May 30, 1986

Unemployment Insurance

Unemployment insurance benefits paid in March 1986 amounted to $921 million, down 3.7% from the previous month and 6.2% from March 1985. Disbursements for the first quarter of 1986 totalled $3,043 million, down 3.2% from the same period a year earlier.

A total of 214,000 claims for unemployment insurance benefits were received in March 1986, a decrease of 0.8% from February 1986 and down 7.4% from March 1985. For the first quarter of 1986, a total of 810,000 claims were received, a decline of 6.1% from the same quarter in 1985.

The number of beneficiaries for the week ending March 15, 1986 totalled 1,258,000, down 0.6% from February. The number of claimants receiving unemployment insurance benefits declined by 8.4% from March 1985, adjusted for seasonal variation. The number of beneficiaries receiving regular benefits increased 0.6% between February and March to 950,000.

Data for the months of January, February and March 1986 will be published in the March 1986 issue of Unemployment Insurance Statistics (73-001, $12/$120).

Contact: H. Stuebert or J.-P. Maynard (613-990-9900), Labour Division.

Leading Indicator of Building Construction Activity

The leading indicator of building construction activity in Canada (1981 = 100) increased slightly (+0.6%) in January to 93.6 from 93.0 in December. This advance was entirely attributable to the performance registered by the residential component of the total index.

After steady growth throughout 1985, the filtered index of residential construction continued to rise (+1.1%) in January to 107.4 – the highest level recorded since May 1981. Construction intentions were strong in the single-family dwelling sector while the situation levelled-off in the multi-family sector. The trend-cycle of residential permits issued declined in the Atlantic provinces, showed little change in Western Canada and increased in Quebec and Ontario.

The filtered index of non-residential construction (excluding engineering projects) slipped slightly by -0.1% to 79.0 in January. The industrial (-0.1%) and (continued on page 2, col. 1)
...Leading Indicator
commercial (-0.1%) components of the non-
residential index showed slight decreases
while a more pronounced decline occurred in
the public (-1.0%) sector. The trend-cycle of
non-residential permits issued posted a
decline in the Prairies that offset rises
recorded in all other regions.

Order the February 1986 issue of
Building Permits (64-001, $20/$200).
Contact: Lizette Gerault-Simard
(613-990-9689), Science, Technology and
Capital Stock Division.

Family Characteristics and
Labour Force Activity
The trend towards the increasing
participation of women in the labour force
and its impact on the Canadian labour
market has occasioned a growing need for
family-related labour market statistics. A
wide range of family data are collected
monthly by the Labour Force Survey, some
of which are regularly published in The
Labour Force (71-001, $20). More extensive
information is now available in a new
publication entitled Family Characteristics
and Labour Force Activity: Annual
Averages 1977-1984 (71-533, $33) which
provides a set of tables relating the labour
force activity of individuals to selected
characteristics of the families to which they
belong. The tables are composed of annual
averages of monthly data from the Labour
Force Survey for the years 1977 through
1984. Both national and provincial estimates
are included.

Although the publication's text does not
include any analysis, the following are some
of the findings which may be drawn from the
data:

- While the number of women in families
increased by 10% between 1977 and 1984,
the number who were in the labour force
grew by 32%.
- In company with this increase in labour
force activity, the employment/population
ratio of women in families, that is, the
number of employed women expressed as a
percentage of the total population of women
in families, increased from 41% to 48%.
There was an increase of 434,000 married
women working full-time and 231,000 more
working part-time.
- More specifically, there was a
substantial increase in labour force
participation among women in families with
young children. The number of women in
the labour force with children three years of
age or less was 54% higher in 1984 than it
was in 1977 (485,000 and 315,000,
respectively). While women in families
were increasing their labour market
activities, the 1977-1984 period was marked
by a reduction in the participation rate for
men in families. Their rate dropped from
78.4% to 77.3% over this time period.
- Although the population of married
women increased by 507,000 between 1977
and 1984, the number of married women
not in the labour force dropped by 284,000.

For more information about the
publication or family-related data derived
from the Labour Force Survey, contact Jean-
Marc Levesque (613-990-9452, Labour and
Household Surveys Analysis Division.

Infomat
Weekly Bulletin
Published by the Communications Division,
Statistics Canada.
Senior Editor: Greg Thomson (613-991-
1103).
R.H. Coats Building, Tunney's Pasture,
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.
Catalogue: 11-002E. Price: Canada,
$2/$100; other countries, $3/$150. To
subscribe: send money order or cheque
payable to the Receiver General for Canada to
Publication Sales and Services, Statistics
Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.
Published under the authority of the
Minister of Supply and Services Canada.
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Department Store Sales and
Stocks
Unadjusted Sales
Department stores in Canada reported
unadjusted sales totalling $900.4 million
in March 1986, up 6.0% from the March 1985
level. Sales were higher in 28 of the 40
departments for which information is
compiled, with the largest increases
reported in furriers' (+25.1%), boys' clothing
and furnishings (+18.1%), floor coverings
(+15.7%) and jewellery (+15.5%). The
most notable decreases were recorded for
millinery (-14.2%), smallwares and notions
(-14.0%), piece goods (-12.1%) and meals and
lunches (-9.3%).

