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Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, January 23, 1998

OVERVIEW

- **Another gain in construction**

  In November, a rise in the number of new industrial construction projects pushed the value of building permits issued by municipalities up to its highest monthly level in more than seven years.

- **Exchange rate affects industrial prices**

  The exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollars had a noticeable effect on the month-to-month and 12-month changes in industrial prices in November.

- **Manufacturers pay less for raw materials**

  Manufacturers paid significantly less for raw materials in November, mainly due to lower costs for crude oil, wood and non-ferrous metals.

- **Improved sales for new motor vehicle dealers**

  In November, dealers sold the largest number of new motor vehicles in any month since January 1990.

- **Help-wanted ads hit seven-year high**

  The Help-wanted Index advanced again in December, to stand at its highest level in seven years.

- **Rise in new housing prices**

  The New Housing Price index rose in November compared with both October 1997 and November 1996.

- **Canada's Aboriginal population**

  According to the 1996 Census, about 3% of Canada's total population reported that they were North American Indian, Métis or Inuit.

Another gain in construction

Municipalities issued $2.9 billion worth of building permits in November (+8.4%). This was the highest monthly level in more than seven years. Most of the gain was due to the strength of proposed new industrial construction.

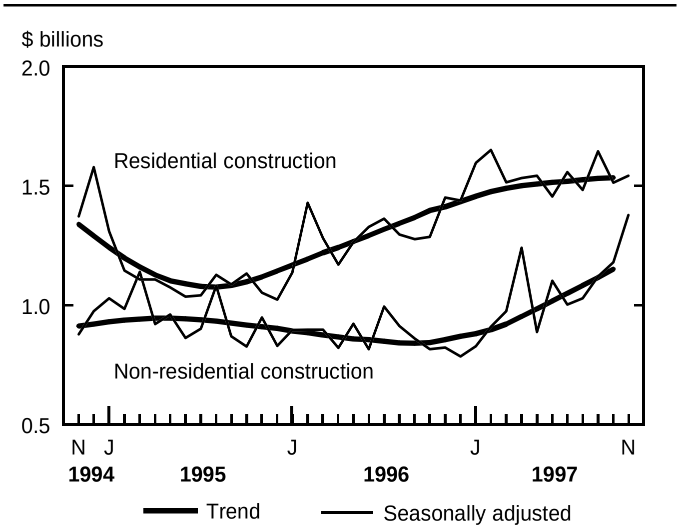
In the housing sector, municipalities issued more than $1.5 billion worth of building permits, up 2.0% from October, as both short- and long-term mortgage rates remained low. Both residential components contributed to the monthly increase: the multi-family component increased 5.1% to $419 million, while the single-family component rose a slight 0.8% to $1.1 billion.

In November, housing intentions rose most in Ontario (+5.3% to $698 million), Quebec (+4.7% to $233 million) and Alberta (+3.6% to $242 million). It was Alberta's fifth consecutive gain. In contrast, significant declines were registered in British Columbia (–5.6% to $257 million) and Nova Scotia (–16.4% to $27 million).

A 16.7% rise brought the value of permits in the non-residential sector (industrial, commercial and institutional) to $1.4 billion. The value of industrial permits jumped 69.2% to $506 million in November. Commercial intentions rose 2.2% to $560 million, while institutional intentions declined 6.5% to $310 million.

(continued on page 2)

Building permits



... Another gain in construction

In Alberta, non-residential permits soared 159.5% to $316 million. Quebec posted its fourth straight monthly gain (+14.3%), reaching a total value of $251 million. The value of non-residential permits fell in British Columbia (–11.0% to $165 million), Ontario (–3.4% to $516 million) and New Brunswick (–23.0% to $12 million).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3–7, 16–22 and 24–32), 129, 137, 443, 989–992, 994, 995 and 4073.

The November 1997 issue of ***Building permits*** *(64-001-XPB, $25/$248) is now available. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; Internet: burejoa@statcan.ca); for analytical information, contact Michel Labonté (613-951-9690; Internet: labomic@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, the data are seasonally adjusted to ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

The monthly Building and Demolitions Survey covers 2,400 municipalities representing 93% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 7% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities excludes the cost of land, and engineering projects such as waterworks, sewers and culverts.

