Catalogue 11-002-XIE (Français 11-002-XIF) ISSN 1209-0867

Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, March 2, 2001

OVERVIEW

- **Trade balance hits record high in 2000**

  Canada registered a record international merchandise trade surplus of $54.5 billion in 2000. Exports to the United States rose at more than twice the pace of imports.

- **2000 was a good year for retailers**

  Retail sales rose 6.3% in 2000, the third strongest advance in the last 10 years. In December, sales grew by 0.9%, led by the food and general merchandise sectors.

- **Wholesale sales almost unchanged**

  Wholesalers saw their sales remain virtually flat in December, but their inventories continued to expand. As a result, the inventory-to-sales ratio rose, reaching a level not seen since March 1999.

- **Foreign direct investment was substantial in December**

  The acquisition of a major Canadian company by a foreign investor resulted in unusually large securities transactions in December. The capital transactions associated with this acquisition are fully offsetting.

- **Training receives boost from implementation of computer technology**

  Nearly one-quarter of all workplaces, accounting for more than one-third of paid employees, made a significant investment in new computer technology in 1999. These investments led to a burst of computer-related training rather than higher employee layoff rates or slower employment growth.

- **Spending on plant and equipment slows**

  In 2001, private and public investment, including housing, is expected to increase by 1.7%. Investment in plant and equipment is expected to stabilize, owing in part to the completion of large capital projects.

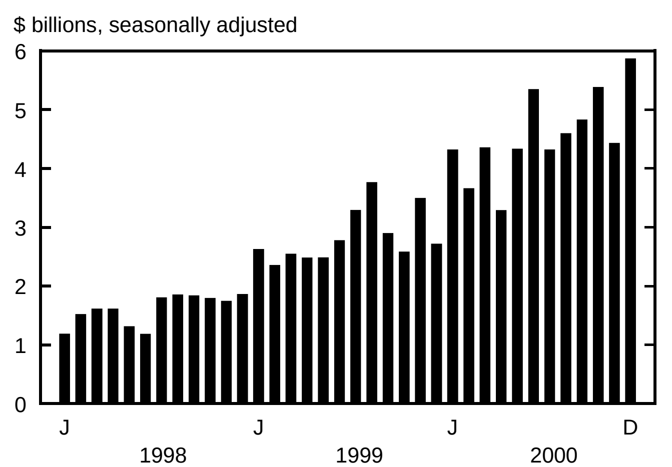
Trade balance hits record high in 2000

Canada registered a record international trade surplus of $54.5 billion in 2000. This surplus is far higher than the previous record of $42.4 billion set in 1996. The trade surplus with the United States alone was $92.1 billion, compared with $60.1 billion in 1999. The deficit with countries other than the United States was $37.6 billion.

Canadian companies exported a total of $417.7 billion worth of goods to the world in 2000, up 15.8% from 1999. At the same time, their imports rose 11.1% to $363.2 billion. About 86% of exports flowed to the United States, while 74% of imports came from the United States. Exports to the United States rose 16.2%, while imports from there were up just 7.3%.

Exports of energy products soared 76.8% in 2000 to more than $52.5 billion. Shipments of crude oil and natural gas, all to the United States, accounted for nearly three-quarters of this increase, and electricity the remainder. Exports of machinery and equipment reached a record $105.6 billion, up 22.8%, led by high tech and

Merchandise trade balance



(continued on page 2)

... Trade balance hits record high in 2000

telecommunications equipment. On the other hand, exports of automotive products remained essentially flat at $96.3 billion.

As to imports, the largest increase in 2000 was for energy products (+65.8%), which reached $17.8 billion. Imports of machinery and equipment rose 13.5%. Imports of automotive products were up just 2.0% from 1999.

On a monthly basis, Canada closed out the year in December with a record trade surplus of $5.8 billion. Exports rose 3.7% to $36.8 billion, while imports declined 0.4% to $31.0 billion.

Exports of energy products reached a record $6.4 billion in December, up 40.7% from November, owing to record exports of natural gas and electricity. Exports of machinery and equipment reached a record $9.7 billion, up 8.2%, stimulated by exports of telecommunications equipment—particularly optical fibre components—along with record exports of office machines and equipment. Exports of complete aircraft, aircraft engines and parts rose 20.4%. In contrast, automobile exports fell 12.0% as production slowed.

Imports of automotive products rose 1.4% in December, on the strength of an increase in incoming shipments of passenger cars and chassis as well as trucks. On the other hand, imports of motor vehicle parts declined for the fourth month in a row. Production of passenger cars and trucks slowed during the last quarter of 2000, reducing the demand for imported parts. Imports of office machines and equipment were up 4.8%, as demand for portable computers and computer parts remained strong.

