



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, June 16, 2000

OVERVIEW

◆ **Full-time job growth resumes**

Full-time employment increased in May by 38,000 jobs, more than offsetting the decline in April. Part-time employment was little changed. The full-time growth pushed the unemployment rate down to 6.6%—the lowest since March 1976.

◆ **Businesses continue to profit from the expansion**

Canadian corporations continued to reap the benefits of the economic expansion of the past year and a half. Operating profits surged to a record \$53.3 billion in the first quarter, up 12.3% from the fourth quarter of 1999.

◆ **Industrial capacity use rate reaches new peak**

On the strength of surging exports and robust domestic demand, factories operated at 87.6% of capacity in the first quarter—a rate not seen since the mid-1960s.

◆ **Decline in residential intentions pulls down building permits**

In April, the value of building permits issued by municipalities declined 8.9% to \$2.9 billion, pulled down by a large decline in residential intentions.

◆ **Urban transport: Revenues outstrip ridership**

Between 1995 and 1999, revenues for urban transit authorities across Canada grew at three times the pace of ridership. Annual revenues grew 4.5% per year, whereas the number of passengers carried rose just 1.4% per year.

◆ **East-west divergence seen in average airfares**

Between 1994 and 1998, average domestic airfares decreased in western cities, but increased in eastern cities. The proportion of business class passengers was also higher in eastern cities.

Full-time job growth resumes

Full-time employment increased in May by 38,000 jobs, more than offsetting the decline in April. Part-time employment was little changed. Overall, that marked a resumption of the upward trend in employment and brought the job growth from May 1999 to May 2000 to 413,000 (+2.8%). May's employment rise pushed the unemployment rate down 0.2 percentage points to 6.6%—the lowest since March 1976.

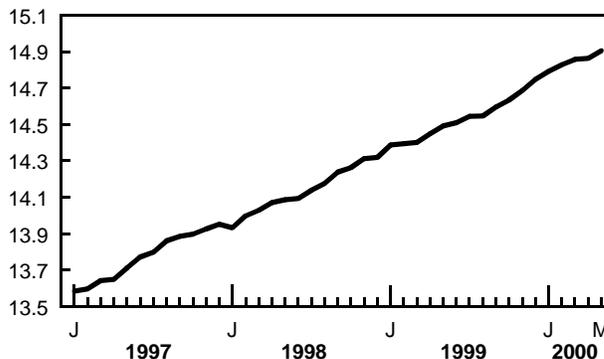
May's employment increase was concentrated among adult men (aged 25 and over) and youths (those 15 to 24). For adult men, full-time employment bounced back (+31,000) from the decline in April, continuing the upward employment trend. The total employment gain among adult men from May 1999 to May 2000 stood at 158,000 (+2.4%). Almost all of that growth was in full-time jobs. The unemployment rate among adult men edged down in May to 5.5%.

Youth employment rose by 13,000, mostly full-time jobs. Labour-market conditions for youths began to improve more than two years ago. Their job gains since May 1999 stood at 91,000 in May (+4.2%), with most of those gains concentrated in full-time employment (+68,000). From April to May, the country's youth unemployment rate fell to 12.5% (-0.4 percentage points).

The youth summer job market started on positive note. Among students aged 20 to 24, 58.0% had jobs in May, up 1.6 percentage

Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



(continued on page 2)



... Full-time job growth resumes

points from May 1999. Again, most of the gains were in full-time employment. This May, 50.6% of employed students aged 20 to 24 were working full time, compared with 45.7% a year earlier. The unemployment rate for this group of students was 15.7%, a slight decline of 1.4 percentage points from May 1999.

In May, all of the job growth occurred in the private sector, as the upward trend that began about three years ago continued. In the sector, the number of employees grew by 32,000 and the ranks of the self-employed swelled by 30,000. That swelling partially offset the large decline in April and returned self-employment to about the same level as in November 1999. The number of public-sector employees fell by 21,000 in May.

Looking at industries, employment grew in May in both the service-producing sector (+28,000) and the goods-producing sector (+14,000). In information, culture and recreation, employment increased (+22,000) following little change in the previous 11 months. In professional, scientific and technical services (+19,000), the job growth since May 1999 stood at 4.3% (+39,000). Employment also increased by 19,000 in health care and social assistance. Recent strength brought gains in this industry since May 1999 to 110,000 (+7.7%). Employment also rose in trade (+14,000) in May, continuing the upward trend that began in early 1998.

