



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, April 11, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ Employment rises in March

Employment grew in March, with more jobs for men and women. The unemployment rate fell to 9.3%.

◆ Upward trend in help-wanted ads continues

The number of help-wanted advertisements in newspapers rose again in March, continuing the upward trend that began last September.

◆ Canadians travel less in their own country

In the first quarter of 1996, Canadians travelled less within Canada than they did in the first quarter of 1994.

◆ New motor vehicle sales up in February

New motor vehicle sales rose in February, nearly reversing January's decline.

◆ Rebound in housing construction continues

Residential housing continued to rebound in February, due exclusively to a surge in single-family homes.

◆ New housing price index remains stable

In February, the New Housing Price Index showed little change compared with the level attained in February 1996.

Employment rises in March

Employment grew by an estimated 61,000 in March, bringing gains since last September to 133,000. The unemployment rate fell to 9.3%, a drop of 0.4 percentage points from February.

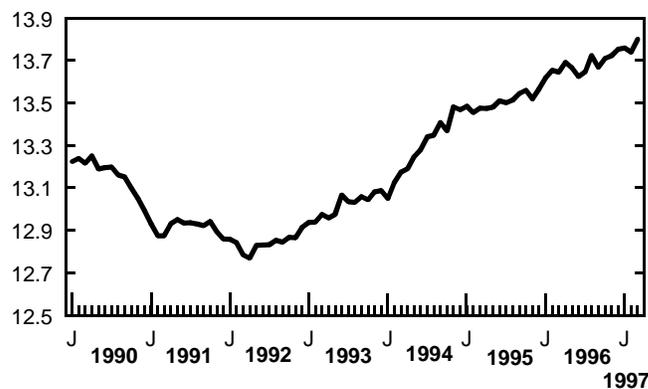
Employment was up for both men (+33,000) and women (+25,000), and approximately four out of five of these jobs were full time. Since September 1996, employment has increased by 1.6% for men and by 0.9% for women. Total youth employment changed little in March. The loss of 16,000 full-time jobs offset the gain of 19,000 part-time jobs. The labour force participation rate for youth decreased slightly, which brought the youth unemployment rate down to 16.6% (-0.3 percentage points).

Most of March's employment increases were in the service sector. Employment in business and personal services increased by 57,000 (+2%), bringing gains in this industry to 102,000 (+3.7%) since last September. Trade gained 23,000 jobs (+1%), offsetting February's losses; employment levels were little changed from the previous year. Employment in finance, insurance and real estate fell by 16,000 (-2%). Recent fluctuations left employment in this industry slightly below last September's level, and down 1.4% from March 1996.

(continued on page 2)

Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



... Employment rises in March

In the goods sector, a gain in manufacturing offset losses in other industries. Manufacturing employment increased by 37,000 (+1.8%), the first employment increase since August 1996. Employment in construction declined by 14,000 in March, leaving gains at 44,000 since May 1996.

Private sector employment rose 0.6% (+56,000) in March, the first significant increase since last August. The number of self-employed workers increased only slightly in February and March, slowing the growth rate observed since last July. Public sector employment changed little in March and dropped 2.8% from a year earlier.

In March, employment increased in Ontario (+46,000), Quebec (+27,000) and Prince Edward Island (+1,000) and declined in New Brunswick (-5,000) and Manitoba (-6,000). There was little change in the other provinces.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3450-3471, 3483-3502 and table 00799999.

Labour force information for the week ending March 15, 1997 (paper version: 71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103; fax version: 71-001-PFB, \$300 annually) is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Household Surveys Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Labour Force Survey, March 1997

Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	Rate (%)
Canada	15,219	0.0	13,801	0.4	1,418	9.3
Newfoundland	234	-1.9	191	-0.3	44	18.7
Prince Edward Island	72	2.4	60	2.4	12	16.0
Nova Scotia	449	0.0	392	0.8	58	12.8
New Brunswick	356	-1.3	307	-1.5	48	13.6
Quebec	3,659	0.0	3,250	0.8	409	11.2
Ontario	5,864	0.6	5,348	0.9	516	8.8
Manitoba	575	-0.8	535	-1.1	40	7.0
Saskatchewan	496	-0.1	465	-0.1	31	6.2
Alberta	1,530	-0.3	1,435	0.3	95	6.2
British Columbia	1,985	-0.8	1,819	-0.5	167	8.4

Upward trend in help-wanted ads continues

The Help-wanted Index rose 3% to 100 in March, continuing the trend that began in September 1996. Eight provinces recorded increases. Compared with March 1996, the national index was 15% higher.