Imports of industrial goods and material declined 3.3% in December. Imports of metal ores such as copper and zinc declined 29.3%. Imports of steel bars, rods and plate fell 11.5%. After reaching a record high in November, imports of chemical and plastic products declined 5.2%, primarily because of lower imports of organic chemicals.

Merchandise trade, 2000
Seasonally adjusted

	$ millions	% change, previous year
Total exports	**417,657**	**15.8**
Agricultural and fishing products	27,575	7.8
Energy products	52,539	76.8
Forestry products	41,379	5.8
Industrial goods and materials	64,611	12.5
Machinery and equipment	105,573	22.8
Automotive products	96,298	0.8
Other consumer goods	14,668	8.9
Special transactions trade[1]	7,979	8.6
Other balance of payments adjustments	7,032	8.6
Total imports	**363,162**	**11.1**
Agricultural and fishing products	18,568	5.2
Energy products	17,753	65.8
Forestry products	3,064	11.8
Industrial goods and materials	70,460	13.4
Machinery and equipment	122,740	13.5
Automotive products	77,406	2.0
Other consumer goods	40,079	8.5
Special transactions trade[1]	6,500	2.8
Other balance of payments adjustments	6,593	5.8

1 *These are mainly low-valued transactions, repairs to equipment, and goods returned to country of origin.*

The December 2000 issue of ***Canadian international merchandise trade*** *(Internet: 65-001-XIB, $14/$141; paper: 65-001-XPB, $19/$188) includes tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. Current account data are available quarterly in* ***Canada's balance of international payments*** *(Internet: 67-001-XIB, $29/$93; paper: 67-001-XPB, $38/$124). For more information, contact Jocelyne Elibani (1 800 294-5583; 613-951-9647), International Trade Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

2000 was a good year for retailers

Retail sales increased 0.9% in December to $23.7 billion. This follows four months of essentially flat retail sales. Food stores and general merchandisers benefited from increased spending by consumers getting ready for the holidays.

In food stores, more than half of the 2.5% increase in sales can be explained by higher prices. The sales of general merchandisers (+2.4%) were boosted by department store openings. The automotive sector posted the only other significant sales gain (+0.4%), led by increases in automotive parts, accessories and services stores.

Retail sales rose 6.3% in 2000, the third strongest advance in the last 10 years. Over the decade, only 1997 (+7.7%) and 1994 (+7.0%) exceeded the growth reported last year.

All retail sectors posted sales increases in 2000. For the third consecutive year, the furniture sector posted the strongest gain (+10.7%), owing to credit incentives and a healthy housing market. The automotive sector recorded its strongest sales gain in the last three years (+8.7%), with sales by gasoline service stations leading the way.

Note to readers

In order to present provincial analysis by sector, all annual comparisons use the sum of unadjusted monthly estimates. As usual, the rest of the analysis is based on seasonally adjusted estimates.

Retail sales by sector

	1999	2000	1999 to 2000
	$ millions		% change
Total, all stores	**260,691**	**277,151**	**6.3**
Furniture	13,654	15,122	10.7
Automotive	102,315	111,176	8.7
Clothing	14,334	15,116	5.5
Other	28,174	29,594	5.0
General merchandise	29,990	31,306	4.4
Food	58,889	61,217	4.0
Drug	13,335	13,620	2.1

(continued on page 3)

... 2000 was a good year for retailers

The remaining retail trade sectors posted less robust increases. Retailers in the clothing sector reported their strongest sales increases in the last six years (+5.5%). Despite a strong holiday season, retailers in the general merchandise sector saw a relatively modest sales gain (+4.4%), partly because of the loss of a major department store in the fall of 1999. Sales by food stores were up 4.0%, almost twice the 2.1% gain seen in 1999. Sales advances in drug stores were lower in 2000 (+2.1%) than in 1999 (+3.0%).

Among the provinces, Alberta led the way in 2000, posting an 8.9% increase in its retail sales. This was its second strongest annual gain in the last 10 years. All sectors, except for drug stores, showed gains of at least 6%. In Ontario, consumers increased their spending in retail stores by 7.2%. This rate was similar to those in the previous three years.

Sales were also above the national average in Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. In those two territories, part of the strength in retail sales could be explained by a strong local economy and sizable population growth.

In British Columbia, strong sales in the automotive sector pushed up total retail sales by 6.2%. This was the strongest sales gain since 1995 in that province. In Quebec, sales rose 4.6%. Sales in furniture stores advanced at about the same rate as elsewhere in Canada, but sales increases in the automotive sector were lower than in most other provinces.