The annual rate is a monthly figure that has been seasonally adjusted and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

Building permits,[1] November 1997
Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	$ millions	% change, previous month	$ millions	% change, previous month	$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	**2,919**	**8.4**	**1,542**	**2.0**	**1,377**	**16.7**
Newfoundland	13	– 8.4	10	– 2.6	3	– 23.0
Prince Edward Island	6	– 8.8	4	32.9	2	– 43.5
Nova Scotia	55	8.3	27	– 16.4	28	52.5
New Brunswick	30	– 20.0	18	– 17.9	12	– 23.0
Quebec	485	9.5	233	4.7	251	14.3
Ontario	1,215	1.4	698	5.3	517	– 3.4
Manitoba	64	– 5.1	27	– 0.5	37	– 8.2
Saskatchewan	60	18.5	21	– 5.5	39	37.2
Alberta	558	57.1	242	3.6	316	159.5
British Columbia	423	– 7.8	257	– 5.6	166	– 11.0
Yukon	7	2.6	3	– 0.9	4	5.7
Northwest Territories	3	9.3	1	428.3	2	– 23.7

1. Data may not add to totals due to rounding.

Exchange rate affects industrial prices

Between October and November, the Industrial Product Price Index rose 0.6%. Compared with November 1996, industrial prices were up 1.4%. Exchange rate movements between the Canadian and U.S. dollars were central to both changes.

In mid-November, the U.S. dollar compared with the Canadian dollar was worth 1.9% more than in mid-October 1997 and 5.6% more than in mid-November 1996. The first movement raised the month-to-month change in Canadian industrial prices from +0.2% (excluding the exchange rate effect) to +0.6%. The second movement increased the 12-month change from +0.3% (excluding the exchange rate effect) to +1.4%.

November's most significant movements included increases in the prices of motor vehicles, newsprint and pulp, and certain organic chemicals, and decreases in many non-ferrous metal products. The rise in value of the U.S. dollar explained most of the

Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers in Canada receive as the goods leave the plant gate. It does not reflect what the consumer pays. Unlike the Consumer Price Index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all the costs that occur between the time when a good leaves the plant and the time when the final user takes possession of it, including the transportation, wholesale, and retail costs.

The impact of changes in the exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollars is most significant for motor vehicles, pulp, paper and wood products, because producers frequently quote export prices for these items in U.S. dollars.

(continued on page 3)

... Exchange rate affects industrial prices

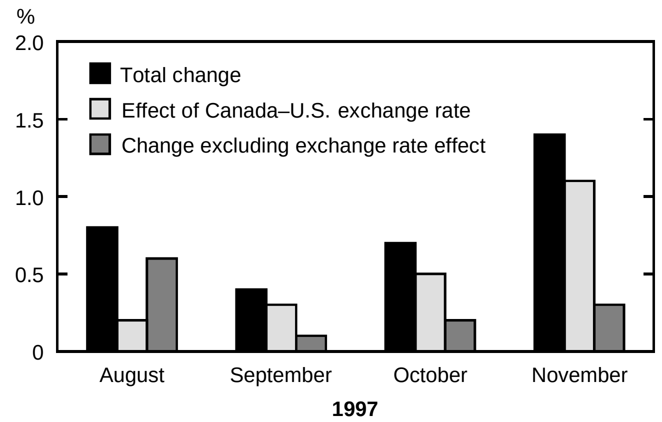
increase in motor vehicle prices. Export prices for both automobiles and trucks rose 1.9%, while domestic prices were unchanged for automobiles and were up only slightly for trucks.

Most of the overall increase in the level of pulp and paper prices was due to the price of exported newsprint, which rose 3.7% while the cost of domestic newsprint remained almost unchanged. The dollar accounted for much of the increase in pulp prices. Higher chemical prices were mostly due to increased costs for organic chemicals, particularly ethylene.

Several non-ferrous metal prices weakened in November: nickel products, refined zinc, and copper and copper alloy products all declined. The price level for gold and gold alloys in primary forms also decreased.