In the goods-producing sector, employment rose by 6,000 in natural resource industries. Since August 1999, when employment in natural resources began to improve, the growth in this industry has totalled 34,000 jobs (+13.0%). Manufacturing employment edged up 7,000, continuing the upward trend of the last three years. Since May 1999, manufacturing employment (+4.1%, +91,000) has shown the largest job growth in wood products, metal products, motor vehicle and parts making, and in computer and electronic products.

Among the provinces in May, job gains were seen in Quebec and British Columbia. Employment rose by 17,000 in Quebec, mainly among youths aged 15 to 24. This increase brought overall

Related information on employment insurance

In March (the latest data), 471,430 persons received the regular type of employment insurance (EI) benefit, a decrease from February of 1.7%. Except for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut, all provinces and territories reported fewer EI beneficiaries than in February. The declines were sharpest in the Yukon (-9.3%) and Nova Scotia (-3.8%), while the downward trend that began in mid-1999 continued in British Columbia and Alberta. Compared with March 1999, the number of beneficiaries receiving the regular benefit fell 8.5% at the national level. From February to March, the amount paid out as regular benefits decreased 4.6% to \$615.3 million. Meanwhile, the number of claims for EI filed by the jobless dropped 4.1% to 214,100 claims. For more information, contact Robert Keay (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

job gains since May 1999 to 110,000 (+3.3%). Most of the gains occurred in the second half of 1999. In May, the largest increases in Quebec were in information, culture and recreation, trade and transportation and warehousing.

In British Columbia, employment increased by 16,000. This brought gains since last October, when the labour market in this province began to strengthen, to 49,000 (+2.6%). Job gains in May were mostly among men aged 25 and over and among youths. The largest increases were in accommodation and food services, information, culture and recreation, and natural resource industries. Despite the job growth in May, the unemployment rate only edged down, owing to an increase in labour force participation.

The full report, *Labour force information, for the week ending May 20, 2000* (print: 71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103; online at www.statcan.ca: 71-001-PIB, \$8/\$78), is now available. For further information, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Labour Statistics Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

Labour Force Survey, May 2000

Seasonally adjusted¹

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	15,961.5	0.1	14,904.9	0.3	1,056.6	6.6
Newfoundland	247.0	-0.2	207.3	0.6	39.7	16.1
Prince Edward Island	73.3	-1.3	65.6	-0.2	7.7	10.5
Nova Scotia	457.7	-0.9	420.3	-0.6	37.5	8.2
New Brunswick	369.2	-0.8	331.4	-0.5	37.8	10.2
Quebec	3,775.0	0.3	3,452.5	0.5	322.5	8.5
Ontario	6,176.9	0.1	5,838.7	0.1	338.2	5.5
Manitoba	581.3	-0.7	554.5	-0.3	26.8	4.6
Saskatchewan	515.6	0.6	489.9	0.4	25.7	5.0
Alberta	1,670.3	0.1	1,591.1	0.5	79.2	4.7
British Columbia	2,095.1	0.7	1,953.6	0.8	141.5	6.8

¹ Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.

Businesses continue to profit from the expansion

Canadian corporations continue to reap the benefits of the economic expansion of the past year and a half. In the first quarter, operating profits surged to a record \$53.3 billion, up 12.3% from the fourth quarter of 1999. Corporate profits have now increased for six straight quarters, for an accumulated gain of 56.4% since the third quarter of 1998.

Non-financial corporations earned 9.2% more in operating profits in the first quarter, with notable gains in manufacturing and mineral fuels. Manufacturers turned out \$14.2 billion in operating profits, a jump from the fourth quarter of 11.0%. Wood and paper producers boosted operating profits 45.9% to \$2.2 billion on the wave of robust domestic and U.S. housing markets, as well as steady demand and strengthening prices for pulp. Newsprint markets remained weak, however.

Makers of electronics and computers saw profits jump 14.4% to \$1.4 billion. Domestic and foreign demand for telecommunications and other high-tech equipment was strong, and lifted operating revenue 14.3% to a record \$10.1 billion. Operating profits in the chemicals, plastics and rubber manufacturing industry climbed 23.1% to \$1.7 billion. Revenue and profits in this sector have steadily expanded over the past year as market conditions have improved.

