail jobs at just over 1,815,000. Most of the big employment increase came from grocery stores, building materials and supplies stores and automobile dealerships.

Probably as a spin-off to the housing boom, employment growth was a strong 3.3% annual average in real estate, rental and leasing. This industry employed just over 293,000 people in 2006.

Strong growth also occurred in professional, scientific and technical services, which added 142,300 jobs, equal to an annual average rate of 2.9%. One factor in the growth of this industry was the demand for workers in architectural, engineering and related services, which was likely the result of increased demand for these services from the construction and oil and gas industries.

Canada's second largest service industry, health care and social assistance, added 199,900 workers, to bring employment in health care and social assistance to 1,667,700 in 2006. Increases were largest in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta.

Employment in the educational services industry rose by 123,600, or an average annual rate of 2.4%, bringing the total to 1,110,000 in 2006. Universities saw particularly fast growth, as enrolment also climbed.

Public administration grew to reach 943,700 in 2006, an average annual growth rate of 1.7% (the same rate as national employment growth). Overall, the bulk of these gains came from local, municipal, and regional public administrations.

Occupations

Small group has fastest growth in employment

The shift in industrial demand for workers to different parts of the economy had an impact on the occupational make-up of the nation. For example, the oil and gas industry is still relatively small, but its rapid expansion in recent years has meant huge gains for a number of occupations.

The number of oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers and related workers almost doubled to 11,500, making it the fastest growing occupation between 2001 and 2006.

The housing boom ignited a round of hiring. Production clerks, many of whom are employed by construction businesses, saw their numbers increase 73.3% to 24,100. Meanwhile, the number of construction trades helpers and labourers rose 57.2% in 2006 to nearly 143,900. Many big ticket purchases increased work for loan officers to nearly 35,400, a gain of 13,900 (64.5%) since 2001.

Employment growth was also strong among postsecondary teaching and research assistants (65.7%). This gain mirrored the increase in postsecondary enrolment in recent years.

Census data showed 36,500 working estheticians, electrologists and related occupations, up 57.4% from 2001. This growth could be a reflection of Canada's expanding spa industry.

Fastest growing occupations, 2001 to 2006, Canada

| Occupation | Employment in 2006 | % growth 2001-2006 |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Oil and gas well drillers, servicers, testers and related workers | 11,500 | 78 |
| Production clerks ¹ | 24,100 | 73 |
| Postsecondary teaching and research assistants | 61,500 | 66 |
| Loan officers | 35,400 | 65 |
| Construction inspectors | 13,700 | 62 |
| Estheticians, electrologists and related occupations | 36,500 | 57 |
| Construction trades helpers and labourers | 143,900 | 57 |
| Administrative clerks | 101,700 | 54 |
| Refrigeration and air conditioning mechanics | 21,400 | 54 |
| Petroleum engineers | 9,000 | 54 |

1. Such as those employed by construction businesses to prepare production schedules. Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Most common occupations

Between 2001 and 2006, truck driving was replaced by retail salespersons and sales clerks as the most common occupation among men. The third most common occupation among men was still retail trade managers.

Among women, the most prevalent occupation reported in 2006 was also retail salespeople and clerks, at just over 400,000. Cashiers were second at 256,000. With added hiring in health care and social assistance, nursing became the third most common occupation, moving up a couple of ranks since 2001.

Several occupations in manufacturing experienced large declines. For example, the number of machine operators dropped by 52,700 between 2001 and 2006. The number of metal fabricators, which included steel workers, fell by about 6,800, or 34.4%, and the number of mechanical assemblers and inspectors, including auto parts assemblers, who have a big presence in southern Ontario, also fell by 6,100, or 33.3%.

About 24,200 people in 2006 worked as electronics assemblers, fabricators, inspectors and testers, down 18.8% from 2001. These also included workers who manufacture audiovisual equipment, such as stereos, televisions and computer parts.

Lowest unemployment rate among those who studied education

By 2006, unemployment rates among people with all levels of education were relatively low compared to previous years. The Canadian economy, however, still places a premium on workers with higher levels of education. According to the census, Canadian workers ages 25 to 54 who had not completed high school had an unemployment rate of 9.4%. This was more than twice the rate of 4.2% among those who had completed a university degree.

The type of program that people have completed can also affect their chances of employment. Among people with postsecondary education, those in education studies had the lowest unemployment rate in 2006, at 3.0%.

Other fields of study for which graduates had low unemployment included biblical studies (3.2%), agriculture, health services, as well as parks, recreation and leisure studies (all were 3.6%).