In the United States, industrial production rose 0.8% in November, while manufacturing increased 1.0%. Japan's 12-month change in industrial prices was down to 1.6% in October and 1.5% in November. In Europe, the most recent figures for the 12-month changes in industrial prices slowed down in Germany (+1.2% in October), the United Kingdom (+1.2% in October and +1.0% in November) and France (+0.6% in October). In Italy, the 12-month change remained at +1.6% in October.

Industrial product prices, annual change



Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870–1878.

*The November 1997 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, $22/$217) will be available shortly. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

Manufacturers pay less for raw materials

Manufacturers paid significantly less (–1.6%) for their raw materials in November than they did in October. This overall price decline was mainly due to lower prices for crude oil, wood and non-ferrous metals. Higher prices for animal and vegetable products partly offset the decline. If the mineral fuels category (90% of which is crude oil) were excluded, raw material prices would actually have declined 0.8% between October and November. On a 12-month basis, manufacturers paid 5.1% less for raw materials compared with November 1996.

Crude oil costs fell 3.5% in November and were down 11.8% from the same period a year earlier. Wood prices declined 2.5% in November, mainly due to lower prices for logs. Compared with 12 months earlier, wood prices were down 9.8%. The non-ferrous metals group, which had been on a downward trend for six months, fell a further 2.8% in November. Lower prices were noted for concentrates of copper, zinc and nickel, and gold prices also fell. Higher prices for radioactive concentrates and aluminum materials partly offset this decline. Non-ferrous metal prices changed little from a year earlier.

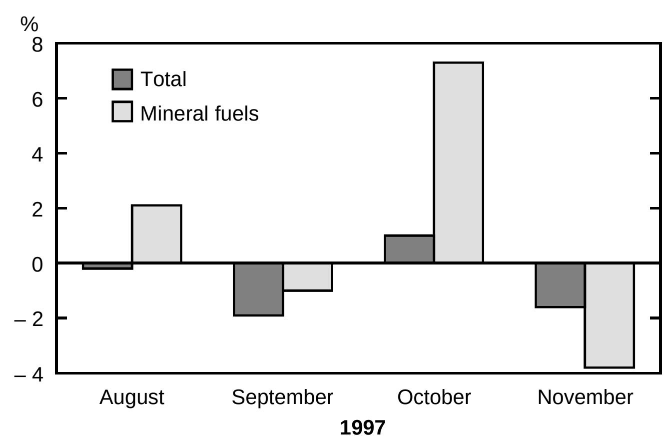
Prices for animals and animal products were up 0.5% in November. Higher prices for cattle for slaughter (+4.7%) were greatly offset by lower hog prices (–3.3%). Vegetable product prices increased 0.4%, mostly due to the higher prices for oilseeds, unrefined sugar and raw tobacco. These advances were somewhat offset by lower prices for corn and coffee.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

Note to readers

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects the prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in a world market. Unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

Raw material prices, monthly change



*The November 1997 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, $22/$217) will be available shortly. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

Improved sales for new motor vehicle dealers

Dealers sold 123,355 new motor vehicles in November, up 3.4% over October. This represents the largest number of new vehicles sold in any month since January 1990. Monthly sales of new passenger cars rose 3.2%, while sales of new trucks increased 3.6%. Compared with November 1996, new motor vehicle sales increased 15.2%. Sales of new cars and trucks rose 4.9% and 27.5%, respectively.

Alberta (+34.0%) and New Brunswick (+30.8%) posted the largest increases in new motor vehicle sales in November compared with the same month in 1996 (unadjusted). Meanwhile, Saskatchewan (+3.4%) and Prince Edward Island (+3.9%) had the lowest increases in year-over-year new motor vehicle sales (unadjusted).

Consumers purchased more new imported motor vehicles (+46.5%) in November than in November 1996 (unadjusted). In comparison, sales for North American built new motor vehicles rose 12.0% in the same period. Consequently, imported vehicles claimed 12.7% of Canadian sales, up from 10.0% in November 1996.