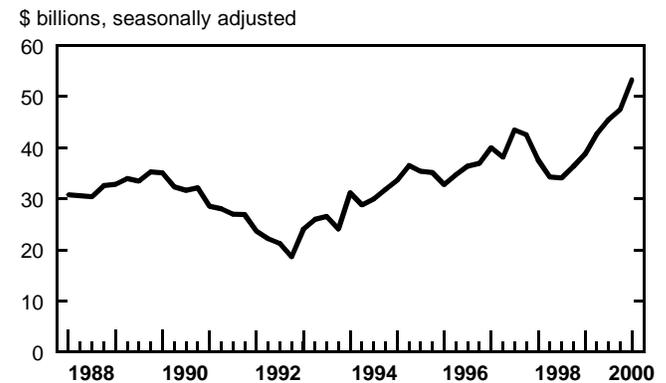
Operating profits of petroleum and coal-products manufacturers increased 1.3% to \$1.1 billion. Skyrocketing world crude oil prices have elevated prices for refined petroleum products, boosting operating revenue 16.0% to an all-time high of \$11.7 billion. Rising crude oil prices lifted profits in the mineral fuels industry to \$3.4 billion, 37.8% above the previous quarter and four times the profits earned in the first quarter of 1999. Many oil producers would have reported even higher profits, but hedging losses crimped first-quarter results.

Wholesalers' operating profits in the first quarter rose 6.3% to

Note to readers

The quarterly financial statistics for enterprises for 1988 through 1999 have now been revised. The survey has undergone significant methodological changes over the past year, notably the conversion to the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS Canada 1997). These quarterly financial statistics cover the domestic activities of non-government corporations.

Operating profits of enterprises



\$3.2 billion. Overall, wholesalers' profits have now risen for six consecutive quarters. Profits in the retail sector slipped 1.7%, but operating revenue remained essentially unchanged from record high fourth-quarter levels.

Financial industries reported a substantial 20.1% increase in first-quarter operating profits. Funds and other financial vehicles (excluding pension funds) reported significantly higher gains on sales of securities and other assets, which boosted operating profits 30.8%. Insurance companies enjoyed a 37.9% profit increase to \$1.2 billion. The depository credit intermediaries (including chartered banks, trust companies and credit unions) posted a moderate 0.7% rise in operating profits, 5.8% above those earned in the first quarter of 1999.

The all-industries operating profit margin advanced for a sixth straight quarter, rising to 10.5%. This was the largest quarter-to-quarter improvement in this profitability indicator since the third quarter of 1997.

The annualized return on shareholders' equity slipped to 9.0%, down from 9.4% in the fourth quarter but well ahead of the 6.2% return earned in the first quarter of 1999. Despite the improved operating profits, after-tax profits (the profit measure used in the return on equity calculation) declined 4.5% from the previous quarter due to significant capital losses, particularly in the financial sector.

To order data, or for general information, contact Jeannine D'Angelo (613-951-2604). For analytical information, contact Bill Potter (613-951-2662) or Jean-Pierre Simard (613-951-0741), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

Financial statistics for enterprises

Seasonally adjusted

	Q1	Q4	Q1	Q4
	1999 ^r	1999 ^r	2000 ^p	1999 to Q1 2000
	\$ billions			% change
All industries				
Operating revenue	460.2	494.9	506.0	2.2
Operating profit	38.8	47.4	53.3	12.3
Non-financial industries				
Operating revenue	407.8	437.5	445.4	1.8
Operating profit	27.7	33.8	36.9	9.2
Financial industries				
Operating revenue	52.4	57.4	60.6	5.6
Operating profit	11.1	13.6	16.4	20.1

^r Revised data.

^p Preliminary data, see note to readers.

(continued on page 4)

Industrial capacity use rate reaches new peak

In the first quarter, factories operated at 87.6% of capacity, surpassing the peak of the 1987-88 economic expansion (86.8%). On the strength of surging exports and robust domestic demand, they raised their rate of capacity use in the first quarter for a sixth straight quarter—reaching a level not seen since the mid-1960s.

The rate of capacity use has been rising because production capacity has not expanded fast enough to keep pace with industrial output. However, several industries posted rates in the first quarter that indicate they may be nearing current production limits. Logging and forestry, mining and quarrying, construction, electric power systems and 8 of the 22 manufacturing industry groups all posted rates over 90%. Although capacity use rates have reached almost unprecedented levels, there is still no clear evidence that inflationary pressures are building.