Retail sales by province and territory

	1999	2000	1999 to 2000
	$ millions		% change
Canada	**260,691**	**277,151**	**6.3**
Newfoundland	4,223	4,495	6.4
Prince Edward Island	1,157	1,238	7.1
Nova Scotia	8,160	8,506	4.3
New Brunswick	6,608	6,910	4.6
Quebec	60,766	63,574	4.6
Ontario	99,150	106,312	7.2
Manitoba	9,023	9,404	4.2
Saskatchewan	7,735	8,110	4.9
Alberta	29,324	31,923	8.9
British Columbia	33,672	35,755	6.2
Yukon	329	344	4.4
Northwest Territories	371	396	6.8
Nunavut	174	185	6.4

The December 2000 issue of ***Retail trade*** *(Internet: 63-005-XIB, $16/$155; paper: 63-005-XPB, $21/$206) is now available. To order data or for general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; gratpau@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

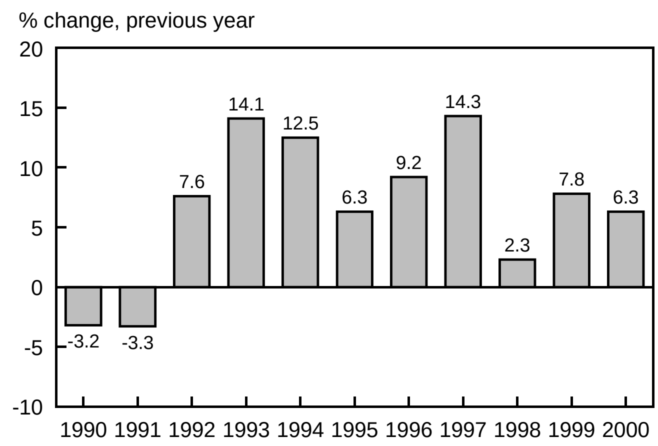
Wholesale sales almost unchanged

Wholesalers saw their sales remain virtually flat at $31.7 billion (-0.1%) in December. Sales in the computer sector bounced back on strong Christmas sales and large orders from institutional clients. During this period, sales were also up sharply for wholesalers of food products as well as beverage, drug and tobacco products.

In contrast, sales declined substantially in the wholesaling of apparel and dry goods, lumber and building materials, farm machinery, equipment and supplies, and industrial machinery, equipment and supplies. Household goods and motor vehicles, parts and accessories also declined. Wholesalers in these sectors reported problems in December, stemming from a lack of orders and a higher number of returns on merchandise, as well as the influence of bad weather in parts of Canada.

While overall wholesale sales were down marginally in December, the value of inventories held by wholesalers continued to climb, rising 0.6% to $43.7 billion. As a result, the inventory-to-sales ratio rose from 1.37 in November to 1.38 in December, reaching a level not seen since March 1999. However, despite weakening sales, wholesalers appear to be moving their inventories more quickly than in 1998. That year, wholesale sales declined and there were several months when the inventory-to-sales ratio ranged between 1.42 and 1.45.

Wholesale sales



For the year 2000 as a whole, wholesalers made $380.3 billion worth of sales, up 6.3% from 1999. However, the growth in sales was less than the 7.8% recorded in 1999. Wholesale sales have been weakening since late 2000. The weakness in sales was broadly based in 2000, with slower sales growth reported by four of the 11 trade groups—especially motor vehicles, parts and accessories and lumber and building materials—and falling sales reported by three sectors.

(continued on page 4)

... Wholesale sales almost unchanged

In 2000, wholesalers in all provinces saw higher sales than in 1999. However, only three provinces improved their growth rate. Alberta wholesalers saw sales rise 12.7%, largely because of the resurgence of the petroleum industry. In Saskatchewan, sales rose by 9.7%, as wholesalers were able to take advantage of improved sales of industrial and agricultural chemicals. And Prince Edward Island wholesalers built on their 3.4% rise in 1999, posting a 6.3% increase in 2000.

The December 2000 issue of ***Wholesale trade*** *(Internet: 63-008-XIB, $14/$140) is now available. For data or general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067; 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; haysale@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

Annual variation in wholesale sales, by trade group

	1998 to 1999	1999 to 2000
	% change	
All trade groups	**7.8**	**6.3**
Food products	7.7	5.8
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	4.2	9.3
Apparel and dry goods	1.6	-1.7
Household goods	2.9	5.4
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	14.2	5.8
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	6.4	4.4
Lumber and building materials	13.0	1.1
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	-13.7	-2.8
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	7.3	12.2
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	13.9	-0.9
Other products	1.8	11.8

Foreign direct investment was substantial in December

The acquisition of a major Canadian company by a foreign investor resulted in unusually large securities transactions in December. On the one hand, Canadian investors received large amounts in the form of foreign shares in exchange for their holdings in the acquired company. On the other hand, foreign portfolio holdings in the same company were purchased by the foreign direct investor. The capital transactions associated with this acquisition are fully offsetting in the balance of payments.

The results of these and other portfolio transactions in December were that foreign holdings of Canadian securities were reduced by $21.6 billion and Canadian holdings of foreign securities were increased by $16.1 billion.