In March, the index for the Prairie provinces reached 117—a level not seen since January 1991. Alberta had the highest gain

Note to readers

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

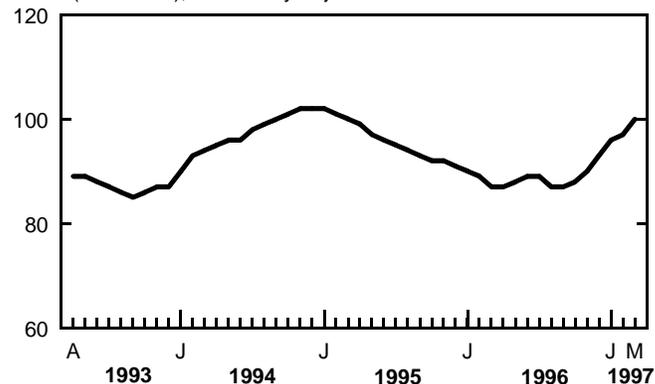
Help-wanted index, March 1997

(1991=100), seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	100	15	3
Atlantic provinces	108	4	0
Newfoundland	88	14	9
Prince Edward Island	158	-2	10
Nova Scotia	106	10	2
New Brunswick	106	-12	-5
Quebec	88	-2	1
Ontario	106	18	3
Prairie provinces	117	33	4
Manitoba	126	22	-1
Saskatchewan	113	26	2
Alberta	113	41	5
British Columbia	75	12	4

Help-wanted index

Index (1991=100), seasonally adjusted



(continued on page 3)

... Upward trend in help-wanted ads continues

(+5%) in the Prairies, while Manitoba registered a decline (-1%). The 4% increase in British Columbia was its largest since July 1995.

The index for Ontario moved up 3% to 106 in March, rising to its highest level since February 1995. Quebec's index rose 1% to 88. The level in Quebec has been in the 84-to-90 band since last March.

Three of the Atlantic provinces posted gains in March: Prince Edward Island (+10%), Newfoundland (+9%) and Nova Scotia (+2%). New Brunswick recorded a 5% drop.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 105 (levels 8, 9 and 10).

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

Canadians travel less in their own country

Canadians travelled less in their own country in the first three months of 1996 than they did in the first quarter of 1994. Domestic travellers made 31.2 million trips between January and March 1996, down 9.2% from the same quarter two years earlier. However, travel expenditures rose 9.5% to \$3.7 billion.

Air travel was the only mode of travel to show an increase, and it was a significant one: 19.1%. Because air travellers tend to spend more per trip, the increased number of such travellers contributed the most to the rise in total domestic travel expenditures. More business travellers and a decline in average domestic air fares likely contributed most to the increase in air travel.

More than 1.5 million travellers flew to their destinations in Canada in the first quarter of 1996. More business (+234,000) and pleasure (+29,000) travellers accounted for most of the jump in air travel. In the first three months of 1996, business travellers accounted for 62% of the air travel market. Canadians visiting friends and relatives made up 20.9% of the market and pleasure travellers, 10.2%. The average domestic air fare fell from \$194 in the first quarter of 1994 to \$182 in the first quarter of 1996.

On average, air travellers tend to stay longer and spend more per trip on accommodation and public transportation. In the first quarter of 1996, they spent \$977 per trip compared with the \$76 spent by those travelling by other means.

