



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, April 6, 2001

OVERVIEW

◆ **Economic activity increases at same pace as in December**

Gross domestic product rose 0.3% in January. Strength in wholesale and retail trade and construction as well as increased activity in the oilpatch were partly offset by continued weakness in the manufacturing sector and lower demand for energy.

◆ **Growth of industrial product and raw material prices continues to weaken**

The annual rate of growth for the Industrial Product Price Index slowed for the third consecutive month, reaching 2.6% in February. For the Raw Materials Price Index, the rate was 4.7%, down for the fourth consecutive month.

◆ **Labour productivity growth slows in last two quarters of 2000**

Labour productivity growth in the Canadian business sector was up 0.7% in the fourth quarter compared with the same quarter of 1999. This was slower growth than in the first three quarters of 2000.

◆ **Weekly earnings for employees increase slightly**

Year-over-year average weekly earnings for all employees rose only 1.9% in January, after gaining between 2.2% and 2.5% for most of 2000.

◆ **Internet use has tripled since 1994**

Some 13 million Canadians, or 53% of those aged 15 and over, used the Internet in 2000. This was three times the rate in 1994, when 18% of Canadians used the Internet.

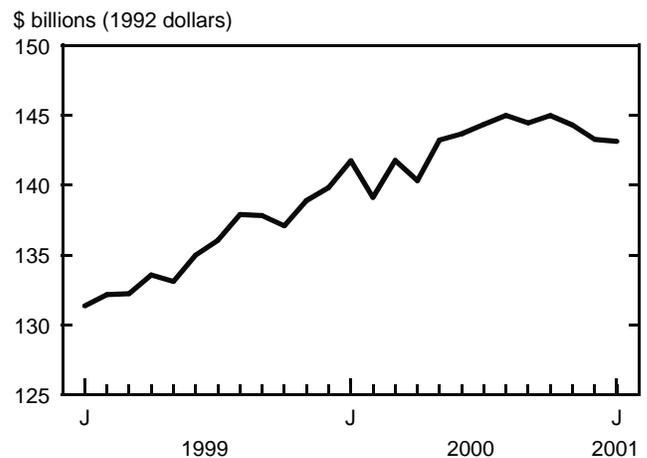
Economic activity increases at same pace as in December

Gross domestic product rose 0.3% in January, the same pace as in December. Strength in wholesale and retail trade and construction as well as increased activity in the oilpatch were partly offset by continued weakness in the manufacturing sector and lower demand for energy.

Both wholesale and retail trade continued to advance in January. Wholesale sales rose 1.7%, up for a fourth month since August 2000. As in December, higher computer sales were mostly responsible for the healthy gain. Retail sales increased 1.1% in January, owing to a general advance in sales by motor vehicle dealers and department stores.

January was a good month for construction industry. Activity increased 1.0%, buttressed by favourable weather after an unusually harsh December. The largest gains were in home-building, with housing starts at their highest level since 1994, and in industrial plant construction, although work on engineering projects also advanced.

Manufacturing output



(continued on page 2)



... Economic activity increases at same pace as in December

Production in the mining sector rose 1.5% in January, boosted by a rebound in the drilling and rigging industry and continued growth in crude petroleum and natural gas extraction. Production from metal and non-metal mines also advanced, owing to sharply increased extraction of uranium and a surge in salt mining. Salt mine operators ramped up production, as a harsh winter in the Great Lakes region increased road salt consumption to the point of wiping out the entire season's inventories.

On the other hand, production in the manufacturing sector edged down 0.1% under the effect of weak demand for electronics and automotive products in January. The output of clothing, textile and plastic products also declined. However, rising levels of production in the machinery, primary metal and chemical industries partly offset these declines. Overall, 15 of the 22 major industry groups, accounting for 62.4% of total manufacturing production, raised their output in January.

