

# More people earning over \$100,000

By The Canadian Press

OTTAWA — The ranks of high-powered, high-salaried Canadian workers ballooned by more than two-thirds between 1990 and 2000, Statistics Canada reported Tuesday, with almost half a million people in the exclusive club of those who earned more than \$100,000 a year.

These high earners accounted for 2.7 per cent of all earners in 2000 — or 447,000 people — but only 1.8 per cent in 1990, with figures adjusted for inflation, the latest census figures showed.

Among the 52.2 per cent of the 16.4 million Canadian earners who worked full time in 2000, 4.2 per cent — or almost 360,000 people — earned more than \$100,000 in 2000.

Remarkably, 20 per cent of people in the \$100,000 club did not work full time. A disproportionately high number of these 90,000 workers were specialist doctors, general practitioners and business consultants, and one-fifth of them were women.

“What the census is showing us is that a lot of people have been able to take advantage of rewarding opportunities in the new economy,” Miles Corak, Statistics Canada’s director of family and labour studies, said Tuesday.

“Average earnings have gone up in Canada and they’re higher than they’ve ever been now. The reason for that is the upper end made big gains.”

But at the opposite end of the scale, the num-

## October Jobs

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OTTAWA — A quick look at October jobs (September in brackets):

Unemployment rate: 6.9 per cent (6.8)  
Number unemployed: 1,113,300 (1,098,800)  
Number working: 14,977,300 (14,957,100)  
Youth (15-24 years) unemployment: 12.9 per cent (12.7)  
Men (25 plus) unemployment: 5.5 per cent (5.5)  
Women (25 plus) unemployment: 6.0 per cent (5.9)

ber of full-time workers who earned \$20,000 or less also increased in the 1990s, accounting for 17.3 per cent of all earners in 2000.

Canadians who worked full time, year round in 2000 earned an average of \$43,231, the census showed.

Men continued to be the vast majority of high earners in 2000, accounting for 84 per cent of those who earned more than \$100,000.

“(High earners) are people who tend to have a set of characteristics: they’re predominantly male, they’re predominantly older than 35, but before retirement age, and they’re predominantly professionals with one or more university degree,” said Charles Beach, economics professor at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ont.

But the high number of Canadian women holding university degrees, and their pursuit of

traditionally male-oriented careers, meant that 2 1/2 times more women pulled down high salaries in 2000 compared to 10 years earlier.

“There’s been quite a percentage increase in females, but that’s because they started from a very low base,” Beach said.

“But (a woman’s salary) was and remains still way, way low relative to men in this group.”

More than half of the men pulling down six figures worked in sales, marketing or as ad managers, while high-earning women tended to be lawyers and family doctors.

The technology boom of the 1990s translated into big gains for men working in computer and information-systems jobs. Between 1990 and 2000, men in these occupations earning more than \$100,000 increased eight fold.

Not surprisingly, the days of being able to leave high school and make big bucks without a post-secondary education appear to be limited.

University-educated workers accounted for two-thirds of the growth among high earners, with 61 per cent of those earning more than \$100,000 in 2000 holding a university degree.

“Education is an absolute requirement to be a professional,” Beach said.

“All professional jobs are defined in terms of requirements of one or more university degree.”

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# Education key to success

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But that hasn't always been the case.

Bob Nobes, 61, a partner at KPMG in Toronto, has had a successful career as a high-earning accountant despite never having gone to university.

"I'm probably the last of the breed," Nobes said from his downtown Toronto office.

"When I was brought on board our firm was at a stage where they were just stopping hiring high-school students."

Nobes, who learned chartered accountancy through on-the-job training and correspondence courses, said he couldn't get into university in 1961 because he didn't have the required Grade 13 second-language credit.

"It was probably one of the dumber things I've done in my life," said Nobes, referring to dropping French after Grade 12.

"But I talked to the guidance counsellor at the school and they said I could be an accountant, they always had requests to fill jobs in that field."

By the mid-1960s, all chartered accountants were required to go to university, but Nobes and many of his contemporaries slipped in under the wire.

His salary started at \$250 a month — more than decent for that era — and continued to rise.

Other high earners who don't have a university degree — and, like Nobes, started their careers more than 40 years ago — include Toronto Mayor Mel Lastman, Ontario provincial politician and former education minister John Snobelen, who earned \$113,501 in 2001, and Frank Stronach, chairman of auto-parts maker Magna International Inc.

Stronach immigrated to Canada from Austria in 1954 with training in tool and machine engineering. He never went to university and was recently said to have a personal fortune of about half a billion dollars.

"(Frank Stronach) didn't get started five or 10 years ago," Beach said.

"He probably got started in his 20s, which was 50 years ago. It

was much easier to get started as an entrepreneur then than it is now."

Tuesday's census release included only information about income derived from employment, and the highest income bracket reported was \$100,000 and up. When figures for income derived from investments are released in May, the country should get a much clearer snapshot of Canada's wealthy. That would include publishing magnate Kenneth Thomson, who is worth more than \$20 billion, and Ted Rogers, who is worth more than \$1.1 billion, although his 2000 earnings from Rogers Communications Inc. came to just over \$3.2 million.

While Ontario, the post populous province, was home to more than half of the country's high earners, Alberta saw the highest per capita growth of high-income earners, with more than twice the number of people earning over \$100,000 in 2000 than in 1990.

Calgary was the metropolitan area with most high earners — 4.9 per cent of 218,400 workers. Toronto had the second-highest number of high earners per capita, followed by Ottawa-Hull and Windsor, Ont. "The Alberta economy was red hot, the unemployment rate was very low and there were serious labour shortages in a lot of areas, in particular construction, energy exploration and in some manufacturing areas," said Graham Lowe, sociology professor at the University of Alberta in Edmonton.

"Those kinds of shortages drive up wages, so it's not unusual to go into northern Alberta and find skilled trades workers earning six-figure incomes."

Lowe also pointed out that Alberta had the youngest population in Canada and a relatively well-educated work force — people attracted to the province by its ongoing energy boom.

"We basically have a boom economy and (high incomes) is one of the consequences," Lowe said.

"Whether it's sustainable, nobody can answer that question."