Note to readers

To be defined as domestic, a trip must cover 80 kilometres or more, be taken by a Canadian and have a Canadian destination. Expenditures reported by travellers cover all travel costs (including transportation, gasoline, accommodation, recreation and entertainment, and food and beverages.)

Data in this article are from the Canadian Travel Survey, which is conducted every two years as a supplement to the Labour Force Survey. In 1996, the survey covered a sample of 16,000 individuals a month. The data from the 1996 and 1994 surveys cannot be compared with previous years because of a break in the historical data series.

A 10.2% drop in automobile trips—the most popular way to travel—was the main contributor to the overall decline in domestic travel between the two periods. About 90% of Canadians travelled by car within the country, while fewer travellers used buses and trains. The drop in spending by automobile travellers was due to a decline in both the number of travellers and in average spending per trip. Spending by bus travellers remained stable; train travellers spent 2.9% more.

For further information, contact Sylvie Bonhomme (613-951-1672; Internet: bonhsyl@statcan.ca), Tourism Statistics Program.

New motor vehicle sales up in February

New motor vehicle sales rose 5.1% (seasonally adjusted) in February, nearly reversing the 5.8% decline recorded in January. New vehicle sales have followed an upward trend since early 1996. The automotive industry has released early indications of March sales that suggest a month-to-month gain in both cars and trucks.

Sales of trucks (which include vans and buses) remained highly volatile. Truck sales jumped 8.3% in February, following a decline of 11.3% in January and an 11.6% increase in December. Overall, the underlying trend in truck sales is upward.

Car sales rose 2.4% in February, almost entirely due to the sale of cars built overseas (+12.3%). The Big Three saw no change in

Note to readers

Data on the average amount spent on new vehicles is derived from unadjusted figures and excludes data reported by heavy truck and bus companies. These estimates are based on data reported by companies who primarily sell light vehicles.

car sales, while the other automakers reported an increase of 5.8%. Car sales have generally increased since April 1996.

Consumers who bought new vehicles (excluding most heavy trucks and buses) in February spent an average of \$25,960 (before tax)—5.7% more than in February 1996.

(continued on page 4)

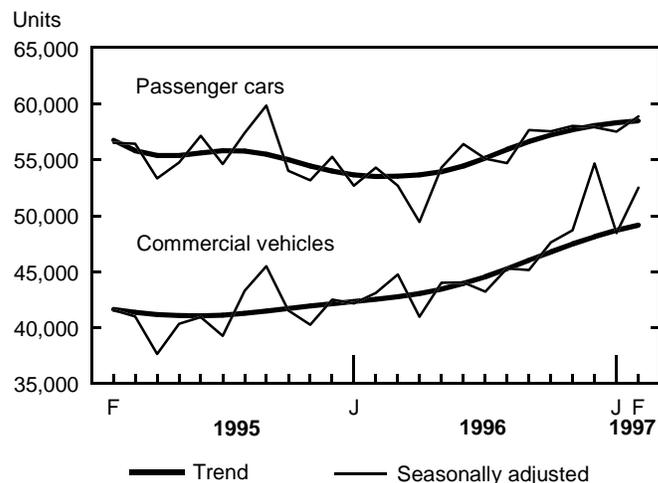
... New motor vehicle sales up in February

The average amount paid for new vehicles (excluding most heavy trucks and buses) has been rising faster than average household income. Between 1992 and 1995, average household income (in current dollars) rose 3.5%, from \$46,465 to \$48,085. But consumers paid 22.7% more for new vehicles, as the average cost rose from \$18,410 in 1992 to \$22,590 in 1995.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

The February 1997 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XPB, \$16/\$160) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Louise G n reux (613-951-3549), Industry Division.

New motor vehicle sales



Rebound in housing construction continues

Municipalities issued \$1.7 billion in permits for housing construction in February—the highest level since November 1991. The value of housing permits rose for the second consecutive month, up 3.9% over January. A surge in single-family homes, which came on the heels of low mortgage rates and favourable prices, was exclusively responsible for this increase. Non-residential permits rose 6.2%, mainly on the strength of new industrial projects. Overall, municipalities issued \$2.5 billion in building permits in February (+4.7%), the highest level since December 1994.