Canada's international transactions in securities

	December 2000	1999	2000
	$ millions		
Foreign investment in Canadian securities	**-21,621**	**5,290**	**18,846**
Bonds (net)	-4,279	4,643	-17,481
Outstanding	1,977	7,789	3,851
New issues	204	31,925	20,069
Retirements	-5,364	-35,151	-41,508
Change in interest payable[1]	-1,095	80	107
Money market paper (net)	1,487	-13,415	1,118
Government of Canada	830	-6,485	-1,134
Other paper	658	-6,931	2,252
Stocks (net)	-18,829	14,063	35,209
Outstanding (including retirements)	-19,445	6,036	-6,425
New issues	616	8,027	41,634
Canadian investment in foreign securities	**-16,059**	**-22,898**	**-62,857**
Bonds (net)	99	-2,362	-4,002
Stocks (net)	-16,158	-20,536	-58,855

1 *Interest accrued less interest paid.*
Note: *A minus sign indicates an outflow of money from Canada, i.e. a withdrawal of foreign investment from Canada or an increase in Canadian investment abroad.*

Related market information

In December, the differential in short-term interest rates declined to its lowest level since May 2000. It amounted to only 17 basis points, continuing to favour investment in the United States. The differential for long-term interest rates was 10 basis points, favouring investment in Canada for the first time since November 1999.

After declining by a total of 21.6% from September to November, Canadian stock prices as measured by the TSE 300 Composite Index rebounded somewhat in December with a gain of 1.3%. U.S. stock prices as measured by the Standard & Poor's 500 Index registered a small gain in December, halting a slide of 13.4% over the previous three months.

The Canadian dollar closed higher against the U.S. dollar in December, for only the third time in the year 2000. The 1.5-cent gain left the Canadian dollar down just over 2.5 cents from the 1999 year-end.

In December, foreign investors reduced their holdings of Canadian equities by $18.8 billion. This divestment focussed on the acquisition of a major Canadian company, whose foreign portfolio shareholdings were bought by a foreign direct investor. Aside from this, foreign investors returned to the secondary market, purchasing existing shares for the first time since September. In 2000, foreign investors acquired a record $35.2 billion of Canadian equities. Share exchanges associated with direct investment acquisitions accounted for less than 10% of the net increase in foreign holdings of Canadian shares.

Foreign holdings of Canadian bonds declined by $4.4 billion in December, the tenth monthly drop in 2000. For the year as a whole, retirements of bonds totalled $41.5 billion. This amount is more than double the $20.1 billion of new Canadian bonds sold in

(continued on page 5)

... Foreign direct investment was substantial in December

foreign markets for the year. Over the year, foreigners invested $3.9 billion in existing Canadian bonds in the secondary market, about half the amount for 1999. Total foreign holdings of Canadian bonds declined by $17.5 billion in 2000. This decline, the first in over four decades, was widespread geographically.

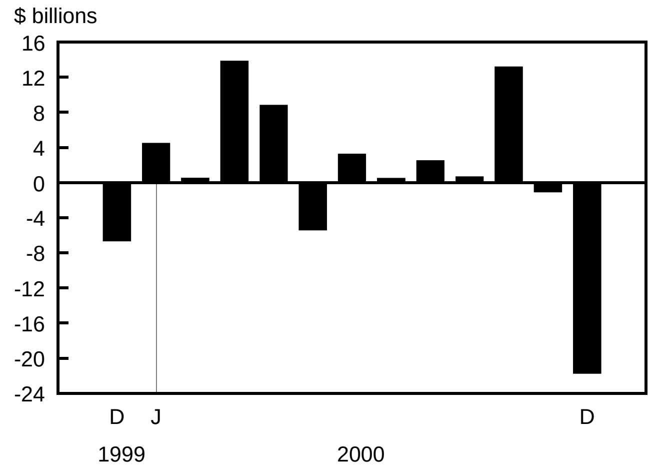
Foreign holdings of Canadian money market paper rose by $1.5 billion, continuing the seesaw pattern of foreign investment in Canadian money market paper throughout 2000. This resulted in a small foreign investment of $1.1 billion for the year, contrasting with a $13.4 billion divestment in 1999.

Canadians increased their holdings of foreign stocks by a massive $16.2 billion in December; the lion's share resulted from the receipt of foreign shares in exchange for those of a major Canadian company as part of a foreign direct investment takeover. In 2000, Canadians increased their holdings of foreign stocks by $58.9 billion. Higher foreign content limits for tax-sheltered Canadian investment funds contributed to the strong demand for foreign stocks.

While there was virtually no change in December, Canadian holdings of foreign bonds increased by $4.0 billion in 2000 as a whole, with 90% going to U.S. bonds. The investment in 2000 is roughly on par with the annual average since 1996.