Production of electrical and electronic equipment continued to sag in January, the second decline since October 2000. Production of telecommunications equipment fell 9.6% and output of electronic parts and components dropped 9.4%. Only producers of computers and peripherals managed to increase their output. Nevertheless, overall output of electrical and electronic products was 17.6% higher than in January 2000.

Despite some strength in consumer demand from the United States, Canadian auto producers tapped the brakes again in January. Output of motor vehicles (-2.3%) and auto parts (-1.9%) declined for a fifth straight month, as producers struggled to pare back excess inventories. Makers of stampings, vehicle steering

Note to readers

Monthly gross domestic product (GDP) is valued at 1992 prices. The estimates presented here are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

components and wheel assemblies were the hardest hit by the production cutbacks.

Production of chemical products rose 1.6% in January, the sixth increase since April 2000. The industry was once again supported by the expansion of pharmaceuticals production. Producers of synthetic resins and dyes, agricultural chemicals and cosmetic products also made sizeable gains. As well, several industries that manufacture construction-related goods boosted their output. Primary steel production increased sharply, as output was hampered in December by plant shutdowns.

Warmer weather and record natural gas prices caused distributors of electricity and natural gas to reduce output by 3.3% from December's peak. This decline was felt more sharply by the heating-oriented gas distribution companies. Some industrial users shut down temporarily, while others switched to alternative fuels.

The January 2001 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (Internet: 15-001-XIE, \$11/\$110; paper: 15-001-XPB, \$15/\$145) will be available in April. To purchase data, contact Yolande Chantigny (1 800 877-4623; imad@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

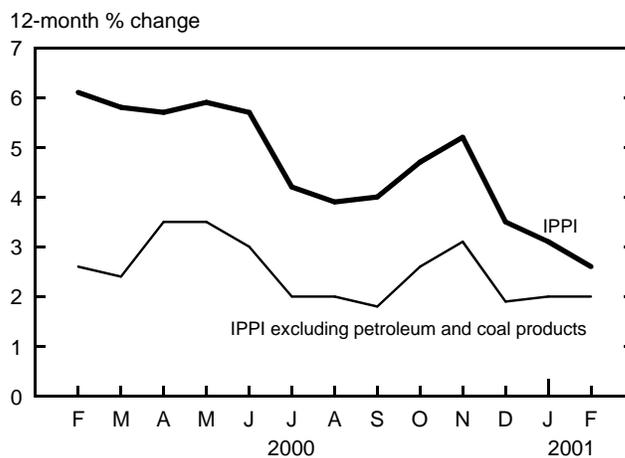
Growth of industrial product and raw material prices continues to weaken

The annual rates of growth for both industrial and raw material prices continued to slow in February. This marks the third consecutive month of decelerating growth for the Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) and the fourth for the Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI).

Manufacturers' prices, as measured by the IPPI, grew 2.6% between February 2000 and February 2001, the lowest rate since August 1999. Stabilizing petroleum and coal product prices were partly responsible for this reduced momentum. For the first time in over a year, petroleum and coal product prices were not a predominant force behind the annual increase. The prices of these products were up 11.1% from February 2000, their smallest year-over-year increase since May 1999. Motor vehicle and paper and paper product prices provided the greatest upward pressure, but they were partly counterbalanced by falling lumber prices.

On a month-to-month basis, industrial prices gained ground in February (+0.5%) after having declined the two previous months. Prices for motor vehicles, primary metals, meat and petroleum products were the major factors behind the monthly increase.

Industrial Product Price Index



Manufacturers paid 4.7% more for their raw materials in February 2001 than in February 2000. This is down from 6.6% in January and remains well below the recent peak of 37.3% in February 2000. In contrast with the IPPI, mineral fuel prices were

(continued on page 3)

... Growth of industrial product and raw material prices continues to weaken

responsible for most of the upward price pressure in the RMPI, accompanied by more modest increases in the prices of animal and vegetable products. These advances were somewhat offset by falling prices for non-ferrous metals and ferrous materials.