Single-family permits rose 6.6% to \$1.3 billion in February. The single-family component, which represents more than 70% of the total residential sector, has been strengthening since mid-1996. The multi-family component, on the other hand, fell 4.4% to \$375 million, the third consecutive monthly drop.

In January and February 1997, the value of planned residential building construction was up 26.8% compared with the same period last year. In 1997, sales of new and existing homes have surpassed last year's level by 36.7%. The stronger demand for housing has resulted in more building permits. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported a 9.6% increase in housing starts in February, the highest level since July 1994.

British Columbia, which saw a sharp increase in the value of multi-family dwellings, led February's resurgence in the housing sector (+13.2%). New Brunswick posted a 56.0% increase in residential permits, entirely due to single-family construction intentions. Newfoundland (-30.7%) and Prince Edward Island (-77.5%) reported the largest drops in total residential permits, mainly due to a decline in single-family dwelling intentions.

Quebec was the largest contributor (+21.6%) to February's overall advance in the non-residential sector, followed by Manitoba and Nova Scotia. The most significant decreases in the non-residential sector were recorded in Prince Edward Island (-88.1%) and Saskatchewan (-16.4%).

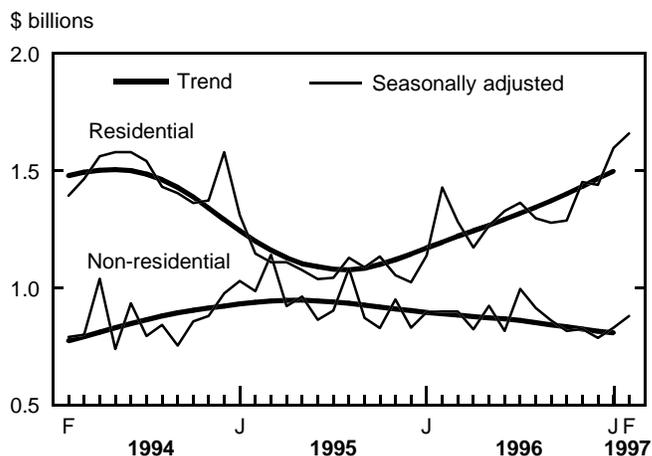
Note to readers

The *m*/monthly Building and Demolitions Permits Survey covers 2,400 municipalities and represents 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 shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers and culverts) and land.

Unless otherwise stated, seasonally adjusted data are presented. The annual rate is a monthly figure that has been seasonally adjusted and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

Housing construction intentions



(continued on page 5)

... Rebound in housing construction continues

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

The February 1997 issue of **Building permits** (64-001-XPB, \$24/\$240) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; Internet: burejoa@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Nathalie Léveillé (613-951-2025; Internet: levenat@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Building permits, February 1997 Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	2,537	4.7	1,658	3.9	879	6.2
Newfoundland	28	- 22.1	21	- 30.7	7	28.9
Prince Edward Island	3	- 83.2	2	- 77.5	1	- 88.1
Nova Scotia	84	13.8	69	8.5	15	45.0
New Brunswick	48	40.3	35	56.0	13	11.3
Quebec	465	11.6	248	4.1	217	21.6
Ontario	1,025	1.0	682	0.3	343	2.3
Manitoba	71	16.2	34	7.2	37	26.1
Saskatchewan	38	- 7.3	21	1.6	17	- 16.4
Alberta	355	2.5	242	4.3	113	- 1.1
British Columbia	416	9.8	301	13.2	115	1.7
Yukon	3	- 10.3	2	- 3.3	1	- 28.2
Northwest Territories	2	- 16.6	2	- 19.1	0	6.7

New housing price index remains stable

In February, the New Housing Price Index showed no change compared with the level attained in February 1996. It was the first time since July 1994 that the annual change was not negative.

On a monthly basis, the index increased 0.2% between January and February. Of the 21 cities surveyed, 13 registered increases, 5 recorded decreases, and the remaining 3 cities showed no change.