The December 2000 issue of ***Canada's international transactions in securities*** *(Internet: 67-002-XIB, $14/$132; paper: 67-002-XPB, $18/$176) will be available soon. For more information, contact Donald Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments and Financial Flows Division.*

Foreign investment in Canadian securities[1]



[1] *Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.*

Training receives boost from implementation of computer technology

In 1999, approximately 24% of all establishments, accounting for 37% of paid employees, implemented a major new software application or hardware installation. These investments in computer technology led to a burst of computer-related training, and not to higher employee layoff rates or slower employment growth, at least during the year the technology was adopted.

The association between training and adopting computer technology is obvious. Workplaces that adopted computer technology provided more computer-related training than did other establishments. Fifty-one percent of workplaces that adopted computer technology provided formal or informal computer-related training in 1999, compared with only 18% of workplaces that did not adopt such technology.

However, since the intensity of the training efforts of employers can vary considerably, it is important to look at the proportion of employees who received training. Twenty-three percent of employees of hardware/software adopters received computer-related training, compared with only 14% of employees of other establishments. Possibly, computer technology adopters had high training rates simply because they had more computer users.

Despite the strong relationship between hardware or software purchases and computer-related training, computer technology implementation does not seem to have spillover effects into other forms of training. Employees in workplaces that invest in computer technology are no more likely to receive other types of formal or informal training than are their counterparts in other establishments.

Note to readers

Data in this article are drawn from the Workplace and Employee Survey, a new longitudinal survey of 6,300 workplaces and 24,600 of their employees. The survey covers technology adoption, innovation, human resource practices, labour turnover and business strategies of employers, as well as wages, training, technology use, working hours and other workplace activities of employees.

This article focusses on computer technology adopters, that is, workplaces that implemented a major new software application or hardware installation between April 1, 1998 and March 31, 1999. The data exclude hardware or software upgrades.

Employees' computer-related learning activities go beyond the formal and informal training provided by their employers. In fact, when asked how they acquired their job-specific computing skills, 45% of employees said they taught themselves. About the same proportion, 44%, stated that they received on-the-job training provided by co-workers, supervisors or resource people. These patterns applied equally to employees of computer technology adopters and those of non-adopters.

While some speculate that the adoption of computer technologies may result in job losses or gains, the survey revealed that jobs are generally no less secure in establishments adopting computer technology than they are in other establishments. In fact, permanent layoff rates tended to be somewhat lower among computer technology implementers (3.4%) than among other establishments (5.1%). Furthermore, layoff rates did not increase

(continued on page 6)

... Training receives boost from implementation of computer technology

with the size of the investment in computer technologies.

The story was much the same for employment growth. Computer technology implementers had a rate of growth (4.4%) similar to that of non-implementers (4.1%). Also, the impact on employment was minimal.

However, averages can be somewhat misleading. Overall, there was more employment volatility among establishments adopting technologies. It is important to note that these results pertain to a single year. The impact of computer implementations on employment may accumulate over time. As well, the most significant employment effects may have occurred when establishments were first adopting the technologies.

For more information on this article, contact Ted Wannell (613-951-3546), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division. For more information on the Workplace and Employee Survey, contact Howard Krebs (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

Spending on plant and equipment slows

Private and public investment, including housing, is expected to increase by 1.7% in 2001, bringing total capital investment to $183.1 billion. By comparison, investment rose 5.0% in 2000.

Investment in plant and equipment is expected to be $138.0 billion, a slight rise of 0.6% from 2000. This levelling off is partly due to the completion of large capital projects over the last few years. After seven consecutive annual increases and high capacity utilization rates, spending appears to be slowing. In particular, investment in machinery and equipment is expected to decline 2.5% to $70.3 billion in 2001, while non-residential construction is expected to rise 4.0% to $67.7 billion.

An increase of $1.7 billion (+8.3%) is expected in the oil and gas extraction industries' spending on plant and equipment. In those industries, strong prices and robust drilling activity persist. This increase will result in spending totalling $21.7 billion.

The winding down of several pipeline projects across the country is expected to result in a 62.1% drop in investment in the pipeline industry in 2001, which will be just over $0.8 billion. At the same time, spending by the support activities for transportation industry, largely on airports, will rise 37.5% to $2.8 billion.

