



# WORK NETWORK

## RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

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### AN ERA OF CHANGE

*An Era of Change: Government Employment Trends in the 1980s and 1990s*, by Joseph Peters, is the first in the series of research studies from the Human Resources in Government (HRG) initiative that will be released by the Work Network this year. The study provides a contextual overview of the employment

trends in the federal and provincial governments through the use of Statistics Canada and administrative data series. Future studies in the HRG series will include a look at labour-management relations, a compensation study, a survey of workplace issues in government, and renewal scenarios.

### RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

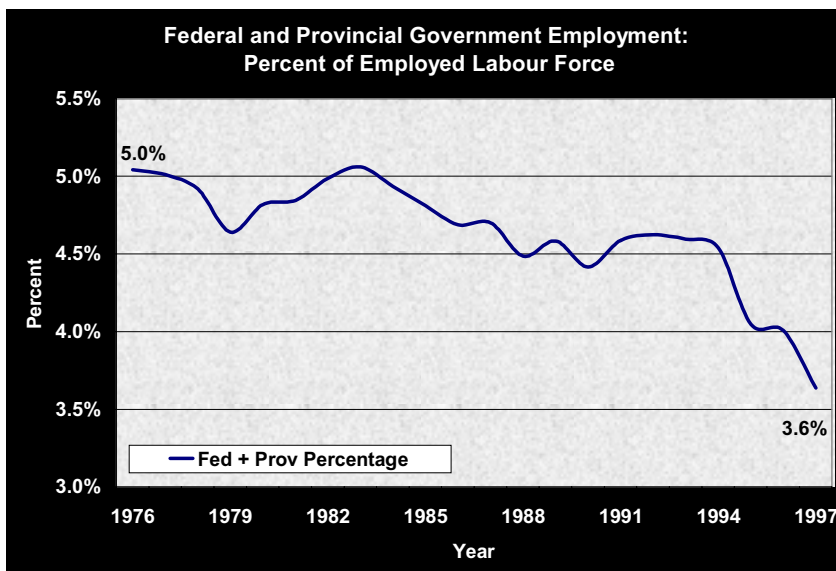
#### Change

- Extensive change has taken place in the 1990s in federal and provincial government workforces in Canada.
- There have been notable similarities between jurisdictions in how this change has occurred,

especially in the areas of downsizing, aging, occupational restructuring and gender composition.

#### Downsizing

- The 1990s have been a period of widespread downsizing.
- The 1996 Census was the first census this century to show a decline in employment at either the provincial or federal levels of government.
- Provincial government workforces decreased 22% between 1991 and 1996. The federal workforce decreased by 15% over that period.



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# Federal Government: A Profile of an Employee - THEN and NOW

The “federal government employee” has fewer coworkers now versus then:

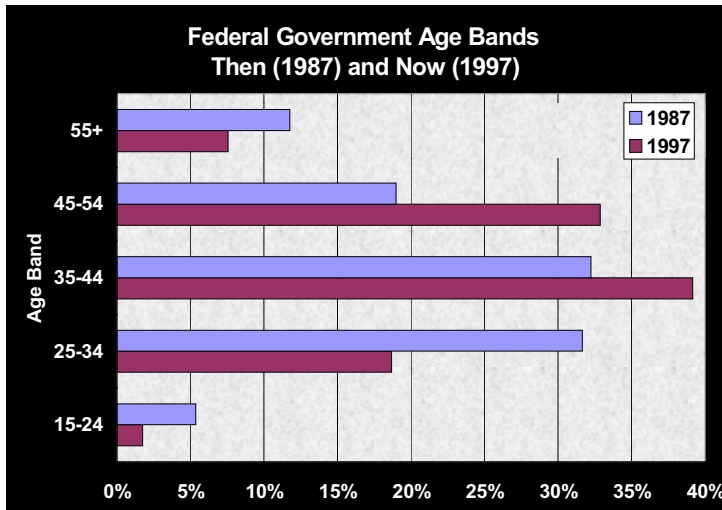
- in 1987, an employee was one of 291,900
- in 1991, an employee was one of 313,000
- in 1997, an employee was one of 269,000

The “federal government employee” in 1982 was 34.8% clerical and 24.1% managerial. Now things are different.

