

## ECONOMIC NEWS

# Employment Continued To Increase in March in Ontario and Quebec

### HIGHLIGHTS

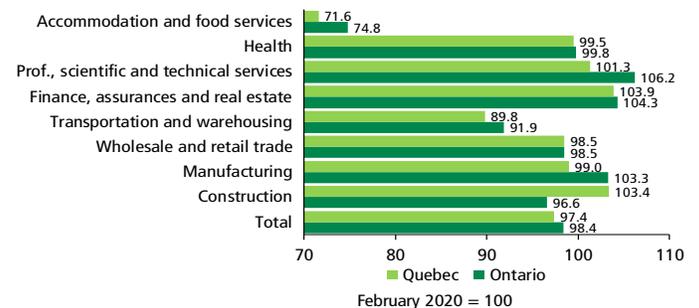
- ▶ Ontario saw the strongest progress last month, with 182,300 new jobs created. February's gains (+100,300) had not completely offset January's losses (-153,500), but with March's contribution they are amply made up.
- ▶ Ontario's unemployment rate decreased by 1.7 percentage points, to 7.5% in March.
- ▶ In Quebec, jobs increased by 25,900 last month, after a substantial increase of 112,600 in February, in the wake of the lifting of lockdown measures.
- ▶ While Quebec's unemployment rate had decreased by 2.2 percentage points between January and February, it stayed at 6.4% in March.

### COMMENTS

In Ontario, services saw the main gains, with the more decisive reopening of the economy in March (+69,000 in wholesale and retail trade, +33,600 in information, culture and recreation, and +23,600 in education). In Quebec, the increase in jobs was essentially in services (+15,900 healthcare and social assistance and +15,000 information, culture and recreation). We can see that not all sectors are recovering at the same speed (graphs), but that accommodation and food services remains the most scarred in both provinces. With the data released this morning, Ontario's employment is at 98.4% of its pre-pandemic level, while Quebec's is at 97.4%. Quebec remains the province with the lowest unemployment rate in Canada.

### GRAPH

**Quebec – Ontario: Not all sectors have regained their February 2020 pre-pandemic levels**



Sources: Statistics Canada and Desjardins, Economic Studies

### IMPLICATIONS

Last month's increase in employment is in line with the gradual reopenings of February and March in Quebec and Ontario. However, the tightening of lockdown measures imposed in the past few weeks in several Quebec regions could slow down the recovery in employment and cause a temporary pullback. This will be especially true if measures are extended to a larger part of the province. In Ontario, the 28-day lockdown of the economy will lead to a decrease in employment in April. While "waves" applies to coronavirus cases, it also perfectly describes the reality of the labour market over the past year.

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