On a monthly basis, the prices of raw materials were up 1.5% in February, driven by rising prices for mineral fuels, animal products and non-ferrous metals. The prices of ferrous materials were the main factor offsetting these increases.

Between mid-January and mid-February, the value of the U.S. dollar strengthened considerably against the Canadian dollar, pushing up commodity prices quoted in U.S. dollars. The impact on the IPPI was such that if the exchange rate had remained unchanged, the IPPI would have edged up 0.1% from January to February. The influence of the dollar was also evident on a 12-month basis. Without the exchange rate effect, the IPPI would have risen 1.3% rather than 2.6% from February 2000 to February 2001.

The increase in motor vehicle and petroleum prices pushed up finished goods prices. After two consecutive monthly declines, finished goods prices gained 0.7% between January and February. Compared to February 2000, prices were up 3.6%.

The year-over-year change in intermediate goods prices slowed for a fourth consecutive month to 2.0%, as lower lumber prices were more than offset by higher prices for paper, petroleum and

Industrial product and raw materials price indexes, February 2001

	Index (1992=100)	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI)	129.3	0.5	2.6
IPPI excluding petroleum and coal	126.7	0.6	2.0
Intermediate goods	130.1	0.5	2.0
Finished goods	128.1	0.7	3.6
Raw materials Price Index (RMPI)	146.5	1.5	4.7
RMPI excluding mineral fuels	124.6	1.1	1.6
Mineral fuels (crude oil)	194.2	2.1	9.4
Vegetable products	119.2	0.1	7.8
Animals and animal products	122.8	2.9	4.2
Wood	141.9	0.2	1.2
Ferrous materials	110.0	-1.3	-10.1
Non-ferrous metals	116.4	0.5	-3.8
Non-metallic minerals	122.8	-0.2	2.2

chemical products. On a monthly basis, prices for intermediate goods advanced 0.5% on the strength of prices for primary metal products, lumber, meat products and motor vehicles.

The February 2001 issue of *Industry price indexes* (paper: 62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available in April. For more information, contact Client Services (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Labour productivity growth slows in last two quarters of 2000

Labour productivity growth in the Canadian business sector was up 0.7% in the fourth quarter of 2000 compared with the last quarter of 1999. This growth in productivity represented a slowdown relative to the first three quarters of 2000. The revised year-over-year growth rates for the previous three quarters were 1.8% in the first quarter, 2.1% in the second and 1.1% in the third.

The slowing of productivity growth occurred in the context of lower domestic demand and hours worked. However, as is often the case when the growth rate in the economy begins to decline, the growth of hours worked slowed relatively less than did output over the fourth quarter of 2000.

Despite the slowdown in the fourth quarter, the succession of quarterly increases in the early part of the year was sufficient to produce an average annual productivity gain of 1.4% for 2000. This is slightly lower than the 1.7% registered in 1999, but higher than the average annual increase of 1.0% since 1988.

Growth in unit labour cost occurs when wages are increasing at a faster pace than labour productivity. During the fourth quarter of 2000, hourly compensation gained 3.9%, advancing much more rapidly than labour productivity (+0.7%). Consequently, unit labour costs rose 3.1%.

Note to readers

In this article, "productivity" refers to labour productivity. These productivity estimates are based on the value-added concept of output and are essentially limited to the overall business sector. Corresponding exclusions are also made to labour compensation and hours worked, so as to make output and labour input data consistent with one another.

Labour productivity is the ratio of output to labour input (hours worked). Economic performance as measured by labour productivity must be interpreted carefully; this indicator reflects changes in the other factors of production such as capital, in addition to growth in productive efficiency. **Labour compensation for all jobs** includes all payments in cash or in kind made by domestic producers to persons at work as remuneration for work. **Unit labour cost** is the labour cost per unit of output. It is calculated as the ratio of labour compensation to real value-added (GDP). It is also the equivalent of the ratio between labour compensation per hour worked and labour productivity.