Most common occupations for men and women, Canada, 2006

| | Employment in 2006 | Change 2001-2006 |
|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Men | | |
| Retail salespersons and sales clerks | 285,800 | 63,600 |
| Truck drivers | 276,200 | 40,900 |
| Retail trade managers | 192,200 | -8,100 |
| Janitors, caretakers and building superintendents | 154,100 | 18,800 |
| Farmers and farm managers | 147,800 | -21,200 |
| Material handlers | 147,000 | 13,900 |
| Automotive service technicians, truck and bus mechanics and mechanical repairers | 143,000 | 20,400 |
| Carpenters | 142,400 | 32,900 |
| Construction trades helpers and labourers | 133,600 | 47,500 |
| Sales, marketing and advertising managers | 102,600 | 10,200 |
| Women | | |
| Retail salespersons and sales clerks | 400,000 | 68,600 |
| Cashiers | 255,500 | 35,500 |
| Registered nurses | 249,400 | 33,800 |
| General office clerks | 244,200 | 23,100 |
| Secretaries (except legal and medical) | 237,300 | -16,500 |
| Elementary school and kindergarten teachers | 241,600 | 19,900 |
| Food counter attendants, kitchen helpers and related occupations | 194,800 | 23,100 |
| Early childhood educators and assistants | 157,700 | 31,700 |
| Food and beverage servers | 152,000 | -2,900 |
| Light duty cleaners | 147,400 | 24,400 |

Sources: Statistics Canada, censuses of population, 2001 and 2006.

Labour mobility highest in North and Alberta

According to data on labour mobility, 562,800 (3.4%) of the total labour force moved to a different province or territory between 2001 and 2006. The most mobile area was the Northwest Territories, where more than one-fifth (21.5%) of its labour force had lived elsewhere in Canada in 2001, followed by Nunavut (15.7%) and the Yukon Territory (14.1%).

Among the provinces, Alberta had the labour force with the highest mobility in 2006, with 8.6% having lived in another province or territory five years earlier. An estimated 160,500 people in Alberta's labour force had moved to the province from other parts of Canada since 2001.

Mobility was highest in two industries: mining, oil and gas extraction, and public administration. In the mining, oil and gas industry, a full 8.1% of those employed in the industry,

about 17,700 workers, had lived in another province or territory five years earlier.

An estimated 51,400 people in public administration, 5.5% of the workforce, had also moved from one province or territory to another in the intercensal period.

The aging workforce

Census data showed that in 2006, workers aged 55 and older accounted for 15.3% of the total labour force, up from 11.7% in 2001. As a result, the median age of the labour force surpassed the 40-year mark for the first time; it rose from 39.5 years in 2001 to 41.2 years in 2006.

According to the census, just over 2 million individuals aged 55 to 64 were employed in 2006, 43.0% more than in 2001. At the same time, the overall labour force participation rate for this group increased from 54.0% to 59.7%.

Farmers had the highest median age (52 years) of all occupations in 2006 (up from 51 years in 2001); they were followed by real estate agents and property administrators (51 years). Other occupations with a median age of about 50 years were ministers, bus drivers and other transit operators, senior managers in health, education, social and community services, and senior government managers.

Immigrants made up over one-fifth of Canada's labour force in 2006

Of the 17,146,100 people in the labour force in 2006, an estimated 3,634,800 were foreign-born. They accounted for slightly over one-fifth (21.2%) of Canada's total labour force in 2006, up from 19.9% previously.

Employment rates for immigrants increased between 2001 and 2006 among those aged 25 to 54 from 76.4% to 77.5%. (The employment rate for the core working-age Canadian born increased from 80.9% to 82.4% in the same period.)

Of the recent immigrants who arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006, 636,500 (or 57.3%) were in the core working-age group. The employment rate of this population was 67.0% in 2006, up from 63.4% in 2001. This increase was faster than the gain among their Canadian-born counterparts.

The lion's share of recent core working-age immigrants went to the Ontario labour market (51.1%), followed by Quebec (19.2%) and British Columbia (15.9%). In Ontario, they recorded an employment rate of 68.5%; in Quebec, it

was 58.2%; and in British Columbia, 67.1% were working in 2006.

Labour market conditions improved for both recent immigrant men and women in the core working-age group in 2006 compared to 2001. Despite this, recent immigrants continued to have lower employment rates than the Canadian born.

Employment rates among recent immigrant men and their Canadian-born counterparts were closer in 2006 than they had been five years earlier. About 78.6% of recent male

immigrants aged 25 to 54 were employed in 2006, up 4.1 percentage points from 2001. During the same period, the employment rate of Canadian-born men rose by only 0.6 percentage points, to 86.3%.

Recent immigrant women also narrowed the gap with their Canadian-born counterparts. Their employment rate rose from 53.2% to 56.8% between 2001 and 2006. This was greater than the increase experienced by Canadian-born women, whose employment rate rose from 76.3% to 78.5%.