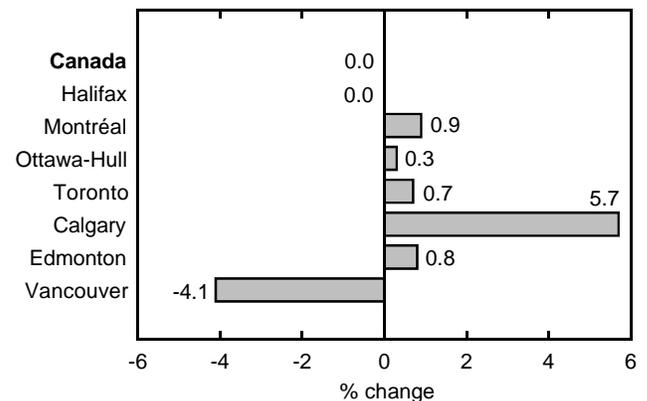
The improvement of housing markets in recent months has been attributable to higher consumer confidence and favourable interest rates. The competitive nature of the housing markets has moderated price increases in a number of surveyed cities in spite of reported increases in construction costs in these cities.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2032.

The first quarter 1997 issue of **Construction price statistics** (62-007-XPB, \$23/\$76) will be available in June. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

New housing price indexes

February 1996 to February 1997



News from Statistics Canada

Family income after separation

Family income after separation is an in-depth study of the financial implications of separation. This report analyzes the changes in after-tax income and family composition before and after separation. The focus is on married persons who became separated between 1987 and 1993 and who had children before the breakup. For the first time, support payments have been taken into account in the assessment of payers' income changes.

New rules relating to the setting of child support payments will come into effect May 1, 1997. *Family income after separation* should enrich the discussion on this issue.

This analysis is based on a new version of the Longitudinal Administrative Data file, which covers virtually the entire Canadian population.

Family income after separation (13-588-MPB, no. 5, \$33) is now available. For further information, contact Diane Galarneau (613-951-4626), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division, or Jim Sturrock (613-957-3732), Department of Justice.

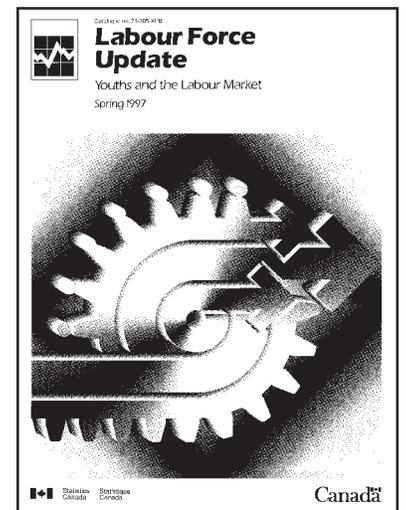
Labour force update

Spring 1997

The first edition of *Labour force update* is now available. Each quarter, *Labour force update* features the latest information and relevant trends relating to a particular labour market issue. Informative commentary, charts and analytical tables provide a concise and up-to-date reference on the topic, as well as a useful starting point for further research.

The inaugural issue covers youths and the labour market. Subsequent editions in 1997 will cover hours, wages and non-standard forms of work.

Labour force update (71-005-XPB, \$29/\$96) is now available. To order, contact the nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre, or if you have Internet access contact our Order Desk at order@statcan.ca. For more information, contact Geoff Bowlby at (613-951-3325).



North American Industry Classification System

The final structure, titles and codes for the *North American Industry Classification System* (NAICS) are now available.