Preliminary estimates from automotive industry sources point to a significant sales increase in December.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

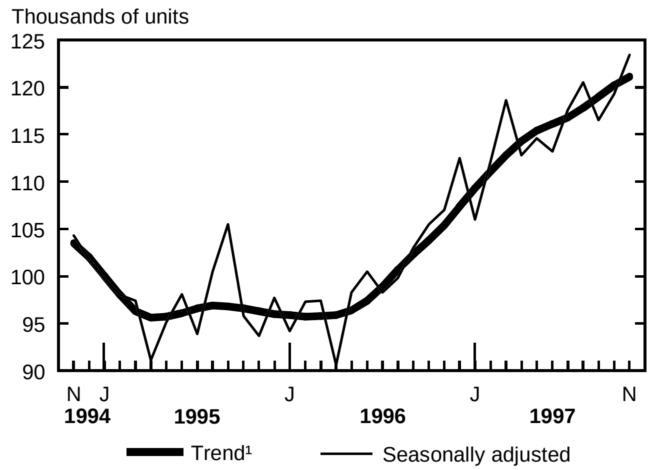
For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel (613-951-2210), Distributive Trades Division.

Note to readers

Passenger cars include those used for personal and commercial purposes (taxis and rental cars, for example). Trucks include minivans, sport utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses. The number of new motor vehicles (passenger cars and trucks) sold is based on seasonally adjusted data.

North American built new motor vehicles include those vehicles manufactured or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico. All other new motor vehicles are considered imports (manufactured overseas). The Big Three (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler), Honda, Toyota and the other automakers may sell new motor vehicles manufactured in North America as well as overseas (imported).

New motor vehicle sales



1. The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

Help-wanted ads hit seven-year high

In December, the Help-wanted Index advanced 2.3%, reaching its highest level in seven years. Since the most recent trough in March 1996, the index has increased by an estimated 35.7%. Seven of the provincial indexes recorded increases in December, led by Quebec (+3.5%) and British Columbia (+3.3%).

Help-wanted Index, December 1997
(1996=100), seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	**133**	**23.1**	**2.3**
Newfoundland	128	17.4	– 0.8
Prince Edward Island	125	8.7	– 4.6
Nova Scotia	132	24.5	0.8
New Brunswick	142	42.0	0.7
Quebec	118	18.0	3.5
Ontario	133	20.9	0.0
Manitoba	146	29.2	2.1
Saskatchewan	142	27.9	2.9
Alberta	155	31.4	0.6
British Columbia	124	13.8	3.3

Note to readers

The Help-wanted Index is compiled from the number of help-wanted advertisements published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas. The index is a measure of the intention of companies to hire new workers. These indices have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons.

For 1997, the index (unadjusted) for Canada rose to 124—its highest level since 1990. All provinces and territories contributed to the increase, although growth was particularly strong in the Prairies. Recent movements in the number of help-wanted advertisements are in line with improvements in other economic indicators.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 105 (levels 8 to 10).

For further information, contact Michael Scrim (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

Rise in new housing prices

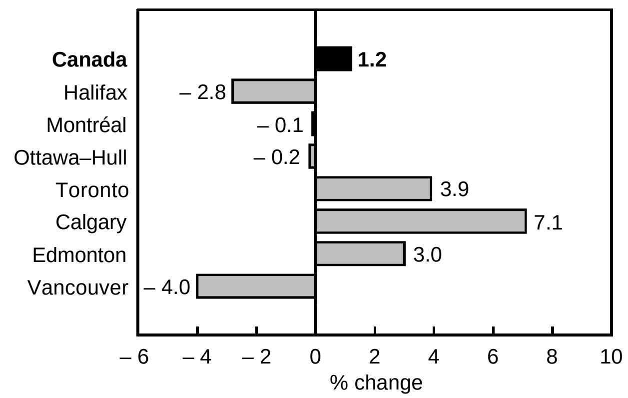
The New Housing Price Index rose 1.2% in November 1997 compared with the same period a year earlier. From October to November 1997, this index of contractors' selling prices for new houses increased 0.4%.

The largest monthly increases were noted in Toronto (+1.1%) and Regina (+1.0%), as some builders passed on increases in construction costs to home buyers in these improving markets. Smaller increases were noted in several other Canadian cities as builders reacted to higher consumer confidence.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2032.