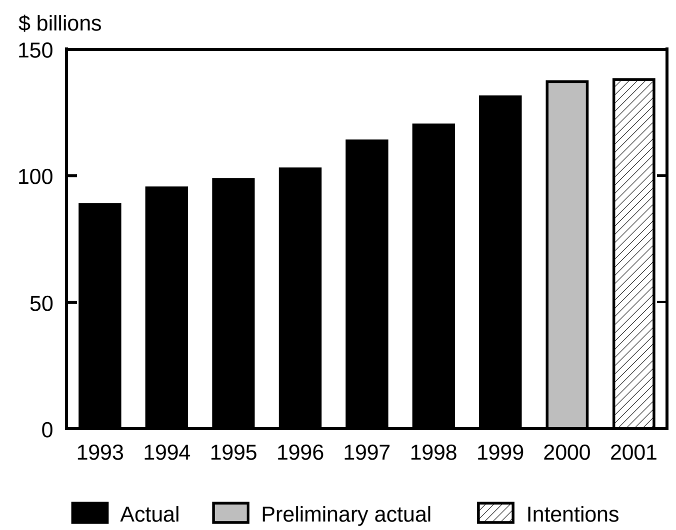
Spending on equipment (such as computers), broadcasting, telecommunications and other information and communications technologies is expected to claim a large proportion of the investment in machinery and equipment in 2001. Respondents to the survey reported that 32% of their spending in 2001 would be devoted to high tech equipment, up from 30% in 2000.

In the manufacturing sector, spending on plant and equipment is expected to show its first significant decline since 1992. Large plant completions do not appear to be accompanied by further planned spending. Declines are expected in 12 of 20 manufacturing industries. In particular, the decline in spending will affect the primary metals industry as well as the wood products industry, where a number of mills are coming into service. The largest spending increase is expected from the computer and electronic products industry.

Note to readers

The Survey of Investment Intentions is based on a sample of 27,000 businesses, governments and institutions. The survey, conducted from October 2000 to the end of January 2001, had a 77% response rate, which represents 82% of the designed sample weight. Data in this article are converted to the calendar year and in current dollars.

Plant and equipment spending



In residential construction, investment is expected to increase for the sixth year in a row and should reach $45.0 billion, up 5.4% from 2000. Renovation is expected to increase 6.0% to $19.7 billion, the highest level ever. New housing construction should rise 4.6%. The largest gain is expected in Ontario, followed by Quebec and Manitoba.

The publication ***Private and public investment in Canada, intentions 2001*** *(Internet: 61-205-XIB, $35) is now available. For more information, contact Gilbert Paquette (1 800 571-0494; 613-951-9818; gilbert@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

New from Statistics Canada

Canadian economic observer
February 2001

The February issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in January and presents a feature article—an updated look at the computer services industry.

A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and major industrial nations.

The February 2001 issue of ***Canadian economic observer*** *(paper: 11-010-XPB, $23/$227) is now available. For more information, contact Cindy Bloskie (613-951-3634; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.*

Housing conditions in predominantly rural regions
1996

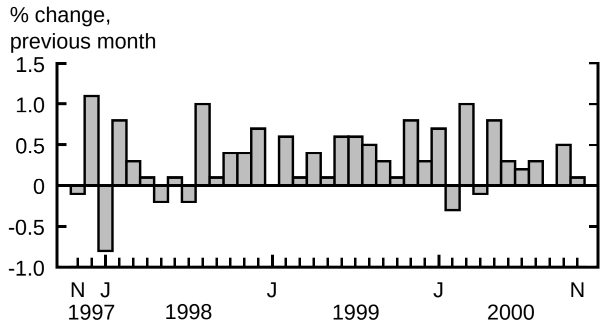
The analysis bulletin, *Housing conditions in predominantly rural regions*, the 12th in a series examining trends in rural Canada, presents a profile of housing conditions in predominantly rural regions using data from the 1996 Census of Population. It is published in collaboration with the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

This bulletin has special relevance to researchers, academics and municipal planners. It compares the proportion of housing in predominantly rural regions that falls below standards of size, condition and affordability set by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) with the proportion in predominantly urban regions. For example, in 1996, 31% of households in predominantly rural regions of the country failed to meet CMHC standards, compared with about 39% of households in predominantly urban regions.

The bulletin ***Housing conditions in predominantly rural regions*** *(Internet: 21-006-XIE, free) is available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). On the Products and Services page, choose Free publications, then Agriculture. For more information, call 1-800-465-1991, or contact Ray Bollman (613-951-3747; fax: 613-951-3868; ray.bollman@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division.*