The quarterly estimates of productivity are meant to help those who focus on the analysis of the short-run relationship between output, employment, and remuneration and hours worked. These series are highly volatile and subject to revision, and they should be used with caution in inferring long-run trends.

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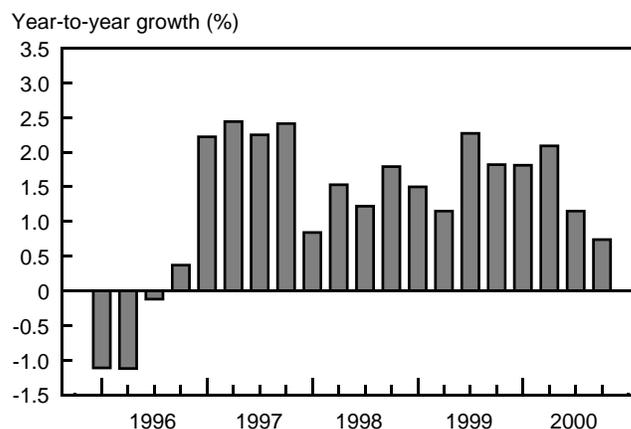
... Labour productivity growth slows in last two quarters of 2000

This quarterly increase follows relatively constant increases, which fluctuated between 2.0% and 2.5% during the previous three quarters of 2000. These results for 2000 contrast with those of 1999, when unit labour cost growth remained close to zero for the last three quarters.

On an annual basis, unit labour costs increased by 2.5% in 2000, compared with 0.3% in 1999. However, the unit labour cost increases in 2000 were about the same as those seen in 1997 and 1998.

For more information on concepts and definitions, a technical note is available on request. For more information, contact John Baldwin (613-951-8588; baldjoh@statcan.ca) or Jean-Pierre Maynard (613-951-3654; fax: 613-951-5403; maynard@statcan.ca), Micro-economic Studies and Analysis Division.

Labour productivity growth



Weekly earnings for employees increase slightly

Average weekly earnings for all employees rose a slight 0.1% in January to \$659.46 from \$658.80 in December. Year-over-year average weekly earnings for all employees rose only 1.9%, after gaining between 2.2% and 2.5% for most of 2000. Recent weakness in earnings growth can be mostly attributed to lower overtime earnings and hours for hourly paid employees in Ontario. Earnings growth from January 2000 to January 2001 was lower than the growth rate of the Consumer Price Index for the same period (+3.0%).

Average weekly earnings, all industries, January 2001 Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	659.46	0.1	1.9
Newfoundland	600.73	-0.2	2.9
Prince Edward Island	524.72	0.7	2.4
Nova Scotia	570.25	0.6	2.9
New Brunswick	590.02	-0.9	3.4
Quebec	618.87	0.3	1.9
Ontario	701.72	-0.3	1.7
Manitoba	585.80	-0.8	1.6
Saskatchewan	592.32	-0.2	2.2
Alberta	675.68	0.7	3.2
British Columbia	664.60	0.3	1.2
Yukon	740.39	-0.2	0.6
Northwest Territories ¹	854.56
Nunavut ¹	780.26

¹ Data not seasonally adjusted.

.. Figures not available.

Note to readers

Beginning with January 2001 data, the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours will publish its estimates based on the North American Industry Classification (NAICS). The NAICS-based estimates are not comparable to the previously published estimates based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of 1980. In order to facilitate this transition, NAICS-based historical series from January 1991 to December 2000 have been produced. A concordance table between NAICS and 1980 SIC codes is available on request. A description of the conversion process and its impact on the data will be available in the April 2001 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours*. For more information on the NAICS consult the "Concepts, definitions and methods" page on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca).

Earnings growth from January 2000 to January 2001 was much stronger in service-producing industries (+2.6%) than in goods-producing industries (+0.4%). Slower growth was especially notable in manufacturing in Ontario.

