Catalogue 11-002E (Français 11-002F) ISSN 0380-0547

Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, October 8, 1999

OVERVIEW

- **GDP growth streak extends to 12 months**
  Gross domestic product advanced in July by 0.4%. It was the 12th consecutive monthly increase, marking the longest growth streak in more than a decade. July's advance was spearheaded by a broad-based increase in factory output.
- **Raw material prices continue to climb**
  Raw material prices climbed in August by 2.3%, largely due to the strength of crude oil prices. That strength was marginally offset by lower wood prices. The yearly advance in raw material prices (+13.1%) was the largest in more than four years.
- **Industrial product prices rise**
  In August, industrial product prices rose 0.4% to stand 2.0% higher than a year earlier. The most significant price increases were for refined petroleum products and pork products, largely offset by lower prices for softwood lumber.
- **Weekly earnings gains remain moderate**
  In July, average weekly earnings for all employees edged up from a year earlier by 1.2%. The annual gains in average earnings continue to be moderate due to modest increases in average paid hours in the past year and to small gains in hourly pay rates.
- **Number receiving EI declines again**
  Fewer Canadians were receiving employment insurance benefits in July. Their number fell from June by 3.0% and dropped from a year earlier by 13.6%.
- **Department store sales up for fifth straight month**
  In August, for a fifth straight month, department store sales increased (+0.9%). Sales grew 3.0% in July.
- **A portrait of seniors in Canada**
  Last year, seniors made up 12% of Canada's population, up from 10% in 1981 and just 5% in 1921. This population group is expected to grow even more rapidly during the next several decades.

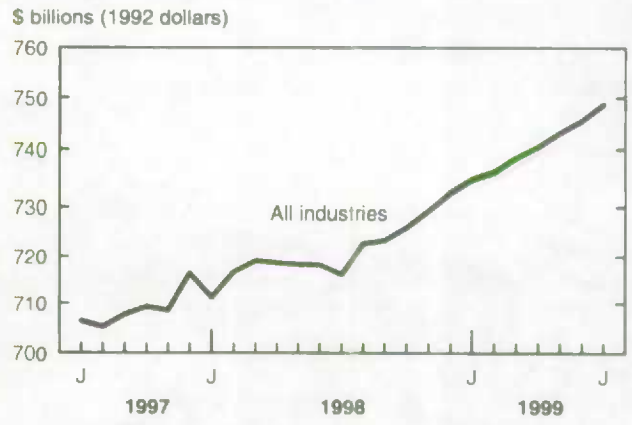
GDP growth streak extends to 12 months

Gross domestic product (GDP) advanced in July by 0.4%. It was the 12th consecutive monthly increase, marking the longest growth streak in more than a decade. July's advance was spearheaded by a broad-based increase in factory output.

Higher manufacturing output accounted for more than a third of July's rise. The rest was attributable to advances in retailing and wholesaling, continued strength in business services, a surge in the utilities industry and the 9th advance in 10 months for residential construction. In the business services industry, activity rose 0.9%. This was spurred by continued growth in computer and consulting services and by increased demand for temporary help and other miscellaneous business services. Unusually warm weather in July sparked a surge in electrical power generation as air conditioning usage led to greater demand.

Manufacturers raised output 0.8% in July, ratcheting up the production of diverse products. It was the fourth manufacturing increase in five months, and the second largest this year after June's 1.1% gain. Overall, 16 of 22 major industry groups raised output. The transportation equipment group (+2.0%) was lifted by increased automobile and aircraft production. Vehicle sales south

Gross domestic product at factor cost



(continued on page 2)

... GDP growth streak extends to 12 months

of the border in both July and August were strong, and July's dealer inventories were at multi-year lows. However, auto parts production in Canada edged down slightly. As for aircraft production, it climbed sharply and broke out of a three-month lull.

Several pulp and newsprint mills that had taken downtime because of a supply glut returned to normal production in July, leading to a 3.5% surge in the output of paper and allied products. July's jump paralleled recent price increases, an indication of firming demand in global markets. Indeed, July's exports of pulp and paper products shot up 5.9%—the largest monthly gain in almost a year-and-a-half.

The strong uptrend in production of electrical and electronic equipment that marked the first six months of 1999 eased in July (+0.5%). Output of telecommunications equipment fell, as did production of electronic parts and components. These declines were partly offset by another increase for computers and peripherals, the fourth in five months. Moreover, production of communications wire and cable returned to strong growth.