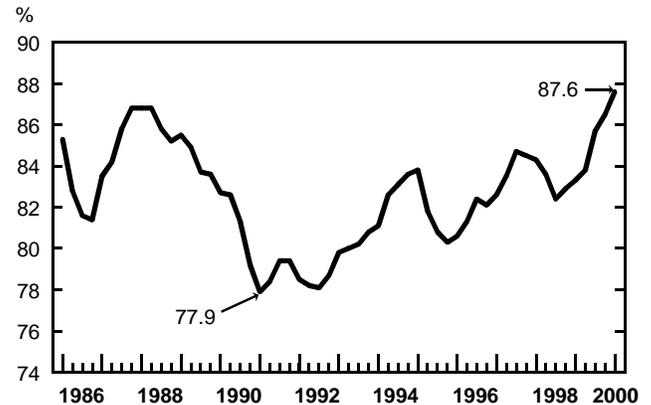
The manufacturing sector contributed the most to the first-quarter increase in industrial production and to the resulting rise in the rate of capacity use. Overall, that rate increased by 0.7 percentage points, bringing the level to 87.9%. This marked the fourth consecutive quarterly increase. Thirteen of the 22 manufacturing industry groups, accounting for almost two-thirds of total factory output, raised their rates.

In particular, electrical and electronic products, beverages, and rubber products reached new peaks. Stepping up output in response to export demand, producers of telecommunications equipment were largely responsible for the rise in the rate for the electrical and electronic products group, bringing the level of capacity use to 94.6%. Producers of rubber products appeared to be approaching

Note to readers

An industry's capacity use is the ratio of its actual output to its estimated potential output. Statistics Canada derives estimates of an industry's potential output from measures of its capital stock, and it also surveys companies. A company's measure of its level of operation, as a percentage of potential, takes into account changes in the obsolescence of facilities, capital-to-labour ratios and other characteristics of production techniques. Rates of capacity use have undergone a historical revision back to the first quarter of 1998.

Industrial capacity utilization rates



full capacity, operating at 97.7%. In the beverage industry, the rate of capacity use reached 91.4%, mainly due to a jump in output by producers of soft drinks in March.

For the first time in almost two years, the machinery industry operated at more than 80% capacity, buoyed by a sharp increase in the production of construction machinery and sawmill and woodworking machinery in February. The largest decrease in the first quarter occurred in the primary textile industries, where production fell 10.6%. Consequently, their rate of capacity use declined 8.4 points to 74.8%.

In the non-manufacturing industries, capacity use rates were up everywhere except forestry, where output fell in the first two months of the quarter. Despite this decline, forestry was still operating at 92.0% of capacity. In mining and quarrying, the rate of capacity use rose to 93.0%. In that industry, output rose 3.0%, largely due to increased drilling and rigging activity.

Electric power systems also increased output in the quarter, owing to cooler temperatures in January and February, as well as to higher exports to the United States in February. The rate of capacity use reached 90.7%, a new peak. Similarly in gas distribution systems, output increased in the first two months of the quarter on increased demand from residential and commercial customers. As a result, capacity use increased to 74.4%.

For more information, contact Richard Landry (613-951-2579) or Susanna Wood (613-951-0655), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Industrial capacity utilization rates, Q1 2000

	%	% point change, previous quarter	% point change, previous year
Total, non-farm goods-producing industries	87.6	1.1	4.3
Logging and forestry	92.0	-2.2	6.8
Mining (including milling) and quarrying	93.0	3.2	12.0
Crude oil and natural gas	72.1	0.9	1.6
Manufacturing	87.9	0.7	3.8
Wood	93.6	3.1	6.8
Furniture and fixtures	87.4	0.8	4.7
Primary metals	93.1	-1.4	-0.1
Machinery	84.2	5.5	11.1
Transportation equipment	93.2	0.9	3.5
Electrical and electronic products	94.6	2.6	14.6
Non-metallic mineral products	85.2	1.3	-3.8
Beverages	91.4	1.7	7.0
Rubber products	97.7	7.8	1.0
Primary textile	74.8	-8.4	-7.9
Textile products	86.5	3.4	7.2
Paper and allied products	94.0	-0.5	4.5
Refined petroleum and coal products	92.5	1.3	-3.9
Chemical and chemical products	78.2	-1.0	-2.9
Construction	91.8	1.8	4.6
Electric power	90.7	1.8	5.3
Gas distribution	74.4	4.2	-0.4

Decline in residential intentions pulls down building permits

In April, the value of building permits issued by municipalities declined 8.9% to \$2.9 billion, pulled down by a large decline in residential intentions. Residential building permits tumbled 15.2% to \$1.5 billion in April, due to lower intentions in both single- and multi-family dwellings, which contributed to the decline almost equally. In the non-residential sector, municipalities issued \$1.4 billion in building permits, down 0.7% from March on lower permits in the commercial component.