Largest Occupational Groups	Then 1982	Now 1997
Management and admin	24.1%	38.8%
Clerical	34.8%	23.5%
Natural sciences	16.3%	11.4%
Services	14.3%	12.6%

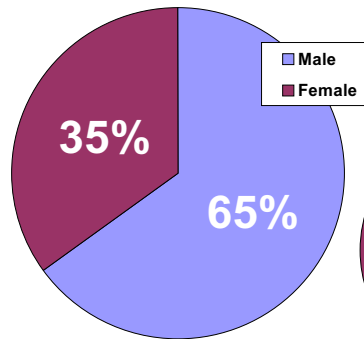
The “federal government employee” is getting older. The median age is the point at which half the employees are younger and half are older:

- in 1976 the median age was 35 years
- in 1997 the median age was 41 years

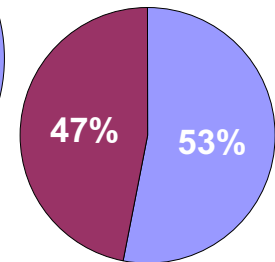


The concentration in the 35 to 54 age groups reflects the dual impacts of downsizing and a hiring freeze.

## Gender Breakdown Then - 1976



## Now - 1997



From 1991 to 1996 the “federal government employee” saw fewer coworkers who worked in these functions.

Protection of person and property	-12,855
General services	- 5,555
Transportation and communications	- 6,711
Armed forces	-31,614

## New Faces

Computer systems analysts +10.9%  
(1991-96)

Computer programmers +19.2%  
(1991-96)

Female Executives: 23.3% of all executive  
positions in 1997, up from 9.6% in 1987

## Disappearing Faces

Clerical occupations -39.7%  
(-41,600 positions) (1991-97)

Non-unionized employees -43.6%  
(1991-97)

## More Familiar Faces

Management and administrators +37%  
(1982 to 1997)



# Provincial Government: A Profile of an Employee - THEN and NOW

The “provincial government employee” has fewer coworkers now versus then:

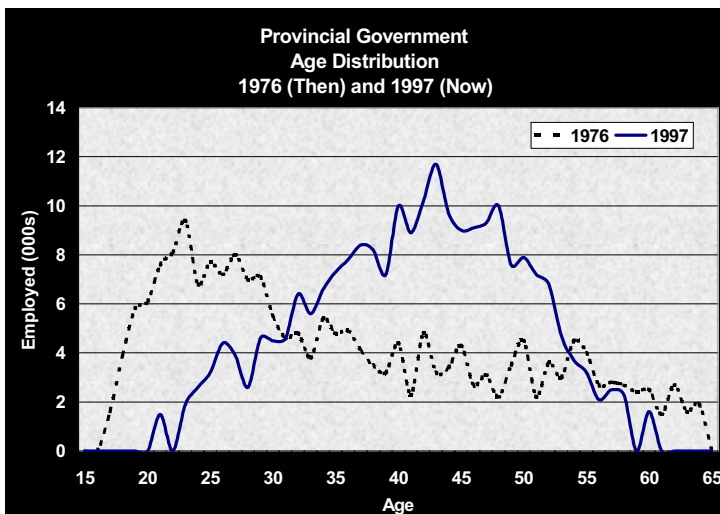
- in 1987, an employee was one of 292,000
- in 1994, an employee was one of 306,900
- in 1997, an employee was one of 237,000

The “provincial government employee” in 1982 was 33.0% clerical and 20.0% managerial. Things have changed.

Largest Occupational Groups	Then 1982	Now 1997
Management and admin	20.0%	33.2%
Clerical	33.0%	29.0%
Services	13.1%	11.9%
Natural sciences	11.7%	10.1%

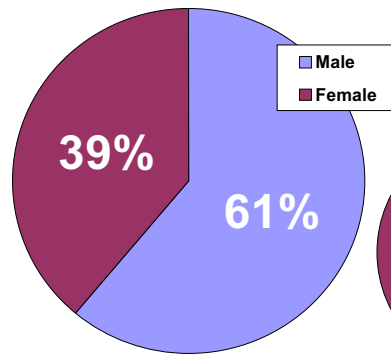
The “provincial government employee” is getting older. The median age is the point at which half the employees are younger and half are older:

- in 1976 the median age was 34 years
- in 1997 the median age was 42 years

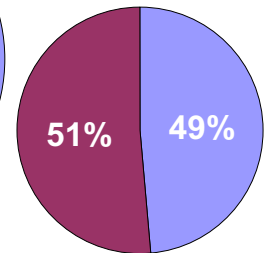


The concentration from age 35 to 54 reflects the dual impacts of downsizing and a hiring freeze.