The year-over-year average weekly earnings growth was 1.7% in Ontario and 1.9% in Quebec. Average earnings in Alberta were up 3.2%, owing to strength in service-producing industries such as finance and insurance, professional services and health care. Average earnings growth in British Columbia was only 1.2%, held back by earnings declines in forestry and manufacturing.

Average hourly earnings for hourly paid employees were \$16.40 in January, down 4 cents from December. Average weekly hours for hourly rated employees were unchanged at 32.0; a small decline in overtime hours was offset by a slight increase in regular paid hours. As well, losses in average paid hours in goods-producing industries (especially manufacturing) were offset by gains in hours in service-producing industries.

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... Weekly earnings for employees increase slightly

The number of employees on payrolls increased by 32,000 in January, the 17th consecutive monthly increase. The strongest employment gains were in construction and retail trade. Wholesale trade and finance and insurance saw the largest employment decreases. Among provinces and territories, the largest gains were in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Manitoba, British Columbia and Yukon saw small employment declines.

The January 2001 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours* (Internet: 72-002-XIB, \$24/\$240; paper: 72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320) presents detailed industry data and other labour market indicators. For more information, contact Jean Leduc or Robert Frindt (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

Internet use has tripled since 1994

Cycle 14 of the General Social Survey, conducted in 2000, estimated that 13 million Canadians, or 53% of those aged 15 and over, used the Internet at home, at work or at some other location in the 12 months prior to the survey. This was three times the 1994 rate of 18%.

Although 11.6 million people aged 15 and older were not using the Internet in 2000, about 27% of them expressed interest in doing so. Cost and access to a computer or the Internet were the main barriers to Internet use for non-users. For low-income non-users, the main barrier to Internet use was the cost, whereas for those with higher incomes, it was a lack of time. About three-quarters of the population felt that access to the Internet should be universal. However, people differed on who should be responsible for removing the barriers.

People who use the Internet tend to be younger, and to have higher incomes and more education than those who don't. Men use the Internet more than women in every age group, but women have closed the gap substantially since 1994. Francophones were less likely to use the Internet than Anglophones, while people living in rural Canada were less likely than urban dwellers to go on-line.

About 84% of Internet users connected to e-mail. Just over 4 million e-mail users, about 39% of the total, reported that they used e-mail every day in the past month, and another 25% said they used it at least several times a week. Asked about their e-mail correspondence with people outside Canada, 43% of Canadian-born Internet users indicated that they used e-mail to communicate internationally in the last month, compared with 71% of foreign-born Canadians.

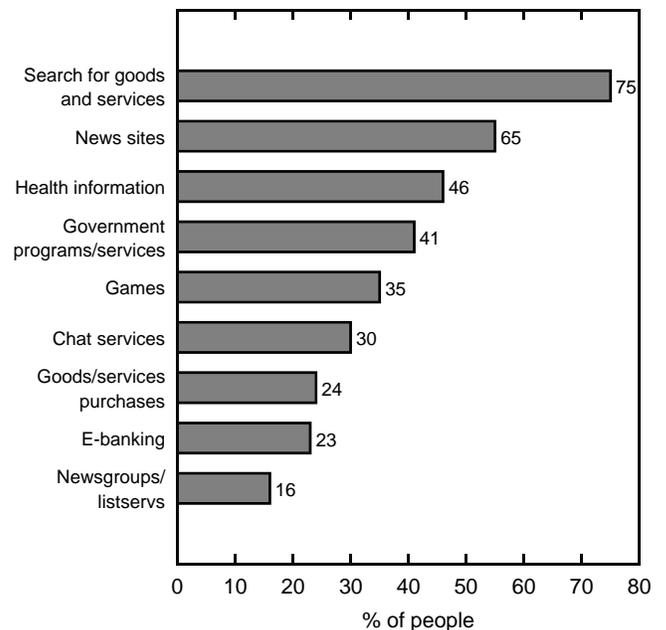
After e-mail, searching for information on goods and services was by far the most popular activity. Among users, an estimated 79% of men and 70% of women searched the Internet for information on goods and services. Teens aged 15 to 19 and seniors were less likely than others to use the Internet for this reason. The next most popular use was to access a news site, followed by searching for health information.