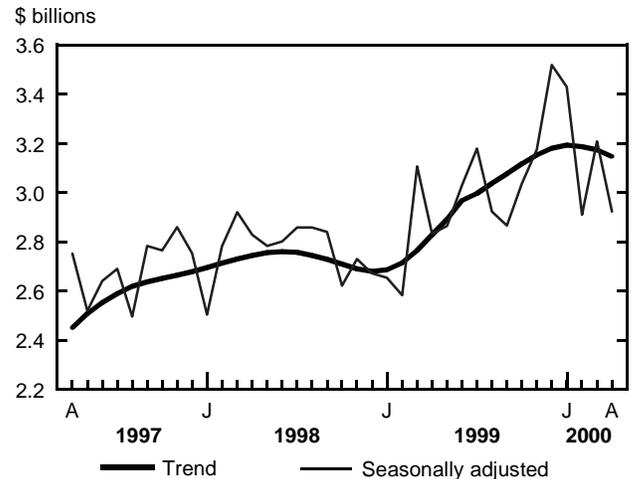
Nonetheless, during the first four months of 2000, the value of building permits reached \$12.5 billion, up 11.6% over the same period in 1999, with both the residential and non-residential sectors contributing.

Permits for single-family dwellings declined for a third consecutive month (-10.7%), while intentions for multiple-family dwellings dropped 26.9%, after a substantial increase in March. Recent increases in long-term mortgage rates, higher selling prices for new housing and weaker home resales may have dampened the outlook for the housing market. However, high full-time employment levels, a low vacancy rate and ongoing economic growth should help to maintain the overall housing market at a higher level than last year.

Among the provinces, Ontario recorded a substantial decrease (in dollar terms) in residential projects (-24.7% to \$721 million), their lowest value since February 1999. The decline was concentrated in metropolitan centres, where a majority showed declines in both single- and multi-family dwelling intentions. British Columbia, Newfoundland and Quebec made smaller contributions to the overall decline. Alberta showed the largest increase (in dollar terms) in April on the strength of higher intentions for single-family dwellings.

In the non-residential sector in April, commercial intentions fell 4.3%, mostly due to fewer projects in the office building and

Value of building permits



warehouses categories. However, the institutional component maintained momentum (+7.4%) after a very large increase in March, the biggest contributions coming mostly from the welfare and government building categories. Industrial building permits remained virtually unchanged from March.

Among the provinces, the most significant monthly decreases in dollar terms were in Alberta, where all non-residential components declined, and in Saskatchewan. In contrast, Nova Scotia showed the largest increase on gains in all three components, followed by Quebec, supported by large gains in industrial projects.

*The April 2000 issue of **Building permits** (online at www.statcan.ca: 64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) presents the full report. For analytical information, contact Pierre Després (613-951-9691; desppie@statcan.ca). For more information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; burejoa@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

Urban transport: Revenues outstrip ridership

Revenues for urban transit authorities across Canada grew at three times the pace of ridership between 1995 and 1999, according to a new study on urban transport. Annual revenues grew 4.5 % per year, whereas the number of passengers carried rose 1.4% per year.

Transit authorities' total operating revenues reached more than \$1.9 billion in 1999, up 18.7% from 1995. During the same period, however, the number of passengers increased only 5% to just over 1.4 billion.

From 1970 to 1990, urban transit ridership rose steadily, reaching a peak of 1.5 billion passengers carried in 1990. After that, ridership declined until the mid-1990s, when it began to rise again. According to the study, two key factors might explain the variation in the numbers of passengers, on a national basis, between 1992 and 1998: the rise in average fares and the level of service provided. (Level of service corresponds with the number of hours that urban transit vehicles provide service.)

In about 80 cities, between 1992 and 1998, average fares rose from 93 cents to \$1.14 in current dollars, but did not keep pace with inflation. Revenues rose from \$1.2 billion to \$1.5 billion, whereas service hours decreased from 24.6 million to 23.2 million. The number of passengers remained constant at 1.43 billion.