The fourth quarter 1997 issue of ***Construction price statistics*** *(62-007-XPB, $24/$79) will be available in March 1998. For further information, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

New housing price indexes, November 1996 to November 1997



Canada's Aboriginal population

According to the 1996 Census, 799,010 individuals, or about 3% of Canada's total population, identified themselves as members of at least one Aboriginal group. About two-thirds were North American Indian, one-quarter were Métis and 1 in 20 were Inuit. About 6,400 reported that they considered themselves as members of more than one Aboriginal group.

With an average age of 25.5 years in 1996, the Aboriginal population was 10 years younger on average than the general population (35.4 years). Children under 15 accounted for 35% of all Aboriginal people, compared with only 20% of Canada's total population. Young people aged 15 to 24 represented 18% of the Aboriginal population and 13% in the general population. There were relatively fewer Aboriginal people in older age groups; for example, only 4% of the Aboriginal population was aged 65 and over, compared with 12% of the general population.

Aboriginal population,[1] 1996 Census

	North American Indian[2]	Métis[2]	Inuit[2]
Canada	**554,290**	**210,190**	**41,080**
Newfoundland	5,430	4,685	4,265
Prince Edward Island	825	120	15
Nova Scotia	11,340	860	210
New Brunswick	9,180	975	120
Quebec	47,600	16,075	8,300
Ontario	118,830	22,790	1,300
Manitoba	82,990	46,195	360
Saskatchewan	72,205	36,535	190
Alberta	72,645	50,745	795
British Columbia	113,315	26,750	815
Yukon Territory	5,530	565	110
Northwest Territories	11,400	3,895	24,600

1. The population who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group: North American Indian, Métis or Inuit.
2. Single and multiple responses have been combined.

Note to readers

The 1996 Census data cannot be compared with data from the 1991 Census and previous censuses. Prior to 1996, census data on Aboriginal persons were derived from a question that asked about their ethnic origin or ancestry. The 1996 Census included a new question that asked more directly if the person is an Aboriginal person.

Aboriginal population: *refers to those people who reported identifying with at least one Aboriginal group; that is, North American Indian, Métis or Inuit. Also included are all those who reported being a Treaty Indian or a Registered Indian as defined by the Indian Act of Canada, as well as members of an Indian Band or First Nation.*

Census families: *those formed by couples and those headed by a lone parent. Married couples and common-law couples are considered families whether or not they have never-married sons or daughters living with them. Now-married and common-law couples comprise husband-and-wife families.*

Mother tongue: *the first language learned at home in childhood and still understood by the individual at the time of the census.*

Almost one-third of all Aboriginal children under the age of 15 lived in a lone-parent family, twice the rate within the general population. Aboriginal children in census families were much more likely to be in a lone-parent family if they lived in a census metropolitan area. In Winnipeg, Regina and Saskatoon, for example, about half lived with a single parent.

Just over one-quarter of the Aboriginal population (about 207,000 individuals) reported an Aboriginal language as their mother tongue. Cree was the most common mother tongue, followed by Inuktitut and Ojibway. However, the majority of Aboriginal people (68%) reported English as mother tongue, while 6% reported French. Only 15% of the entire Aboriginal population reported speaking an Aboriginal language at home. On the other

(continued on page 6)

... Canada's Aboriginal population

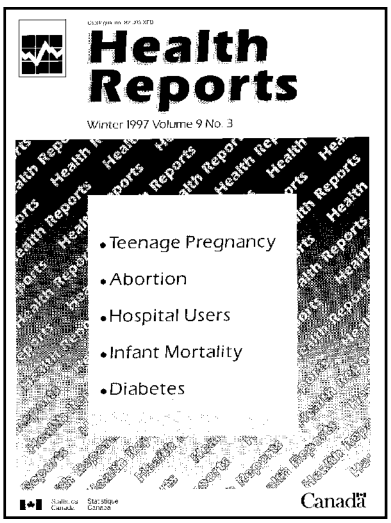
hand, 29% reported that they were able to carry on a conversation in an Aboriginal language. Knowledge of an Aboriginal language was most common among those aged 55 and over, with more than half of this group able to converse in an Aboriginal language.