At the provincial level, when compared
to last year, department store sales
decreased in Prince Edward Island (-4.6%),
New Brunswick (-1.6%) and fractionally
in Manitoba, while the remaining provinces
reported higher sales. Increases ranged
from 9.4% in Ontario to 1.1% in
Saskatchewan.

Sales also rose in all of the 10
metropolitan areas surveyed, with increases
ranging from 10.9% in Hamilton to a
fractional increase in Winnipeg.

Sales by major department stores in
March 1986 reached $553.8 million, up 3.1%
from the corresponding month a year
earlier, while junior department stores had
sales of $346.6 million, up 11.1% over the
same period last year.

Seasonally Adjusted Sales
Adjusted for seasonal fluctuations and the
number of trading days, total department
store sales in March 1986 increased by 2.3%
to $1,060.8 million from the revised
February 1986 level of $1,036.5 million.

Stocks
The unadjusted selling value of inventories
held by department stores in March 1986
was $4,184.6 million, up 27.8% from March
1985. For locally adjusted department store
stocks totalled $4,213.2 million, up 2.5%
from the February 1986 revised level.

Employment, Earnings and
Hours
Preliminary data on employment, payrolls
and hours for March 1986 showed an
estimated 8,924.5 thousand employees at
the Canada industrial aggregate level, an
increase of 34.9 thousand (0.4%) from
February 1986. Employment increased in
transportation, communication and other
utilities, while the remaining industries
showed little change. Small increases were
registered in all provinces and territories
with the exception of Alberta which
registered a slight decrease.

Order the March 1986 issue of
Employment, Earnings and Hours
(72-002, $35/$350). Contact: R. Arseneault
(613-990-3900), Labour Division.

Non-residential Construction
Output Price Indexes
The price index for non-residential
construction advanced 4.2% from the first
quarter of 1985 - the largest yearly increase
since the third quarter of 1982. A strong
price increase was posted in Toronto (6.5%) in
response to continued demand for non-
residential construction in that area.
Increases over four quarters in the other
three Eastern cities ranged between 4.8% for
Montreal and 4.0% for Ottawa.

In Western Canada, two trends emerge.
In Vancouver, where the level of demand
has been relatively stable over the last 13
quarters, year-to-year price increases
began in the second quarter of 1985 and
accelerated to the increase of 3.8% posted in
the first quarter of 1986.

In Calgary and Edmonton, where
substantial declines in demand have been
recorded over the last several years, year-to-
year decreases in the index have been fairly
constant since the first quarter of 1982.
Calgary's increase of 1.3% this quarter is the
first year-to-year increase in 13 quarters.
In Edmonton, a similar pattern prevails and
the yearly change this quarter stands at
2.0%.

Order the first quarter issue of
Construction Price Statistics (62-007,
$15/$60). Contact: the Prices Division
(613-990-9608).

Analysis of 1985 Results (Final Data)
Final estimates for 1985 show that
department store sales - the fourth largest
component of retail trade in Canada
according to the kind of business
classification - registered a 5.7% gain over
1984, rising to $12,038.6 million in current
dollars from $11,384.9 million.

Sales by major department store
organizations for the year 1985 reached
$7,474.1 million, 4.1% higher than in 1984,
while junior department store organizations
recorded an increase of 8.5% to $4,564.5
million. Major department stores accounted
for 62.1% of the total sales, while junior
department stores held 37.9%.

Order the March 1986 issue
Department Store Sales and Stock
(62-006, $35/$350). Contact: Marketing
Musaad (613-991-3549), Retail Trade
Section, Industry Division.
**Net Farm Income (Preliminary)**

Realized net farm income in 1985 is estimated at $3,908 billion, down 10.6% from the revised 1984 level of $4,369 billion.

Total farm cash receipts in 1985 (including supplementary payments) were $19,879 billion, a decline of 2.3% from $20,350 billion in 1984. Crop receipts declined by 4.7% in 1985 to $9,382 billion, due mainly to reduced farm marketings of wheat, oats, barley and rye. Western grain stabilization and crop insurance payments, totalling $1,126 billion partially offset the reduction in crop cash receipts. Livestock receipts were relatively unchanged at $9,770 billion in 1985. Declines of 3.5% in hog receipts and 2.4% in calf receipts were balanced by slight increases in other livestock products. Other federal and provincial government payments, such as those made as a result of the adverse weather conditions in the Prairies, also helped to counter the decline in total cash receipts.

Farm operating expenses and depreciation charges were virtually unchanged at $16,223 billion in 1985 compared to the revised 1984 level of $16,245 billion. Higher feed grain prices in 1985 while lower interest rates helped to reduce interest expenses by 7.0%. A decline in the value of machinery and farm buildings in 1985 resulted in a 3.1% reduction in depreciation charges from the 1984 level.