Nevertheless, the results of service and fare changes in eight cities that carry about 75% of all urban transit riders differ from the national average. In one city, for example, fare decreases coupled with service increases helped to push up both ridership and revenue by more than 20%.

In 1992, urban transit ridership in Canada was 92 trips per capita. By 1998, it had fallen to 84 trips. Notably, cities such as Ottawa, Toronto and Montreal have per-capita ridership rates that exceed the national average.

Factors affecting urban transit ridership (53F0003XIE, no charge) is now available online at www.statcan.ca. Click on "Products and services", followed by "Downloadable research papers (free)". To request data, contact Jean-Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; larocque@statcan.ca). For more analytical information, contact Harold Kohn (613-951-0162; kohnhar@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.

East–west divergence seen in average airfares

Between 1994 and 1998, average domestic airfares decreased in western cities, but increased in eastern cities. The average domestic airfare reached a record high of \$199.70 in 1994. In 1996, fares for all cities dropped significantly, then in 1997 fares began to increase again. However, in 1998, airfares in the western cities remained below their record 1994 levels, whereas fares in the east surpassed their prior records.

Average domestic airfares

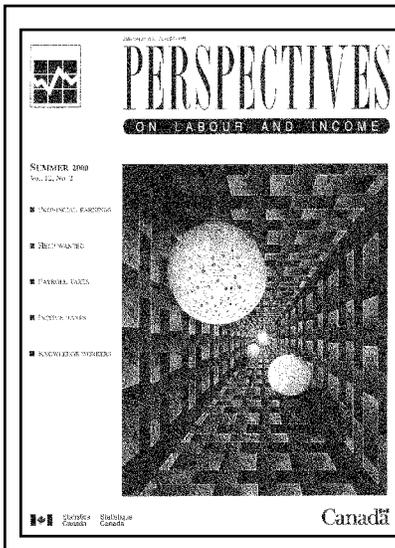
	1994	1998	1994 to 1998
	\$		% change
Canada	199.70	192.70	-3.5
Vancouver	216.80	192.60	-11.2
Edmonton	190.40	173.40	-8.9
Calgary	199.70	178.10	-10.8
Regina	194.40	168.50	-13.3
Saskatoon	183.40	161.60	-11.9
Winnipeg	219.20	214.10	-2.3
Toronto	218.70	224.80	2.8
Ottawa	202.40	209.60	3.6
Montreal	187.90	194.70	3.6
Halifax	188.20	196.70	4.5

The divergence of fares between eastern and western cities resulted from many factors. In February 1996, WestJet began scheduled service in the western provinces. As well, in July of that year, Greyhound Air began scheduled trans-Canada flights, creating additional competition. Both carriers featured regular low fares, which the major carriers quickly matched. In addition, the charter carriers continued to compete more and more with the scheduled carriers. In 1997, VistaJet entered the eastern market as a low-cost carrier, but it ceased operations in September, followed shortly by Greyhound Air. In 1998, airfares also began to reflect new user charges for air navigation services and some airport improvement fees.

The proportion of business class passengers was also higher in the eastern cities. In 1998, according to the Canadian Travel Survey, the eastern air travel market consisted largely of business travel, whereas the western market was mostly personal travel. In Ontario–Quebec, 72% of air travel trips in 1998 were for business purposes. By contrast, in the Alberta–British Columbia market, 67% of air trips were for personal purposes that year. Personal air travel markets may be more price-sensitive, whereas business travellers may be more concerned about frequency of flights, international connections and other factors. Since 1983, City Express, Wardair, Nationair, Intair, Greyhound Air, and VistaJet have each, in turn, unsuccessfully contested the eastern market by offering low-cost scheduled flights.

The May 2000 issue of *Aviation service bulletin* (online at www.statcan.ca: 51-004-XIB; \$8/\$82) is now available. A print-on-demand service is also available. For more information, contact Bradley Snider (613-951-0071; snidbra@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Perspectives on labour and income Summer 2000

One of the articles in the summer issue of *Perspectives on labour and income* presents a comparison of the effective income tax rates in Canada and the United States. This issue also looks at provincial earnings differences, the Help-wanted Index as a predictor of labour-market conditions, payroll taxes, and knowledge workers on the move (adapted from the Spring 2000 issue of *Education quarterly review*).