Although the Atlantic provinces and Quebec accounted for one-third of the total population of Canada, they were home to only 14% of Canada's Aboriginal population in 1996. The highest concentrations of Aboriginal people were in the North and on the Prairies. The Yukon and Northwest Territories were home to 45,865 Aboriginal people, or 6% of the total Aboriginal population. About 63% of all Aboriginal people lived in the four western provinces, compared with 30% of all Canadians.

About 3 of every 10 Aboriginal people lived on rural reserves, and another 3 in 10 lived in census metropolitan areas. One-quarter lived in urban areas other than census metropolitan areas, and one-fifth in rural areas other than reserves, often isolated northern communities. About one-fifth lived in 7 of the country's 25 census metropolitan areas: Winnipeg, Edmonton, Vancouver, Saskatoon, Toronto, Calgary and Regina. Winnipeg had the highest Aboriginal population at almost 46,000, more than the entire Northwest Territories; Edmonton followed, then Vancouver.

For more information on this release, contact Pierre Gauthier (613-951-2599), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Health reports
Winter 1997

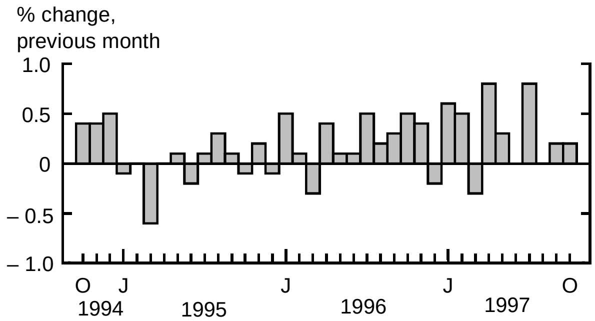
The Winter 1997 issue of *Health reports* features the articles, "Teenage pregnancies, 1974 to 1994", "Marital status and abortion", "Characteristics of hospital users", "Infant mortality and low birthweight, 1975 to 1996" and "The health of Canadians with diabetes".

Health reports provides comprehensive and timely analysis of national and provincial health information and vital statistics derived from surveys or administrative databases. It is designed for a broad audience including health professionals, researchers, policy makers, educators and students.

*The Winter 1997 issue of **Health reports** (82-003-XPB, $35/$116) is now available. For further information, contact Marie Beaudet (613-951-7025; fax: 613-951-0792; Internet: beaumar@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.*

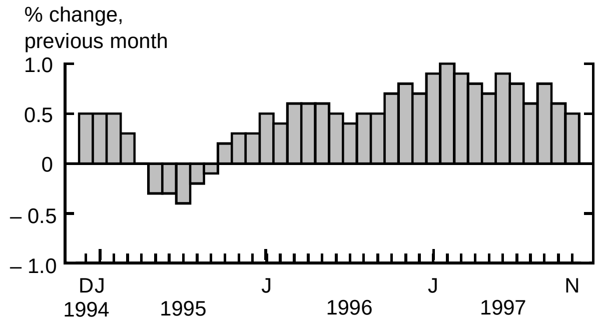
Current trends

Gross domestic product



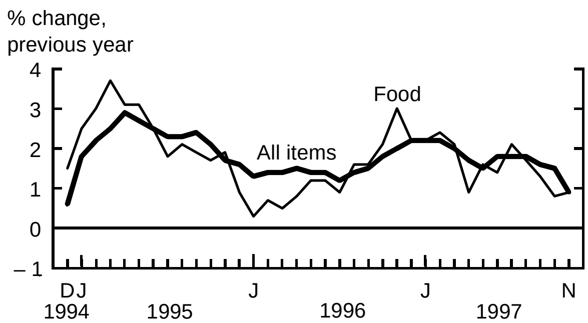
Real gross domestic product at factor cost rose 0.2% in October.

Composite Index



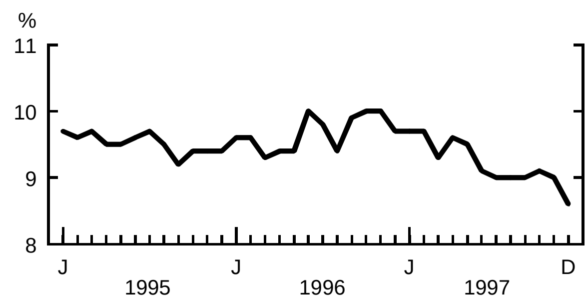
The Composite Index grew by 0.5% in November.