The furniture industry posted another robust month. The recent advances have been driven by higher production of office furniture, where growth, buoyed by strong foreign demand, has ballooned more than 12% since the beginning of the year. The home furniture industry has also been doing well, spurred on by increased residential construction.

A steep drop in non-ferrous metal smelting led to a 5.2% drop in the primary metal products industry. The sharp decline at the smelters resulted from constrained output at several base metal mines because of mine closures, longer-than-usual summer shutdowns and strikes. Output of fabricated metal products declined 0.8%. Output in the rapidly growing plastics industry edged down 0.3%. The plastics industry has been buoyed lately by strong demand for new moulded plastic products.

Note to readers

Monthly gross domestic product (GDP) by industry is valued at 1992 prices. The data are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Retailing activity, after a disappointing second quarter, rose a healthy 0.9%. However, the July gain was narrow, with car and truck dealers and department stores accounting for most of it. Wholesaling activity rose 0.8% on continued strong growth in sales of computers and software. Excluding these distributors, wholesaling activity was essentially flat.

Activity in the mining sector slipped 0.4% in July as both metal and non-metal mine output declined in the face of slackening demand and production interruptions. Output of crude oil and natural gas rose for the third time in four months, paralleling the recent recovery in oil prices and a firming of demand in the face of lower inventories. July's increase was concentrated in natural gas production. Drilling and rigging activity was also on the rise, as stronger oil prices improved cash flow.

Non-residential builders did not fare well in July. Real estate agents experienced their first slowdown in six months. Telecommunications carriers and postal and courier companies reported increased business. Defence services were lifted by an increase in Canada's peacekeeping commitment to Kosovo. A strike by Quebec nurses reduced output in the health services sector for a second month.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4677-4681.

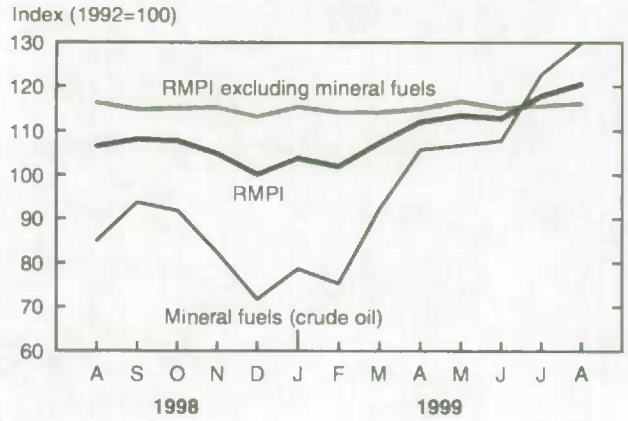
The July 1999 issue of ***Gross domestic product by industry*** *(15-001-XPB, $15/$145) presents the full report. To purchase data, contact Yolande Chantigny (1 800 877-IMAD, IMAD@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Raw material prices continue to climb

Raw material prices continued to follow an upward trend in August, rising 2.3%. This increase was largely due to the strength of crude oil prices. It was marginally offset by lower wood prices. Compared with August 1998, raw material prices were up 13.1%—the largest yearly advance in more than four years. Oil prices were responsible for the bulk of that advance.

Crude oil prices were still climbing in August (+6.6%), as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) maintained supply restrictions. OPEC appears committed to sustaining the production cuts until at least early next year. On a yearly basis, the price surge in crude oil was even more dramatic at 57.8%—the largest yearly increase in close to nine years. From July to August, the strength of crude oil prices was tempered somewhat by lower prices for coal (-2.4%) and natural gas (-0.4%). On a yearly basis, the price gains were modest for both coal (+3.1%) and natural gas (+4.6%). If mineral fuels (90% of which is crude oil) were excluded, raw material prices would have risen from July to August by only 0.4%. Moreover, they would have declined on a yearly basis by 0.2%.

Raw Materials Price Index



(continued on page 3)

... Raw material prices continue to climb

Animal product prices followed two months of decline with an advance in August of 3.3%. This advance was largely achieved on the strength of hog prices. As U.S. meat packers stepped up hog purchases after July's heat wave, which kept farmers from transporting hogs, prices jumped 18.5%. On a yearly basis, overall animal product prices were up 1.2%. Cattle prices figured prominently in that by gaining 7.0%.

Wood prices in August fell 3.3%. This drop after six months of increases was mainly due to a drop in log prices (-4.0%). Log sales tend to taper off, and prices fall accordingly, as the building season begins to wind down. Pulpwood prices were more stable, slipping 0.6%. Reflecting the vigour of the U.S. housing market, log prices were up from August 1998 by 7.2%. Pulpwood prices, meanwhile, dropped from last August by 5.4%. Consequently, overall wood prices rose from a year earlier by 4.2%.