## Gender Breakdown Then - 1976



## Now - 1997



From 1991 to 1996 the “provincial government employee” saw fewer coworkers in some functions and more in others.

Health	-53,027
Social services	+12,036
Education	- 4,829

## New Faces

- Computer systems analysts +7.8% (1991-96)
- Financial auditors and accountants +23.0% (1991-96)

## Disappearing Faces

- Clerical occupations -16.1% (1991-97)
- Health and social policy researchers -25.1% (1991-96)

## More Familiar Faces

- Management and administrators +47.3% (1982 to 1997)



# RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS (Cont'd)

## Change in What Government Does

- An examination of the functions that governments perform has shown that the federal and provincial changes have been quite different from 1991 to 1996.
- Federally, 41% of the cutbacks took place in protection of persons and property (12,855 positions). When the military is included in the federal definition, this increases to 69% or reductions of 40,714 positions.

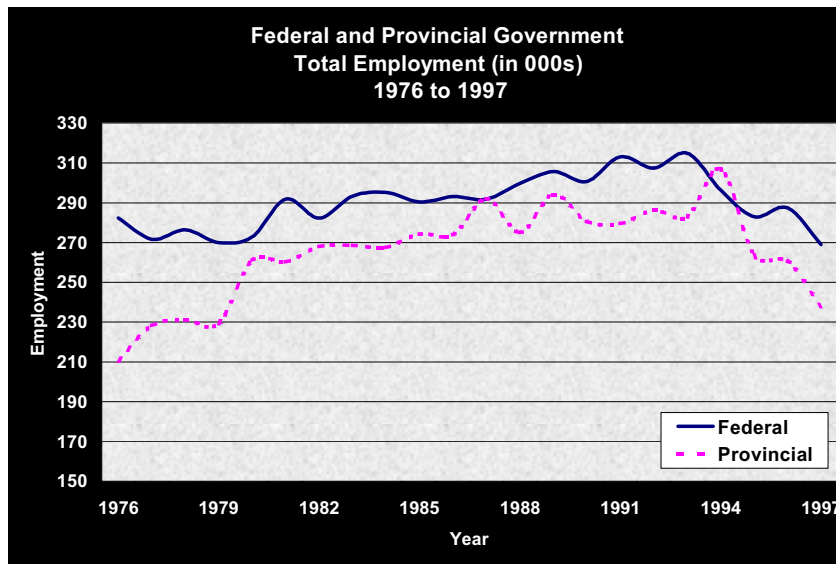
- In 1996 there were 12,625 fewer positions (-23%) in provincial government administration than in 1991.
- When government administration is broadened provincially to include health, education, and social services, health represents 73% (53,027 positions) of the workforce reductions from 1991 to 1996.

## Occupational Restructuring

- Between 1991 and 1997, the share of employment in managerial and administrative

positions increased significantly, while the share of employment in clerical occupations saw a large decrease.

- Occupations in management and administration now comprise over one-third of the federal and provincial



workforces as a result of employment increases in this occupational group and downsizing in others from 1991 to 1997.

- Reductions in clerical occupations of over 41,600 persons translated into over 94% of all workforce reductions federally, and 32% (-13,300 persons) provincially.

## Aging

- Government workforces are aging at a much faster rate than the labour force as a whole.

- This rapid “greying” of government workforces reflects widespread downsizing in conjunction with the hiring freezes.
- Those aged 25 or less made up less than 2% of the workforce in four of the five jurisdictions that data were collected from.

• The most significant growth has taken place in the 45 to 54 age group. It now makes up over 30% of the government workforces: however, for many governments this category represented close to 20% in 1987.

## Gender

- The gap between male and female participation rates in the government workforces has narrowed substantially over the past 20 years.
- In 1997, 47.1% of the federal workforce were women, up from 35.4% in 1976.
- Provincially, female participation exceeded male participation for the first time in 1993 (52%), and has since continued to do so.

## For Additional Information:

Contact - Joseph Peters

[jpeters@cprn.org](mailto:jpeters@cprn.org)

Or visit our website at:

<http://www.cprn.org>