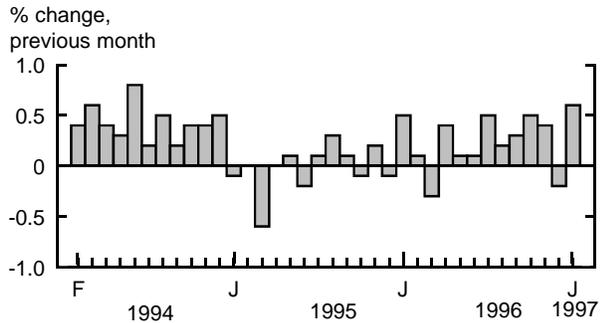
The NAICS is a common industry classification system developed by Statistics Canada and statistical agencies in Mexico and the United States. It will replace the existing systems of all three countries within the next few years. Data on industries covered by the NAICS will be comparable among the NAFTA countries. In Canada, NAICS-Canada will replace the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification. Statistics Canada will adopt the new classification in its annual economic statistics program for reference year 1997.

Descriptions of all sectors are available on the Internet at www.statcan.ca under the heading "Concepts, methods and definitions." Documentation is available from Kim Farrall (613-951-4245; fax: 613-951-8578; Internet: nijhsha@statcan.ca).

For further information, contact Shaila Nijhowne, Standards Division (613-951-8577; fax: 613-951-8578; Internet: nijhsha@statcan.ca).

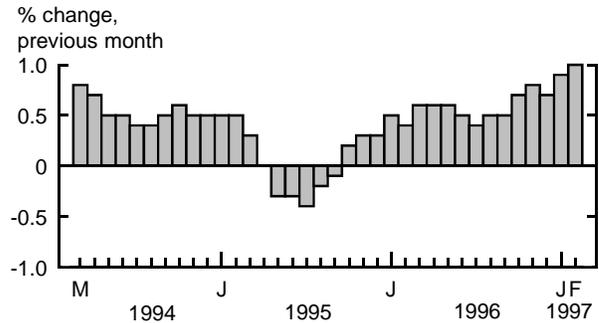
Current trends

Gross domestic product



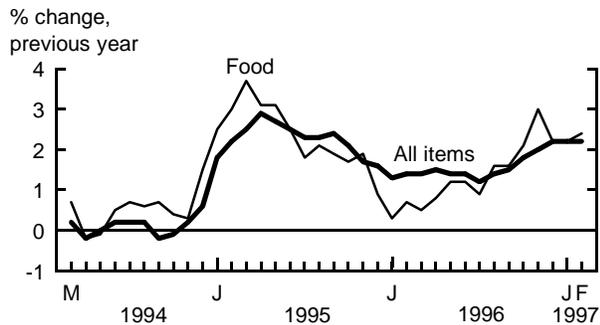
Real gross domestic product at factor cost increased 0.6% between December and January.

Composite index



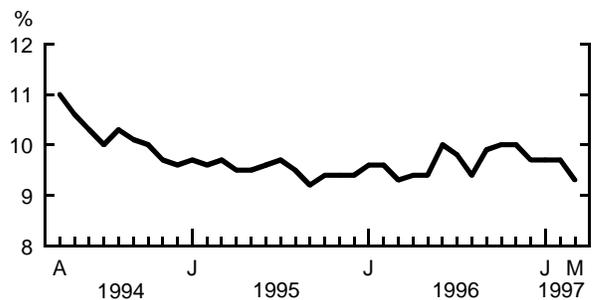
The composite index grew by 1.0% in February.

Consumer price index



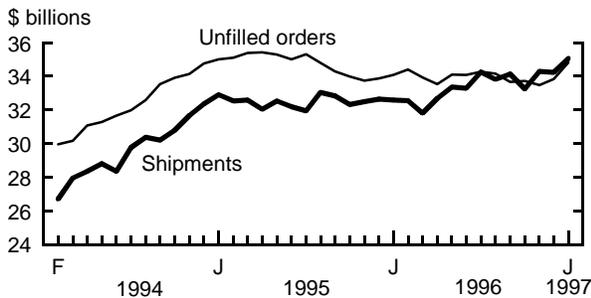
Consumers paid 2.2% more for goods and services in February 1997 than the year before. Food prices rose by 2.4%.