Non-ferrous metal prices in August edged up 0.4%. Most non-ferrous metal prices remained relatively stable. Nickel prices were the exception, climbing 12.2% to their highest level in over two years, due to strong demand from stainless steel producers (a major consumer of nickel) and to speculation. Gold prices, after several months of significant erosion, regained 2.1% in August. Partly, this occurred because the 20-year low in prices sparked demand from jewellers in Asia and Europe. And, amid signs that workers at Canada's largest copper mine were prepared to accept a wage proposal and thereby allow the mine to re-open, copper concentrate prices fell 2.7%

Vegetable products as a group increased in price by 1.0%. The higher prices were widespread. On a yearly basis, however, prices were down 11.1%. Soybean prices jumped in August by 10.6%, as concern intensified that dry weather in the United States would worsen the damage that resulted from the heat wave in late July. Corn prices were similarly affected and rose 3.4%. These increases were somewhat tempered by a drop in canola prices (-4.2%). In general, both soybean and canola prices have been under downward pressure recently. Unrefined sugar prices rose 8.4% in August amid speculation that demand from Russia might rebound despite the recent duties that were imposed.

Ferrous material prices increased from July to August by 1.2%. On a yearly basis, however, prices looked more sluggish (-12.4%) because of price drops for iron ore (-10.8%) and iron and steel scrap (-13.7%).

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

*The August 1999 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, $22/$217) will be available at the end of this month. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-3350, fax (613-951-1539, infounit@statcan.ca). Prices Division.*

Industrial product prices rise

In August, industrial product prices rose 0.4% to stand 2.0% higher than a year earlier. However, excluding petroleum and coal products, the yearly increase was only 0.7%. In August, the most significant price increases were for refined petroleum products and pork products. For both, the increases reflected higher raw material prices. The gains in August were largely offset by lower prices for softwood lumber.

The value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar was almost unchanged from mid-July to mid-August, but it was up noticeably from a year earlier. August marked the eighth consecutive increase in the yearly change in industrial prices excluding the exchange-rate effect. In December 1998, it had been -2.5%.

Prices in the refined petroleum products industry jumped from July to August by 6.4%. Prices were 35.7% above their low in February and were up 27.7% compared with August 1998. The increase in petroleum product prices happened as crude oil prices rose a further 6.6% in August. This increase occurred as OPEC maintained its output restrictions. Over the last two years, these cuts have totalled more than 4 million barrels of crude oil a day. The reductions are felt to be mainly responsible for the rise in petroleum prices since February.

Pork prices vaulted in August by 21.8%. This followed a 1.9% recovery in July after a 3.5% setback in June. Pork prices in August recovered to just 12.5% below their peak of May 1997. Prices for hogs were also up in August (+18.5%).

In August, the price level in the chemicals and chemical products sector was up 1.7%. Most of the increase came from industrial organic chemicals (+7.6%) and plastic synthetic resins (+2.5%). Prices for the former rose due to a steep advance in ethylene prices. Products in which ethylene is an important component also contributed to the increase. For the latter, most of the price gain was due to the polyethylene resins, which also have ethylene as a significant component. Ethylene prices in the United States have also made a sharp increase recently.

Exchange-rate effect on industrial prices, August 1999

	12-month change	Excluding exchange-rate effect
	%	
Manufacturers' prices		
All goods	2.0	2.7
Intermediate goods[1]	2.2	2.8
First-stage goods[2]	4.0	4.7
Second-stage goods[3]	1.9	2.4
Finished goods[4]	1.7	2.6
Food and feeds	1.7	1.7
Capital goods	0.1	1.4
Other finished goods	2.5	3.7
Other prices		
Raw material prices (RMPI)	13.1	..
Retail prices (CPI)		
Food bought at stores	0.7	..
Goods except food bought at stores	3.1	..
U.S. manufacturers' prices	2.4	..

[1] *Used as inputs into industry.*
[2] *Used as inputs into basic industries.*
[3] *Used as inputs into other industries.*
[4] *Used for immediate consumption or for capital invesment.*
.. *Figures not available.*

(continued on page 4)

... Industrial product prices rise

Softwood lumber prices were down from July by 6.3%. Much of the decline may have been due to seasonal variations. The overall price level for softwood lumber declined across the country, except on the coast of British Columbia. Some of the most severe price declines occurred in the interior of British Columbia, where prices were down 8.5% for Douglas fir and down 8.8% for spruce, pine and fir. In Canada, domestic softwood lumber prices tumbled 9.2%, while export prices fell 5.3% (or 5.0% in U.S. dollars). In the United States, softwood lumber prices dropped 6.0%.