An estimated 3.1 million people, about one-quarter of all Canadians who surf the Internet, used it to buy goods and services. Similarly, just under 3 million people—23% of users—used it for electronic banking. These activities were most common among adults in their late 20s and 30s.

Note to readers

This article is based on Cycle 14 of the General Social Survey, "Access to and use of information communication technology." This is the first time that Statistics Canada has collected detailed information on individual use of computers and the Internet. Data from this cycle complement other Statistics Canada surveys on this topic, particularly the Household Internet Use Survey.

Surfing the Internet, 2000



However, security concerns influenced purchases and banking on the Internet. There were fewer Internet consumers among those concerned about security: 17% of those greatly concerned made Internet purchases, compared with 32% of those with little or no concern. Overall, 72% of users reported that they were concerned about security, and 66% reported specific concerns about privacy. Moreover, about 5% of users, or 750,000 people, reported having actually experienced security problems on the Internet, such as having people hack into their e-mail account or computer files.

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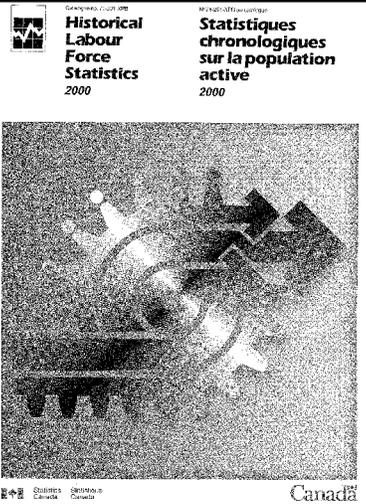
... Internet use has tripled since 1994

As Canadians spend more time on the Internet, they devote less time to other activities. More than one-quarter of users reported that because of their Internet use they watched less television, and 15% spent less time reading books, magazines and newspapers. About 10% reported that they devoted less time to sleeping, leisure activities and household chores.

*The document **Changing our ways: Why and how Canadians use the Internet** (Internet: 56F0006XIE, free), as well as a set of tables (Internet: 56-505-XIE, free), are now available on Statistics Canada's Web site, www.statcan.ca. To download the document, go to the "Products and services" page and choose "Research papers (free)," then "Social conditions." To download the tables and a summary, go to the "Products and services" page and choose "Free publications," then "Social conditions." For more information, contact Heather Dryburgh (613-951-6276) or Kathryn Stevenson (613-951-4178), Housing and Social Statistics Division.*



New from Statistics Canada



Historical Labour Force Statistics 2000
Statistiques chronologiques sur la population active 2000

Historical labour force statistics 2000

Historical labour force statistics is an annual publication that provides the seasonally adjusted employment and unemployment statistics presented each month in the media. It includes data going back 10 to 20 years on general labour market characteristics for Canada, the provinces and metropolitan areas. Each year, the series are updated and revised according to the latest information on seasonal models and factors.

*The publication **Historical labour force statistics, 2000** (paper: 71-201-XPB, \$75) is now available. For more information, contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4720; fax: 613-951-2869; usaljea@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.*

Biotechnology use and development 1999

The working paper *Biotechnology use and development, 1999* is the first from the 1999 Biotechnology Use and Development Survey. The paper describes survey concepts and definitions, and contains tables on biotechnology firm revenues, research and development, imports and exports, human resources and product development.

