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A Weekly Review

Friday, July 6, 2001

OVERVIEW

◆ Economic activity stalls

After edging up 0.1% in March, total economic activity was unchanged in April. A surge in oil and gas exploration activity provided the single largest push to the economy.

◆ Growth of industrial prices and cost of raw materials slacken

Annual rates of growth for both industrial product prices and the cost of raw materials slowed in May, as energy prices had less impact.

◆ First drop in labour productivity in nearly five years

Labour productivity in the business sector declined a marginal 0.2% in the first three months of 2001 as the economy slowed down. It was the first year-over-year drop since the second quarter of 1996.

◆ Foreigners continue to invest strongly in Canadian bonds

In April, foreign investors added \$4.7 billion in Canadian bonds to the \$6.2 billion invested in March, bringing to \$13.6 billion the holdings accumulated so far in 2001.

◆ Weekly earnings remain unchanged

In April, average weekly earnings for all employees were virtually unchanged at \$661.05. On a year-over-year basis, average weekly earnings were up 1.8%.

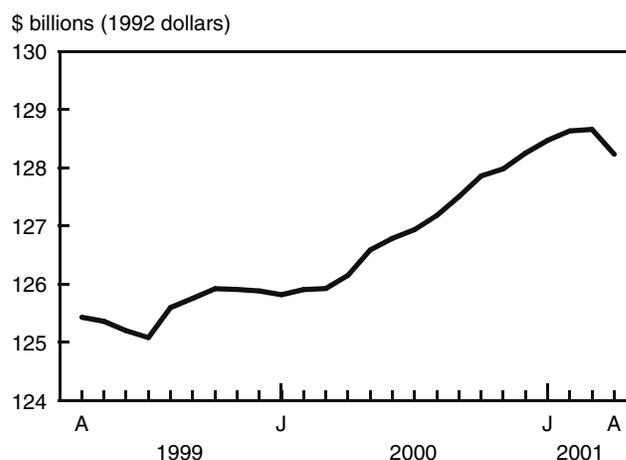
Economic activity stalls

Total economic activity was unchanged in April, after edging up 0.1% in March. The 23.5% surge in oil and gas exploration activity provided the single largest boost to the economy in April. Unusually dry weather and strong market incentives spurred producers to increase exploration activity. Nevertheless, the extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas fell back, after advancing for two months.

Public sector output fell 0.4% because of labour disputes. Strikes in Ontario schools, as well as smaller work stoppages across Newfoundland, in Halifax and in Vancouver led to a 1.1% fall in education services. Overall, the strikes—which were over by month's end—shaved 0.1% from the total economy's growth rate.

Generous incentives lured customers into auto dealers' showrooms, sending retailing activity 0.8% higher. April was also a good month for retailers of men's and women's clothing and shoes. These increases were partly offset by the sharpest decline in furniture store sales activity in several years. Wholesaling activity fell 0.5%, declining for a third straight month. The decrease was broadly based.

Public sector output



(continued on page 2)



... Economic activity stalls

Total factory output eased 0.1%, a fifth decline in six months, owing to the continued slump in world demand for communications-related products. Output of telecommunications equipment fell 14.2%, the seventh drop in eight months, dragging down overall production of electrical and electronic products by 2.1%. Despite the drop in production, manufacturers have a significant accumulation of unsold goods. In contrast, output of computers and peripherals rose in April, buoyed by resilient foreign demand.

Machinery producers reduced production by 4.0% in April. Factories making agricultural, sawmill and other machinery were hurt by labour strife, and slowing demand moved other plants to reduce the length of their work weeks.

Activity in the automotive products industry continued to reflect the recent resurgence of consumer demand in the United States. Canadian output of motor vehicles increased 3.7% in April, a second consecutive increase. Production of light trucks was up particularly sharply.

The first full month of production after the expiry of the Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement saw a partial rebound in output of sawed lumber. Strong residential construction activity in the United States prompted Canadian sawmills to raise output by 5.3% after March's tumble. Output of other wood products was also up in April.

Output in the construction industry fell 0.7% in April, the second consecutive decline. The drop was most pronounced for engineering projects.

Note to readers

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

The next annual revision of monthly GDP by industry estimates, scheduled for release on September 28, will include major classification and conceptual changes. For more information, consult the "Statistical methods" page on Statistics Canada's Web site, www.statcan.ca.

Output in the finance industries edged up 0.1% in April, as investors continued to channel money into mutual funds. Sales climbed 60% compared with April 2000, although most of these sales were directed into money market funds. However, the current slowdown in the stock market continued to affect both larger integrated investment dealers and smaller independent ones.

The April 2001 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (Internet: 15-001-XIE, \$11/\$110) will be available soon. A print-on-demand version is also available. 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 prices and cost of raw materials slacken

Annual rates of growth for both industrial product prices and the cost of raw materials slowed in May, as energy prices had less impact. Manufacturers' prices, as measured by the Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI), grew 2.7% from May 2000 to May 2001, compared with a year-over-year gain of 2.9% in April. Meanwhile, manufacturers paid 2.0% more for their raw materials last May than they did in May 2000, a significant slowdown from April's year-over-year gain of 7.5%.