In the United States, Canada's major trading partner, total industrial production in August rose 0.3% as manufacturing output rose 0.4%. Manufacturing industry prices south of the border increased in August by 0.6% to stand above the August 1998 level by 2.4%. The yearly change in U.S. manufacturing industry prices has been following an upward trend since November 1998, when it was -1.0%. In the United Kingdom, the yearly change in domestic manufacturing output prices was +1.3% in August. Excluding excise taxes, it was only +0.2%. In Italy, the change in industrial prices was -0.7% (July); in Germany, -0.7% (August); in France, -2.1% (June).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.

The August 1999 issue of ***Industry price indexes*** *(62-011-XPB, $22/$217) will be available at the end of the month. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-3350, fax: 613-951-1539, infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

Weekly earnings gains remain moderate

In July, average weekly earnings for all employees edged up from a year earlier by 1.2% (or $3.26) to stand at $612.85. The annual gains in average earnings continue to be moderate due to modest increases in average paid hours in the past year and to small gains in hourly pay rates.

Average weekly earnings, all industries, July 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	**612.85**	**0.5**	**1.2**
Newfoundland	548.03	-0.7	3.4
Prince Edward Island	486.70	1.0	2.3
Nova Scotia	533.06	1.3	2.6
New Brunswick	527.26	-0.5	-1.1
Quebec	573.21	0.2	0.5
Ontario	654.68	0.9	1.8
Manitoba	546.44	0.4	0.6
Saskatchewan	543.34	0.1	0.8
Alberta	620.76	0.2	0.8
British Columbia	624.30	0.2	1.1
Yukon	683.36	2.2	0.1
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	786.49	1.5	9.0

Average weekly earnings increased from July 1998 to July 1999 for hourly-rated (+2.4%) and salaried (+1.9%) employees. Average weekly earnings for those in the "other employees" category declined 0.2%. For the most part, this decline was caused by a fall in earnings for commissioned salespersons in trade and finance and in insurance and real estate.

Hourly-rated employees in all industries worked in July an average of 31.4 hours (including overtime), unchanged from June. Their average overtime stood at 1.0 hour per week, also unchanged from June. Average hourly earnings for hourly-rated employees were up from July 1998 by 1.1%, with the most significant earnings gains seen in mining and in the durable goods industry.

The number of employees on business payrolls increased from June to July by 67,000. The largest gains were in manufacturing, trade and business services. Substantial increases in payroll employment were reported in most provinces, with the strongest advances occurring in Quebec.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4285-4466, 9438-9452, 9639-9664 and 9899-9911.

The July 1999 issue of ***Employment, earnings and hours*** *(72-002-XPB, $32/$320) presents the month's industry data and other labour market indicators in detail. Annual averages for 1998 are now available in a variety of formats. Custom tabulations of the data are available on demand. For further information, contact Jean Leduc (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087, labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.*

Number receiving EI declines again

In July, 496,920 Canadians who received the regular type of employment insurance (EI) benefits. That was a drop from June of 3.0%. Six provinces and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut reported decreased numbers of EI beneficiaries. Increases were recorded in the Atlantic provinces and in the Yukon. The number of such beneficiaries in July was down from a year earlier by 13.6%.

The amount paid out as regular benefits increased 3.9% in July to $629.3 million. The number of claims for EI benefits made by the jobless surged 9.7% to 224,900 claims.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5717 and 5735-5736.

For more information, contact Gilles Groleau or Rob Keay (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087, labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

EI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, July 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Beneficiaries	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	**496,920**	**-3.0**	**-13.6**
Newfoundland	35,210	1.6	5.0
Prince Edward Island	8,490	1.8	-8.9
Nova Scotia	27,170	1.1	-12.0
New Brunswick	35,110	1.7	-7.1
Quebec	168,840	-4.0	-16.7
Ontario	96,170	-7.6	-26.1
Manitoba	12,300	-3.6	-6.9
Saskatchewan	12,680	-3.1	9.5
Alberta	35,010	-6.4	10.9
British Columbia	60,820	-4.8	-12.2
Yukon	1,040	1.4	-21.0
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	1,230	-2.5	2.8

Department store sales up for fifth straight month

In August, department stores reported seasonally adjusted sales of $1,564.3 million, up from July by 0.9%. This increase came in the wake of a 3.0% gain in July. With the August increase, department store sales have been on the rise for five months. Compared with August 1998, sales this August were ahead 12.2%. That is the largest yearly growth seen since September 1997 (+12.3%). Department store sales have shown sustained growth, except for a slight dip in the spring of 1998, since early 1996.