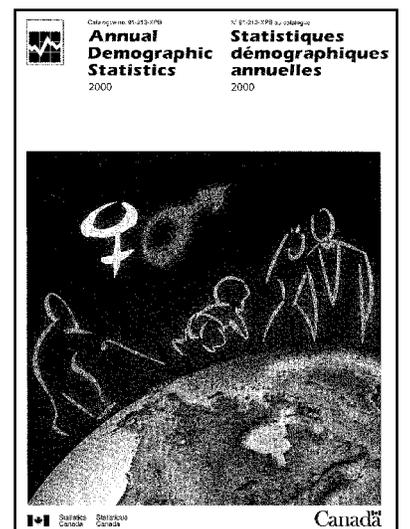
*The working paper **Biotechnology use and development, 1999** (Internet: 88F0006XIB01007, free) is now available. From the "Products and services page," choose "Research papers (free)," then "Science and technology." For additional information, contact Chuck McNiven (613-951-1233; chuck.mcniven@statcan.ca), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.*

Annual demographic statistics 2000

The 2000 edition of *Annual demographic statistics* provides the most recent population estimates and projections up to 2005 by age group and sex, plus data on births, deaths and migrations. It groups the information by province and territory, census metropolitan area and census division, and also provides data on census families and marriages and divorces.

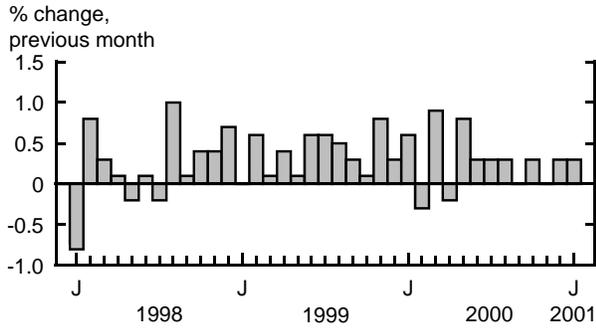
A CD-ROM, included with the publication, contains even more data than did the one in last year's edition. It also includes the population projections as well as animated age pyramids, which illustrate the aging of the population. The time series can be easily manipulated to create customized demographic analyses in any spreadsheet program. The population figures can be used to calculate per-capita rates for market research, quantitative analysis and planning.

*The publication **Annual demographic statistics, 2000** (paper: 91-213-XPB, \$125 including CD-ROM) is now available. An electronic version without the CD-ROM (91-213-XIB, \$56) will be available soon. For more information, contact Lise Champagne (613-951-2320; fax: 613-951-2307; chamlis@statcan.ca), Demography Division.*



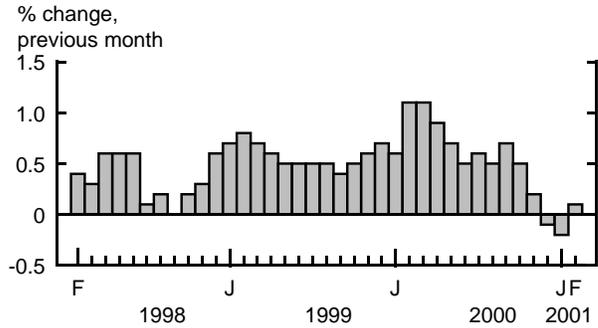
Current trends

Gross domestic product



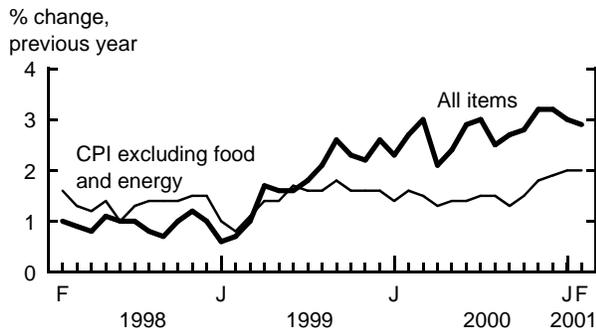
Gross domestic product rose 0.3% in January, the same pace as in December.