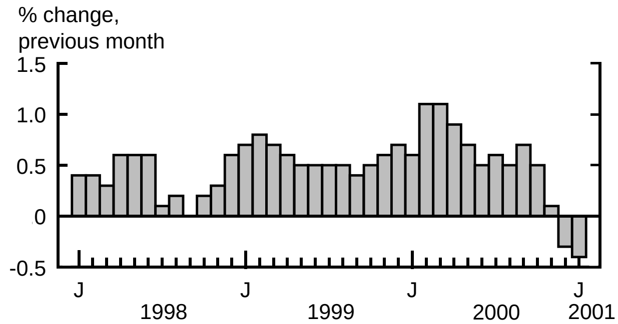
Current trends

Gross domestic product



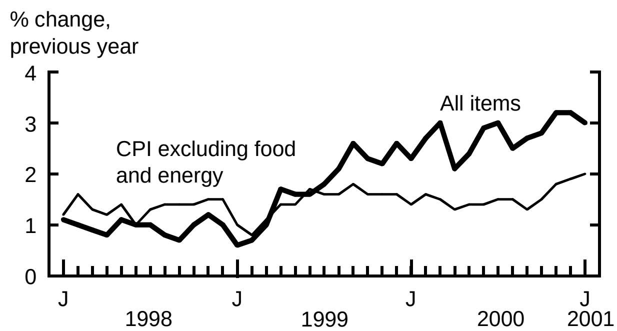
November's gross domestic product was little changed, edging up 0.1% from October, due to slower North American demand for automotive products.

Composite Index



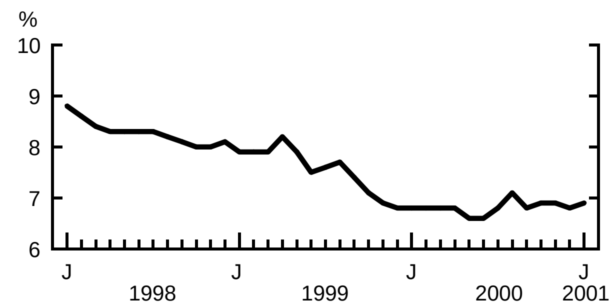
The leading indicator posted a 0.4% drop in January after a 0.3% dip in December, consistent with a slowing economy.

Consumer Price Index



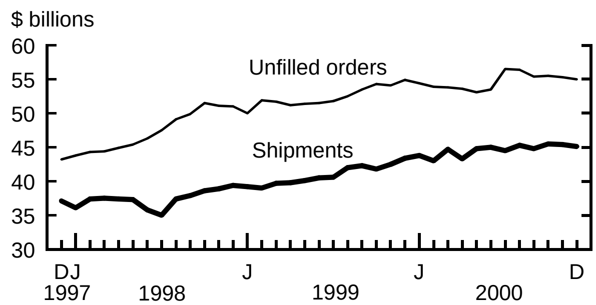
Consumer prices for goods and services were 3.0% higher in January 2001 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 2.0%.

Unemployment rate



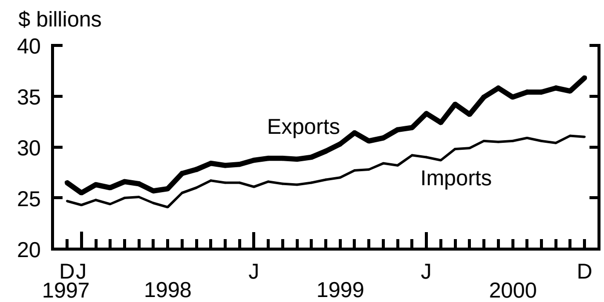
In January, the unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage points to 6.9%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments slipped 0.8% in December to $45.1 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders edged down 0.6% to $55.0 billion.

Merchandise trade



In December, the value of merchandise exports rose 3.7% to $36.8 billion. Imports declined a marginal 0.4% to $31.0 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 ($ billions, 1992)	December*	796.2	0.2%	3.3%
Composite Index (1992=100)	January	166.3	-0.4%	6.1%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billions)	Q4 2000*	54.0	2.2%	13.9%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 2000	86.9	-0.1†	1.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	December	23.7	0.9%	5.1%
Department store sales ($ billions)	December	1.57	3.3%	9.8%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	December	131.2	2.5%	-8.9%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	December	31.7	-0.1%	1.7%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	January	15.07	0.0%	1.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	January	6.9	0.1†	0.1†
Participation rate (%)	January	66.1	-0.1†	0.4†
Average weekly earnings ($)	December*	631.87	0.0%	2.4%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	January	177	-2.2%	4.7%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billions)	December	36.8	3.7%	15.7%
Merchandise imports ($ billions)	December	31.0	-0.4%	6.3%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billions)	December	5.8	1.4	3.2
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billions)	December	45.1	-0.8%	4.0%
New orders ($ billions)	December	44.7	-1.2%	1.1%
Unfilled orders ($ billions)	December	55.0	-0.6%	0.0%
Inventory/shipments ratio	December	1.35	-0.01	0.07
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	January	114.7	-0.3%	3.0%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	January*	128.6	-0.2%	3.1%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	January*	144.0	0.7%	6.4%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	December	104.4	0.1%	2.4%

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

Infomat
A weekly review

Editor: Caroline Olivier (613) 951-1189; olivcar@statcan.ca
Head of Official Release: Madeleine Simard (613) 951-1088; simamad@statcan.ca

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

Price per issue: paper, $4; online at www.statcan.ca, $3. Annual subscription: paper, $145; online, $109. All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude applicable sales taxes. Shipping charges will be added for delivery outside Canada.