Unadjusted for seasonal factors, August's department store sales were up from August 1998 by 12.3%. This yearly sales growth was evident in every province: 15.6% in Ontario, 13.1% in the Atlantic provinces, 10.6% in the Prairie provinces, 9.0% in Quebec and 8.5% in the region formed by British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. This last region has reported yearly sales growth in each of the last four months.

Note to readers

The department store sales data for August include both sales made by Eaton's and by its merchandise liquidator.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

To purchase data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549, 1 877 421-3067, retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Clérance Kimanyi (613-951-6363, kimacle@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Department store sales including concessions
Not seasonally adjusted

	August 1999	August 1998 to August 1999	January-August 1999	January-August 1998 to January-August 1999
	$ millions	% change	$ millions	% change
Canada	**1,511.6**	**12.3**	**10,298.6**	**7.4**
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island[1]	30.4	16.1	193.0	12.0
Nova Scotia	47.4	12.0	312.8	8.4
New Brunswick	35.9	12.3	226.0	5.5
Quebec	270.8	9.0	1,918.1	7.0
Ontario	644.9	15.6	4,396.6	9.1
Manitoba	62.0	8.8	428.5	6.1
Saskatchewan	51.0	10.1	343.8	7.1
Alberta	183.7	11.4	1,206.8	6.9
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut[1]	185.4	8.5	1,273.0	2.5

[1] *For reasons of confidentiality, the data for Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island are combined, as are the data for British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.*

A portrait of seniors in Canada

In 1998, there were an estimated 3.7 million individuals aged 65 and over in Canada, a 57% increase from 1981. Last year, seniors made up 12% of Canada's population, up from 10% in 1981 and just 5% in 1921. This population group is expected to grow even more rapidly during the next several decades, particularly once baby boomers start turning 65 around 2011. By 2041, a projected 23% of the population will be 65 and over.

The fastest growth is occurring among those in older age ranges. In 1998, an estimated 380,000 people were aged 85 and over—nearly double the level in 1981 (196,000) and almost 20 times the 21,000 in this age group in 1921.

In 1996, 27% of seniors were immigrants, whereas immigrants made up only 17% of the overall population. Victoria, British Columbia is the seniors' capital of Canada. Fully 18% of the population there is aged 65 and over.

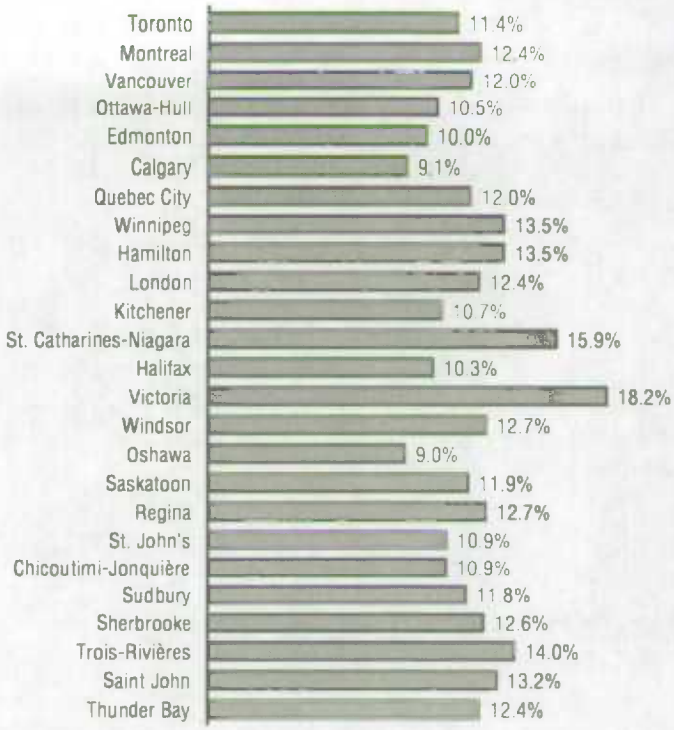
The life expectancy of seniors has risen substantially during this century. In 1996, a 65-year-old person had an estimated remaining life expectancy of 18.4 years, roughly half a year more than in 1991, three years more than in 1971, and five years more than in 1921. As in other age groups, senior women have a longer remaining life expectancy than do senior men. The senior population is predominantly female. In 1998, women represented 57% of all Canadians aged 65 and over and 70% of those aged 85 and older.