The Summer 2000 issue of *Perspectives on labour and income* (75-001-XPE, \$18/\$58) is now on sale. For more information, contact Henry Pold (613-951-4608; henry.pold@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

New from Statistics Canada

Socio-economic profiles of independent truck drivers

1997

In 1997, the nearly 50,000 self-employed Canadians who worked as independent truckers (owner-operators) worked long hours for low pay, and they were far more likely to feel stressed than drivers employed by trucking companies.

These findings and more are documented in a new research paper titled *The cost of independence: Socio-economic profiles of independent truck drivers*. It is part of a series of transportation-related research papers that were released in recognition of National Transportation Week.

The cost of independence: Socio-economic profiles of independent truck drivers (53F0002XIE, no charge), as well as other reports and studies on various aspects of transportation, can be downloaded at Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca) free of charge. Look under "Products and services", followed by "Downloadable research papers (free)". Copies can also be obtained from Jean-Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; laroque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.

Travel agencies

A new research paper titled *Quit yanking my supply chain: The challenges facing travel agencies in Canada* examines the current difficulties faced by travel agencies, such as increased competition via the Internet and erosion of revenue and customers. This paper was produced as part of National Transportation Week.

The new report, *Quit yanking my supply chain: The challenges facing travel agencies in Canada* (50F0003XIE) can be downloaded free of charge at Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under "Products and services", followed by "Downloadable research papers (free)". For further information, contact Jean-Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; laroque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.

Inter-corporate ownership

2000

The structure of the Canadian corporate sector is constantly evolving. Stock splits, mergers and takeovers are regular occurrences affecting the concentration of corporate assets and the degree of foreign control. The *Inter-corporate ownership directory* is the most authoritative and comprehensive source of information currently available on corporate ownership. It tracks the ownership of the largest Canadian corporations and provides up-to-date information reflecting recent corporate takeovers and other substantial changes.

The *Inter-corporate ownership directory*, which now lists more than 95,000 corporations, is a unique directory of who owns what in Canada. The data are presented in an easy-to-read tiered format, illustrating at a glance the hierarchy of subsidiaries within each corporate structure. The entries for each corporation provide both the country of control and the country of residence. As well, inclusion of the Standard Industrial Classification code enables study by industrial sector.

The 2000 edition of *Inter-corporate ownership directory* (61-517-XPB, \$350), produced biennially, is now available. A Windows version of the directory, updated quarterly, is available on CD-ROM (61-517-XCB, \$350/\$995). For more information, contact Jeannine D'Angelo (613-951-2604) or Martin Brière (613-951-0519), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

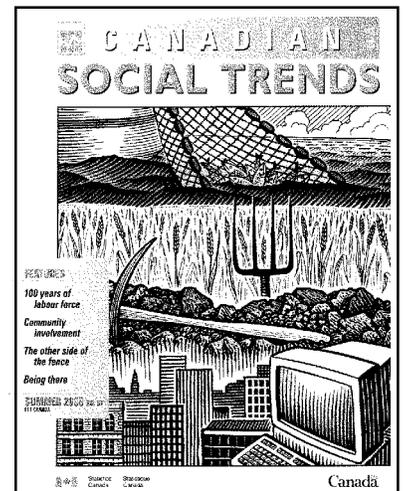
Canadian social trends

Summer 2000

The current issue of *Canadian social trends* features the following articles: "One hundred years of the labour force", "Community involvement: The influence of early experience", "The other side of the fence" (a study about neighbours), and "Being there: The time dual-earner couples spend with their children".

Each quarter, *Canadian social trends* integrates data from many sources to examine emerging social trends and issues. It also features the latest social indicators, as well as information about Statistics Canada's products and services.

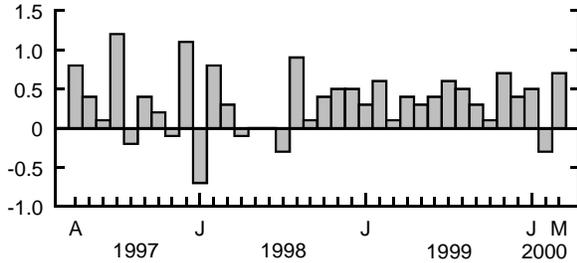
The Summer 2000 issue of *Canadian social trends* (print: 11-008-XPE, \$11/\$36; online at www.statcan.ca: 11-008-XIE, \$8/\$27) is now available. For more information, contact Susan Crompton (613-951-2556; cstsc@statcan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.