Unemployment rate



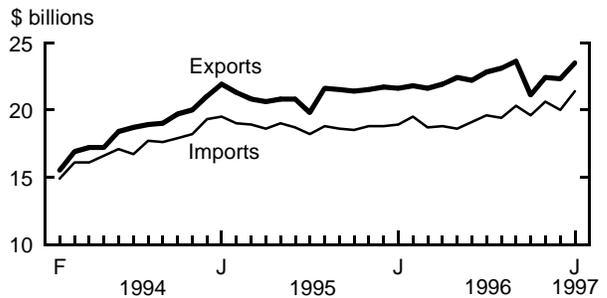
In March, the unemployment fell to 9.3%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments rose 2.2% in January to \$35.1 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 3.0% to \$34.8 billion.

Merchandise trade



In January, the value of merchandise exports increased 3.1% from December to \$23.5 billion. Imports rose 7.2% to \$21.4 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, 1986)	January	560.9	0.6%	2.8%
Composite index (1981=100)	February	189.0	1.0%	8.5%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1996	25.7	5.7%	10.4%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 1996	84.8	0.7†	2.4†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	January	18.8	1.4%	5.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	February*	111.4	5.1%	14.5%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	March*	13.8	0.4%	1.1%
Unemployment rate (%)	March*	9.3	-0.4†	-0.1†
Participation rate (%)	March*	64.5	-0.1†	-0.3†
Labour income (\$ billion)	November	36.5	0.8%	3.6%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	January	596.78	0.2%	4.1%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	January	23.5	3.1%	8.0%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	January	21.4	7.2%	13.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	January	2.1	-0.7	-0.7
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	January	35.1	2.2%	7.6%
New orders (\$ billion)	January	36.1	4.3%	9.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	January	34.8	3.0%	2.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	January	1.29	-0.04	-0.09
PRICES				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	February	134.4	0.1%	2.2%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	February	129.8	0.1%	0.0%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	February	137.1	-3.2%	5.5%
New housing price index (1986=100)	February*	132.4	0.2%	0.0%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

Infomat

A weekly review

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Publications released from April 4 to 10, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (C\$)	United States	Other countries
			(US\$)		
AGRICULTURE					
Cereals and oilseeds review	January 1997	22-007-XPB	15/149	15/149	15/149
INDUSTRY					
Asphalt roofing	February 1997	45-001-XPB	7/62	7/62	7/62
Coal and coke statistics	January 1997	45-002-XPB	12/114	12/114	12/114
Crude petroleum and natural gas production	December 1996	26-006-XPB	19/186	19/186	19/186
Electric power statistics	January 1997	57-001-XPB	12/114	12/114	12/114
Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard	January 1997	36-003-XPB	7/62	7/62	7/62
Retail trade	January 1997	63-005-XPB	21/206	21/206	21/206
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS					
Gross domestic product by industry	January 1997	15-001-XPB	15/145	15/145	15/145
LABOUR					
Labour force information	March 15, 1997	71-001-PPB	11/103	12/120	14/140
LABOUR AND HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS ANALYSIS					
Family income after separation, income analytic report no. 5	1987 to 1993	13-588-MPB	33	33	33
SERVICES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY					
Telephone statistics	January 1997	56-002-XPB	10/93	10/93	10/93

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M4T 1M4

Local calls: (416) 973-6586
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-416-973-7475

Manitoba

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Via Rail Building, Suite 200
123 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 4V9

Local calls: (204) 983-4020
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-204-983-7543

Saskatchewan

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Avord Tower, 9th Floor
2002 Victoria Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 0R7

Local calls: (306) 780-5405
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-306-780-5403

Southern Alberta

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Discovery Place, Room 201
3553-31 Street N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
T2L 2K7

Local calls: (403) 292-6717
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-403-292-4958

Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
8th Floor, Park Square
10001 Bellamy Hill
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 3B6

Local calls: (403) 495-3027
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-403-495-5318

British Columbia and the Yukon

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Library Square Tower, Suite 600
300 West Georgia Street
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 6C7

Local calls: (604) 666-3691
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: 1-604-666-4863

Telecommunications Device for the Hearing Impaired

Toll free: 1 800 363-7629