Most seniors describe their health in positive terms. Still, in 1997, 82% of seniors living at home reported that they had been diagnosed with at least one chronic health condition, while 25% had a long-term disability or handicap.

The majority of seniors are retired, but a substantial number are still part of the paid work force. In 1998, just over 225,000 people aged 65 and over, or 6% of the total senior population, had jobs. At the same time, 23% of the senior population participated in formal volunteer activities and 58% in informal volunteer activities.

The average income of seniors in 1997 was 18% higher than it was in 1981 (taking inflation into account). However, in 1997, close to 700,000 seniors (19% of the total) had incomes below Statistics Canada's low-income cutoffs. Considerable differences in economic circumstances are also evident depending on family status and sex. In 1997, for example, 49% of all unattached senior women had a low income, compared with only about 6% of senior women who lived in a family.

Seniors as a percentage of the population in census metropolitan areas, 1998



The third edition of ***A portrait of seniors in Canada*** *(89-519-XPE, $45) is now available. For further information, contact Colin Lindsay (613-951-2603, fax: 613-951-0387, lindcol@statscan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.*

New from Statistics Canada

A portrait of seniors in Canada
Third edition

A portrait of seniors in Canada presents a comprehensive statistical profile of the population aged 65 and over. It provides details on family status and living arrangements, housing, health, education, income, and work and leisure patterns.

This report was prepared, in part, to provide a database on seniors for the current International Year of Older Persons, which has special relevance because seniors make up one of Canada's fastest growing population groups. Issues associated with the ageing population will become even more critical when the baby boomers begin turning 65 early in the next century.

The third edition of ***A portrait of seniors in Canada*** *(89-519-XPE, $45) is now available. For further information, contact Colin Lindsay (613-951-2603, fax: 613-951-0387, lindcol@statscan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.*

New from Statistics Canada

Food expenditure survey
1996

Are you interested in doing in-depth analysis of the food spending patterns of Canadian households? For example, do you need to know what proportion of the budget is spent on various food categories by different types of households? Or which households purchased meals in restaurants and what kind of restaurants they favoured?

The microdata file from the 1996 Food Expenditure Survey gives data users access to hundreds of detailed variables about food spending, the quantity of food purchased, and the type of store or restaurant where purchases occurred. Also included are a variety of household demographic variables.

*The public-use microdata file for the **1996 Food Expenditure Survey** (62M0002XDB, $1,500) is now available. Similar files based on the 1984, 1986, 1990, and 1992 surveys are also available. Analytical highlights are presented in the publication **Family food expenditure in Canada** (62-554-XPB, $52). For further information about the survey and related products and services, contact Client Services (613-951-7355, 1 888 297-7355, fax: 613-951-3012, income@statcan.ca), Income Statistics Division.*

Insights on...

The feature article in the latest issue of *Insights on...* is titled "Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Canada—progress and prospects". It was compiled and recently published by Industry Canada using Statistics Canada data.

Insights on... is a free newsletter that reports on emerging trends in business and trade. It documents developments in Canadian industry and examines how businesses are responding to new challenges and opportunities. Also included is information on new Statistics Canada products and services that pertain to businesses and industry.

***Insights on...** (paper: 61F0019XPE, $40/$100; online at www.statcan.ca: 61F0019XIE, free) is now available. To order, or for more information, contact Jamie Brunet (613-951-6684, jamie.brunet@statcan.ca), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.*

Environment and waste management industries
1996 and 1997

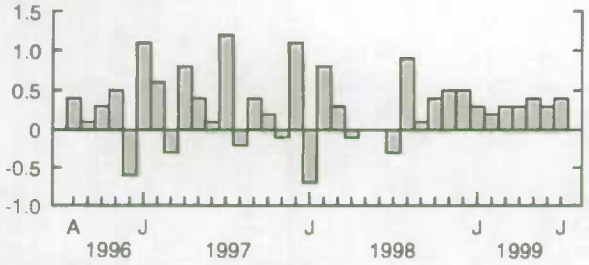
Two reports on the environment and waste management industries for 1996 and 1997 are now available. The first, *The environment industry: business sector, 1996 and 1997*, presents statistics on the supply of environmental goods and services. The environment industry consists of businesses that provide goods and services used to protect the environment.