Total net income, which takes into account the value of inventory change, increased 25.1% to $4,244 billion. The marketing of a larger than usual proportion of an already drought-reduced crop in the fall of 1984 significantly reduced year-end grain inventories. Increased grain production and lower marketings for the August to December 1985 period resulted in higher year-end stocks. Consequently, the total value of inventory change in 1985 was $0,336 billion compared with the 1984 inventory change of $0,977 billion.

Order the 1986 issue of Agriculture Economic Statistics (21-603). Contact: George Beelen or Jackie LeBlanc-Cooke (613-990-8706), Agriculture Natural Resources Division.

**Sales of Natural Gas**

Sales of natural gas by main distributors amounted to 5,286,502 thousand cubic metres during March 1986.

On the basis of rate structure information sales in the latest month were broken down as follows: residential sales, 1,578,699 thousand cubic metres; commercial sales, 1,313,685 thousand cubic metres; and industrial sales, 2,394,118 thousand cubic metres.

**Realized Farm Net Income by Province, 1985**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Millions of dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Que.</td>
<td>$489.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alta.</td>
<td>$577.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sask.</td>
<td>$708.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Man.</td>
<td>$549.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>B.C.</td>
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<tr>
<td>N.S.</td>
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<td>N.B.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nfld.</td>
<td>$11.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Statistics Canada, Farm Net Income (21-202)

**Farm Cash Receipts**

Farm cash receipts for the January-March 1986 period were estimated at $5,220 million, a decrease of 8.2% from the level of $5,684 million for the corresponding period in 1985.

During this period receipts from the sale of field crops totalled $2,559 million, down 16.8% from the 1985 level of $3,067 million. Lower Canadian Wheat Board participation payments and lower liquidations of deferred grain receipts were the main reasons for the drop. Prices declined for all major field crops. However, increased quantities of wheat, barley, rye, flaxseed, soybeans and potatoes were marketed. Consequently, cash receipts increased for wheat, barley, rye and soybeans while decreasing for oats, flaxseed, rapseseed, corn and potatoes.

Total livestock receipts decreased by 3.1% from $2,467 million in 1985 to $2,390 million in 1986. Receipts for cattle and hogs declined due to lower marketings and prices, while receipts for calves decreased in spite of higher prices. Receipts increased for sheep, lambs and dairy products, while decreasing for poultry and eggs.

Other cash receipts went from $150 million in 1985 to $271 million in 1986; an 80.7% increase. Higher provincial income stabilization payments, especially in Alberta and British Columbia, and higher supplementary payments in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia are the principal reasons for this increase.

Order the January-March 1986 issue of Farm Cash Receipts (21-001, $7.370). This publication is also immediately on Envoy 100, an electronic messaging system. For more information, contact Lambert Gauthier or Steven Danford (613-990-8706), Agriculture Natural Resources Division.

**International Travel Account**

In the first quarter of 1986, preliminary estimates show that Canada posted an international travel deficit of $1,438 million—similar to the level recorded in the first quarter of 1985. Over the last five years, Canada has recorded a deficit in the first quarter averaging $1.2 billion.

Receipts from international travel increased by 24% or $123 million during the first quarter of 1986. Payments by Canadians travelling abroad grew at a much slower pace, rising by 5% or $121 million.

It should be noted that Easter occurred in March this year and as a result a shift in international travel flows from April into March might have taken place.

Order the January-March issue of Travel Between Canada and Other Countries (66-001, $35/$140). Contact: Paul L. Paradis (613-990-8932), International Travel Section, International and Financial Economics Division.

**Union Wage Rate Index**

The Canada total union wage rate index (1981 = 100) for construction trades remained unchanged in April from the level of 132.2 recorded in March.

Comparing April 1986 with the same month in 1985, union wage rates at the Canada total level rose 3.4%. The largest increase was reported in Halifax (10.1%), while cities in Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia registered increases of 4.4% on average.

It should be noted that these estimates of change are derived from current contract agreements covering 16 trades in 17 cities across Canada. Five cities in the provinces of Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Alberta are excluded due to the small number of existing union wage rate agreements.

Order the second quarter 1986 issue of Construction Price Statistics (62-007, $15/$60), available in August. Contact: Lisa-Gay Tremblay (613-990-9601), Prices Division.
### Agriculture and Natural Resources

Index Numbers of Farm Prices of Agricultural Products, March 1986

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- Construction Type Plywood, March 1986
- Factory Sales of Electric Storage Batteries, March 1986
- Electric Power Statistics, February 1986
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Exports by Commodities, March 1986
Imports - Merchandise Trade, 1985
Summary of Canadian International Trade, March 1986

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<td>65-001</td>
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Provincial Government Employment, October-December 1985

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Restaurant, Caterer and Tavern Statistics, February 1986

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Air Carrier Traffic at Canadian Airports, Second Quarter 1984
Railway Carloadings, March 1986
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