Consumer Price Index



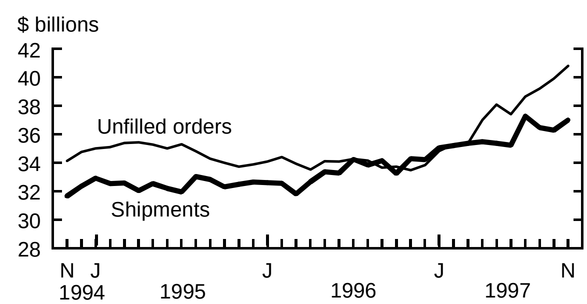
Consumers paid 0.9% more for goods and services in November 1997 than the year before. Food prices also rose by 0.9%.

Unemployment rate



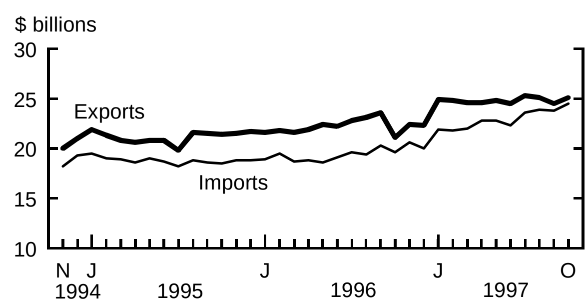
In December, the unemployment rate fell 0.4 percentage points to 8.6%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments advanced by 1.5% in October to $37.0 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 2.1% to $40.8 billion.

Merchandise trade



In October, the value of merchandise exports dipped by 0.6% from September to $25.1 billion. Imports increased 2.7% to $24.5 billion.

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

Latest monthly statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product ($ billion, 1992)	October	700.7	0.2%	4.2%
Composite Index (1981=100)	November	201.7	0.5%	9.9%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q3 1997	27.7	2.7%	11.9%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1997	86.2	1.2†	2.9†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	October	19.8	0.3%	7.4%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	November*	123.4	3.4%	15.2%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	December	14.1	0.4%	2.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	December	8.6	– 0.4†	–1.1†
Participation rate (%)	December	64.8	– 0.1†	0.0†
Labour income ($ billion)	October	37.48	0.2%	3.8%
Average weekly earnings ($)	October	595.81	– 0.2%	0.3%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	October	25.0	– 0.6%	9.7%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	October	24.5	2.7%	19.9%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	October	0.6	– 0.8	– 1.8
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	October	37.0	1.5%	9.6%
New orders ($ billion)	October	37.9	2.1%	11.6%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	October	40.8	2.1%	18.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	October	1.28	– 0.02	– 0.07
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1986=100)	November	136.8	– 0.1%	0.9%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	November*	120.1	0.6%	1.4%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	November*	123.4	– 1.6%	– 5.1%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	November*	133.4	0.4%	1.2 %

***Note:** All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*
* *new this week*
† *percentage point*

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Publications released from January 16 to 22, 1998

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription Canada (C$)	Outside Canada (US$)
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Touriscope: International travel, Advance information, Vol. 13, no. 11		66-001-PPB	8/73	8/73
HEALTH STATISTICS				
Health reports	Winter 1997	82-003-XPB	35/116	35/116
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS				
Gross domestic product by industry	October 1997	15-001-XPB	15/145	15/145
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCKS				
Building permits:				
microfiche version	November 1997	64-001-XMB	25/140	25/140
paper version	November 1997	64-001-XPB	25/248	25/248
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Cement	November 1997	44-001-XPB	7/62	7/62
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	November 1997	46-002-XPB	7/62	7/62
Oil pipeline transport	October 1997	55-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
Oils and fats	November 1997	32-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard	November 1997	36-003-XPB	7/62	7/62
Refined petroleum products	October 1997	45-004-XPB	21/206	21/206
Steel wire and specified wire products	November 1997	41-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index	December 1997	62-001-XPB	11/103	11/103
TRANSPORTATION				
Railway carloadings	November 1997	52-001-XPB	11/103	11/103

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