The second, *The waste management industry survey: business and government sectors, 1996*, details the quantities of waste disposed in landfills and incinerators managed by governments and businesses. It also includes statistics on the preparation of materials for recycling or re-use, the operation of disposal facilities, hazardous waste volumes and types, as well as financial and employment characteristics of the local governments and businesses that provided waste management services.

***The environment industry: business sector, 1996 and 1997** (16F0008XIE) and **The waste management industry survey: business and government sectors, 1996** (16F0023XIE) are now available for free online at Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under "Products and services", and then "Downloadable publications (free)". These reports are also available in print for a fee. For further information, contact the Information Officer (613-951-0297, fax: 613-951-0634), Environment Accounts and Statistics Division.*

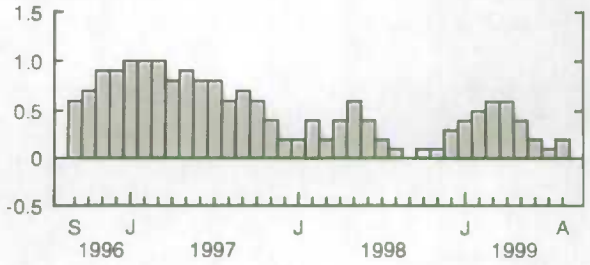
Current trends

Gross domestic product



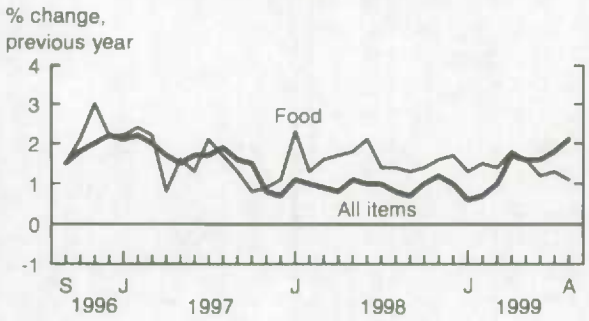
Economic activity continued to advance in July (+0.4%). This extended the expansion to 12 months – the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade.

Composite Index



The growth of the leading indicator was much the same in August at 0.2%, which is its average gain since June.

Consumer Price Index

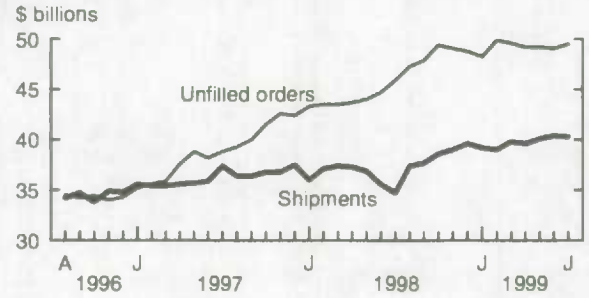


Consumers paid 2.1% more for goods and services in August 1999 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.1%.

Unemployment rate

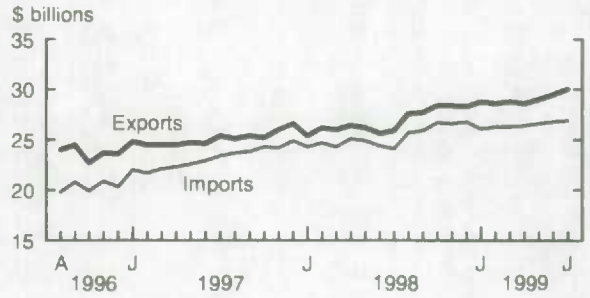
In August, the unemployment rate notched up 0.1 percentage points to 7.8%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments slipped 0.1% in July to $40.3 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders increased 0.7% to $49.5 billion.

Merchandise trade



In July, the value of merchandise exports increased 1.8% from June to just surpass $30.0 billion for the first time ever. Imports edged up 0.3% to 26.9 billion.