Current trends

Gross domestic product

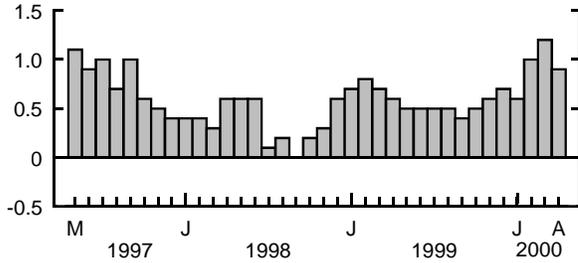
% change,
previous month



After receding in February, economic activity surged 0.7% in March. The advance marked a return to the solid growth path.

Composite Index

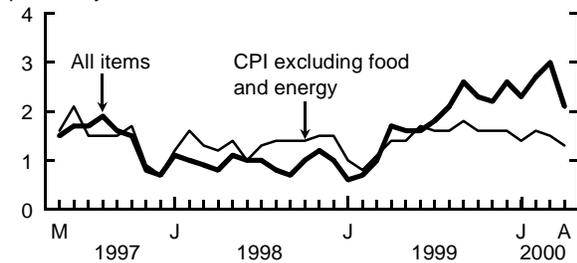
% change,
previous month



The growth of the leading indicator slowed from 1.2% in March to 0.9% in April. Household demand lost some of its vigour and financial markets slowed.

Consumer Price Index

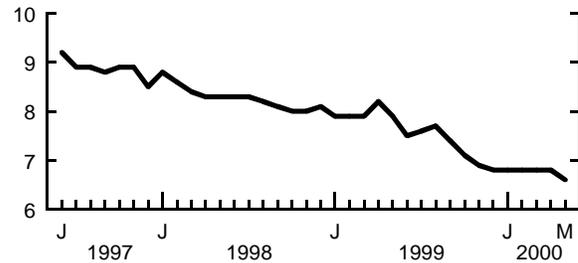
% change,
previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.1% higher in April 2000 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.3%.

Unemployment rate

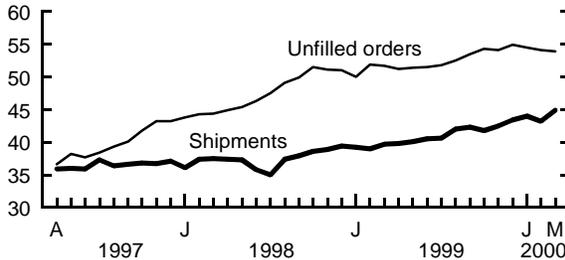
%



In May, the unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points to 6.6%, the lowest since March 1976.

Manufacturing

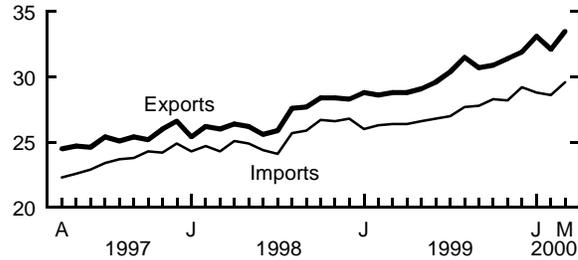
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rebounded 3.8% in March to \$44.9 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders decreased 0.3% to \$53.9 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In March, the value of merchandise exports rebounded 4.5% from February to \$33.5 billion. Imports climbed 3.7% to \$29.6 billion.

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

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	March	774.3	0.7%	4.7%
Composite Index (1992=100)	April	161.6	0.9%	8.2%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q1 2000*	53.3	12.3%	37.5%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 2000	87.6	1.1†	4.3†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	March	22.8	2.1%	6.7%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	April	1.50	1.4%	3.9%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	April*	133.2	-1.1%	4.2%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	March	31.6	2.0%	8.7%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	May*	14.91	0.3%	2.8%
Unemployment rate (%)	May*	6.6	-0.2†	-1.3†
Participation rate (%)	May*	65.8	0.0†	0.0†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	March	624.11	0.3%	3.0%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	May	169	1.2%	7.0%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	March	33.5	4.5%	16.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	March	29.6	3.7%	12.5%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	March	3.9	0.4	1.4
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	March	44.9	3.8%	13.0%
New orders (\$ billion)	March	44.8	4.5%	13.3%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	March	53.9	-0.3%	4.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	March	1.28	-0.03	-0.01
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	April	110.1	-0.4%	2.1%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	April	126.8	0.0%	5.6%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	April	134.1	-6.0%	19.7%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	April*	102.7	0.2%	2.1%

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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