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 phone call (613) 951-7277, or 1 800 700-1033 both in Canada and outside Canada, or send an e-mail to order@statcan.ca.

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.

Products released from February 22 to 28, 2001

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price ($) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Fruit and vegetable production	February 2001	22-003-XI	23/46
Housing conditions in predominantly rural regions	1996	21-006-XIE	no charge
Stocks of frozen products	February 2001	23-009-XIE	no charge
The dairy review	Q4 2000	23-001-XIB	27/89
The dairy review	Q4 2000	23-001-XPB	36/119
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS			
Canadian economic observer	February 2001	11-010-XPB	23/227
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES			
Retail trade	December 2000	63-005-XIB	16/155
Wholesale trade	December 2000	63-008-XIB	14/140
ENVIRONMENT ACCOUNTS AND STATISTICS			
A geographical profile of manure production	1996	16F0025XIB	no charge
Econnections: Linking the environment and the economy — Indicators and detailed statistics	2000	16-200-XKE	80
HEALTH STATISTICS			
Health reports, Volume 12, no. 2		82-003-XIE	15/44
Health reports, Volume 12, no. 2		82-003-XPE	20/58
The postal code conversion file plus		82F0086XDB	no charge
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS			
Estimates of labour income	December 2000	13F0016DDB	250/1,000
Estimates of labour income, Tables and analytical document	December 2000	13F0016XPB	20/200
Financial flow accounts	Q4 2000	13-014-DDB	300/1,200
Financial flow accounts, Tables and analytical document	Q4 2000	13-014-PPB	50/180
Income and expenditure accounts	Q4 2000	13-001-DD	125/500
Income and expenditure accounts, Tables and analytical document	Q4 2000	13-001-PPB	50/180
INTERNATIONAL TRADE			
Canadian international merchandise trade	December 2000	65-001-XIB	14/141
Canadian international merchandise trade	December 2000	65-001-XPB	19/188
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK			
Private and public investment in Canada	Intentions 2001	61-205-XIB	35
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY			
Asphalt roofing	January 2001	45-001-XIB	5/47
Construction type plywood	December 2000	35-001-XIB	5/47
Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation	January 2001	44-004-XIB	5/47
Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	December 2000	31-001-XIB	15/147
Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	December 2000	31-001-XPB	20/196
Natural gas transportation and distribution	November 2000	55-002-XIB	13/125
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	December 2000	25-001-XIB	6/55
Refined petroleum products	October 2000	45-004-XIB	16/155
Refined petroleum products	October 2000	45-004-XPB	21/206
Steel wire and specified wire products	December 2000	41-006-XIB	5/47
METHODOLOGY			
Survey methodology, Vol. 26, no. 2	December 2000	12-001-XPB	47
TRANSPORTATION			
Aviation service bulletin, Vol. 33, no. 1		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, while -XCB denotes a compact disc.
Note: All products are priced in Canadian dollars and exclude applicable sales taxes. Shipping charges will be added for delivery outside Canada.

Calendar of key releases: March 2001

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1	2
5	6	7 **Building permits**, January 2001 **Help-wanted Index**, February 2001	8	9 **Labour Force Survey**, February 2001 **Industrial capacity utilization rates**, Q4 2000
12 **New Housing Price Index**, January 2001	13 **Population projections***, 2000 to 2026	14 **New motor vehicle sales**, January 2001	15 **Survey on financial security***, 1999	16 **Travel between Canada and other countries**, January 2001
19	20 **Canadian international merchandise trade**, January 2001 **Wholesale trade**, January 2001	21 **Consumer Price Index**, February 2001 **Retail trade**, January 2001	22 **Composite Index**, February 2001 **Canada's international transactions in securities**, January 2001 **Employment Insurance**, January 2001	23 **Monthly Survey of Manufacturing**, January 2001
26 **Access to and use of information and communications technology***, 2000	27 **National Balance Sheet Accounts***, 2000 **Canada's international investment position***, 2000	28 **National tourism indicators***, Q4 2000	29 **Industrial Product Price and Raw Materials Price Indexes**, February 2001 **Employment, earnings and hours**, January 2001 **Labour productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost**, Q4 2000	30 **Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry**, January 2001

Note: *Except for the releases marked with an asterisk, all the release dates in this calendar are fixed. A more detailed calendar of fixed release dates for the entire year is available from Statistics Canada's Web site at www.statcan.ca.*

How to order products and services

To order Infomat or other products:

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 at *www.statcan.ca.* Click on "Products and services" to access the CANSIM database. Or consult the tables in "Canadian statistics".