Note: *All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.*

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product ($ billion, 1992)	July*	748.7	0.4%	4.6%
Composite Index (1981=100)	August	215.7	0.2%	3.8%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q2 1999	37.2	1.6%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1999	83.8	0.5†	1.0†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	July	21.7	1.3%	5.5%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	July	130.5	4.0%	8.0%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	July	30.2	0.4%	10.3%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	August	14.67	0.0%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	August	7.8	0.1†	-0.5†
Participation rate (%)	August	65.4	0.0†	0.3†
Average weekly earnings ($)	July	612.85	0.5%	1.2%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	September*	160	1.3%	11.1%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	July	30.0	1.8%	15.8%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	July	26.9	0.3%	11.5%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	July	3.2	0.4	1.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	July	40.3	-0.1%	16.2%
New orders ($ billion)	July	40.7	1.1%	13.4%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	July	49.5	0.7%	7.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	July	1.27	0.02	-0.15
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	August	111.1	0.3%	2.1%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	August	122.5	0.4%	2.0%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	August	120.5	2.3%	13.1%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	July	100.8	0.2%	0.6%

Note: *All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*
* *new this week*
† *percentage point*
.. *figures not available yet due to a survey redesign*

Infomat
A weekly review

Published by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10th floor, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Editor: Tim Prichard (613) 951-1197; prictim@statcan.ca
Head of Official Release: Chantal Prévost (613) 951-1088; prevcha@statcan.ca

Price per issue: paper version, $4; Internet version, $3. Annual subscription: paper version, $145; Internet version, $109. Prices outside Canada are the same, but are in U.S. dollars. All prices exclude sales tax.

To subscribe: Send a money order or cheque payable to the Receiver General of Canada/Statistics Canada, Circulation Management, 120 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6. To order by telephone call (613) 951-7277, or 1 800 700-1033 both in Canada and outside of Canada.

The first (official) release of all statistical information produced by Statistics Canada occurs in *The Daily* (www.statcan.ca), available at 8:30 a.m. *The Daily* presents highlights from new data releases, along with sources, links and contacts for further information. It also contains schedules of upcoming major news releases and announces the Agency's new products and services.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences – Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48 – 1984.

Publications released from September 30 to October 6

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/subscription Canada (C$)	Outside Canada (US$)
AGRICULTURE				
Cereals and oilseeds review	July 1999	22-007-XPB	15/149	15/149
Vista on the agri-food industry and the farm community	September 1999			
Internet		21-004-XIE	free	
Paper		21-004-XPB	free	free
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL FLOWS				
Canada's international transactions in securities	July 1999			
Internet		67-002-XIB	14/132	
Paper		67-002-XPB	18/176	18/176
HOUSING, FAMILY AND SOCIAL STATISTICS				
A portrait of seniors in Canada, third edition	1999	89-519-XPE	45	45
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK				
Building permits	August 1999	64-001-XIB	19/186	
Private and public investment in Canada	1999 revised intentions	61-206-XIB	33/33	
LABOUR STATISTICS				
Quarterly estimates of trusteed pension funds	Q1 1999	74-001-XPB	19/62	19/62
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Coal and coke statistics	July 1999	45-002-XPB	12/114	12/114
Electric power statistics	July 1999	57-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
Energy statistics handbook	September 1999	57-601-UPB	387	387
Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation	August 1999	44-004-XIB	5/47	
Monthly survey of manufacturing	July 1999	31-001-XPB	20/196	20/196
Pipeline transportation of crude oil and refined petroleum products	July 1999	55-001-XIB	9/86	
Production and disposition of tobacco products	August 1999	32-022-XIB	5/47	
Sawmills and planing mills	July 1999	35-003-XIB	9/86	
Supply and disposition of crude oil and natural gas	June 1999	26-006-XPB	19/186	19/186
TRANSPORTATION				
Aviation service bulletin, vol. 31, no. 9		51-004-XIB	8/82	

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions (B signifies bilingual, E signifies English); those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote the paper version. XDB means the electronic version on diskette or compact disc.
Note: All publications available via the Internet are priced only in Canadian dollars, so a U.S. dollar price is not listed for them.

How to order publications

To order Infomat or other publications:

Please refer to the • Title • Catalogue number • Volume number • Issue number • Your VISA or MasterCard number.

In Canada and outside Canada call: **(613) 951-7277** or **1 800 267-6677**
Fax your order to us: **(613) 951-1584** or **1 877 287-4369**
Or e-mail your order: **order@statcan.ca**

To order on the Internet: Visit the Statistics Canada web site at www.statcan.ca and click on "Products and services".
To order by mail, write to: Circulation Management, Statistics Canada, 120 Parkdale Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.
Include a cheque or money order payable to Receiver General of Canada/Publications.
Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centres provide a full range of the Agency's products and services.
For the reference centre nearest you, check the blue pages of your telephone directory under Statistics Canada.
Authorized agents and bookstores also carry Statistics Canada's catalogued publications.
For address changes: Please refer to your customer account number.
Visit Statistics Canada anytime on the Internet: *www.statcan.ca*