Composite Index



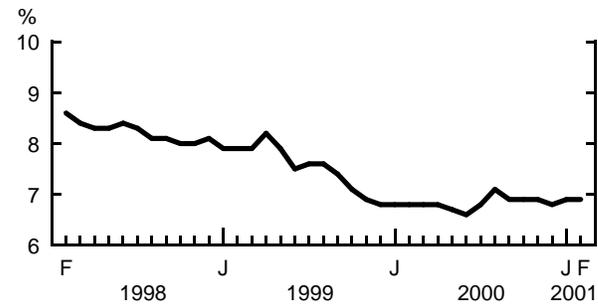
The leading indicator posted a 0.1% growth in February due to a firming in housing and services.

Consumer Price Index



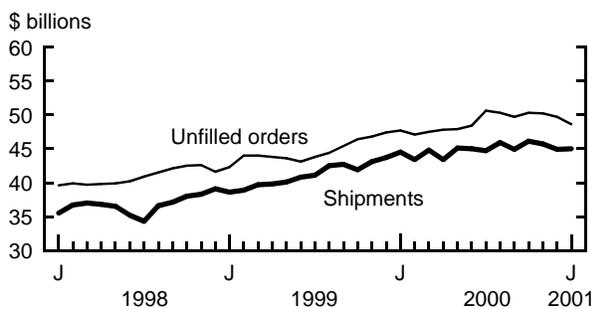
Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.9% higher in February 2001 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 2.0%.

Unemployment rate



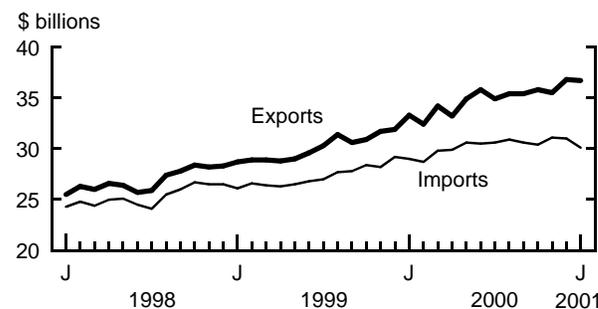
In February, the unemployment rate remained unchanged from January at 6.9%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments edged up 0.3% in January to \$45.0 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders dropped 2.3% to \$48.6 billion.

Merchandise trade



In January, the value of merchandise exports declined 0.4% to \$36.7 billion. Imports fell at a faster pace, declining 2.9% to \$30.1 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)	January*	799.8	0.3%	3.2%
Composite Index (1992=100)	February	167.1	0.1%	5.5%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q4 2000	54.0	2.2%	13.9%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 2000	85.4	-0.2†	0.7†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	January	23.8	0.6%	5.4%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	January	1.63	3.6%	6.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	January	130.5	-0.4%	-1.7%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	January	32.3	0.8%	3.0%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	February	15.04	-0.2%	1.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	February	6.9	0.0†	0.1†
Participation rate (%)	February	66.0	-0.1†	0.2†
Average weekly earnings (\$)¹	January	659.46	0.1%	1.9%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	March*	168	-1.8%	-1.8%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	January	36.7	-0.4%	10.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	January	30.1	-2.9%	4.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	January	6.6	0.7	2.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)¹	January	45.0	0.3%	1.2%
New orders (\$ billions)¹	January	43.8	-1.3%	-2.0%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)¹	January	48.6	-2.3%	1.9%
Inventory/shipments ratio¹	January	1.44	0.00	0.11
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	February	115.2	0.4%	2.9%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	February	129.3	0.5%	2.6%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	February	146.5	1.5%	4.7%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	January	104.6	0.2%	2.5%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

* new this week

† percentage point

¹ These estimates are now based on the North American Industry Classification (NAICS). They are not comparable to the previously published estimates based on the Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) of 1980.

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A weekly review

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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:
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