Petroleum and coal product prices rose 10.0% in May from May 2000. Price increases for motor vehicles, chemicals and chemical products and lumber also contributed to the annual rise in manufacturers' prices. In contrast, falling prices for primary metal products had a dampening effect on the yearly increase. Mineral fuels were responsible for part of the upward pressure in the Raw Materials Price Index in May, along with increases for animal and vegetable products. These advances were partly offset by declining prices for wood and non-ferrous metal products.

From April to May, industrial prices rose 0.3%. Higher prices for lumber and petroleum and coal products were partly offset by lower prices for paper and paper products, motor vehicles and

Industrial product and raw materials price indexes, May 2001

	Index (1992=100)	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI)	131.0	2.7	0.3
IPPI excluding petroleum and coal products	128.5	0.2	2.2
Intermediate goods	131.6	2.1	0.5
Finished goods	130.2	3.8	0.1
Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI)	144.6	2.0	0.6
RMPI excluding mineral fuels	126.1	1.4	-0.3
Mineral fuels (crude oil)	184.8	3.0	1.8
Vegetable products	120.7	5.7	2.1
Animals and animal products	129.7	5.9	1.0
Wood	138.2	-2.2	-4.0
Ferrous materials	112.9	-5.9	-0.4
Non-ferrous metals	114.2	-3.4	0.6
Non-metallic minerals	123.0	1.4	0.0

chemicals and chemical products. Raw materials prices rose 0.6%. Increases for mineral fuels and animal and vegetable products were somewhat offset by declines in prices for wood products.

(continued on page 3)

... Growth of industrial prices and cost of raw materials slackens

Crude oil prices were 1.9% higher in May than in April, as Iraq announced plans to halt exports and concerns regarding supply shortfalls for the summer season continued. This increase spilled over into the IPPI, as petroleum and coal product prices were up 3.1%.

Rising prices for motor vehicles and petroleum products pushed up prices of finished goods on a year-over-year basis. Prices for electrical and communication products, tobacco products and paper and paper products also contributed to the 3.8% rise from May 2000. On a month-to-month basis, prices for finished products were virtually unchanged, up 0.1% from April. Higher prices for petroleum products were offset by lower prices for motor vehicles and meat, fish and dairy products.

Producers of intermediate goods received 2.1% more for their goods in May compared with May 2000. Higher prices for petroleum, paper and paper products and lumber products were the driving force behind this increase. Prices for input goods

Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers in Canada receive as the goods leave the plant gate. It does not reflect what the consumer pays. Canadian producers export many goods. They often quote their prices in foreign currencies. Therefore, a rise or fall in the value of the Canadian dollar against its U.S. counterpart affects the IPPI.

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

advanced 0.5% in May from April, on the strength of prices for lumber and petroleum products.

*The May 2001 issue of **Industry price indexes** (paper: 62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available soon. For more information, contact Client Services (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca) or Danielle Gouin (613-951-3375; danielle.gouin@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

First drop in labour productivity in nearly five years

As the economy slowed down, labour productivity in the business sector edged down 0.2% in the first three months of 2001 on a year-over-year basis. It was the first year-over-year drop in quarterly productivity growth since the second quarter of 1996.

The first quarter's decline in productivity growth occurred at a time of falling exports, lower investments in machinery and equipment, and a slowdown in the growth of hours worked.

On a quarter-to-quarter basis, labour productivity in the business sector declined 0.1% in the first quarter of 2001. This follows a 0.6% decline in the fourth quarter of 2000 and a rise of 0.8% in the third quarter of 2000.

Labour productivity growth in the business sector has slowed on a year-over-year basis in both Canada and the United States in the past three quarters. In Canada, growth fell from 2.1% in the second quarter of 2000 to -0.2% in the first quarter of 2001, while in the United States, growth slowed from 5.2% to 2.7% over the same period.

However, since 1997, the year-over-year rate of growth in business sector labour productivity has been much higher in the United States than in Canada. Over this four-year period, productivity growth averaged 3.3% in the United States, compared with 2.0% in Canada.

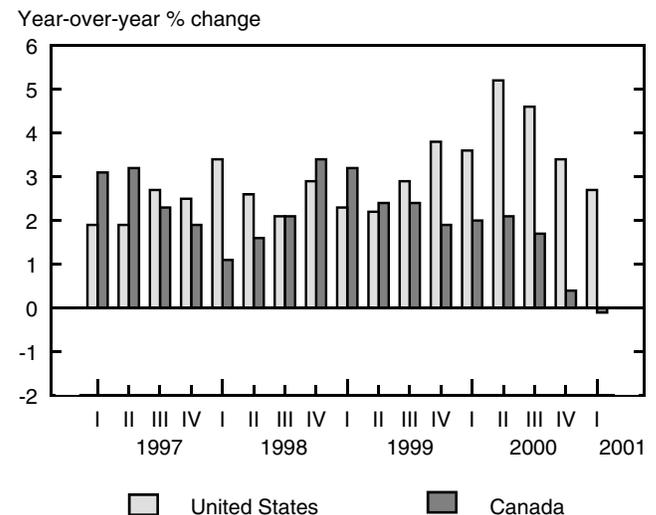
Despite the slight decrease in labour productivity, the pace of growth in unit labour costs slowed in Canada in the first quarter, falling from 3.2% in the fourth quarter of 2000 to 1.9% in the first quarter of 2001. This slowdown was primarily due to a slower pace in the year-over-year growth of hourly compensation, which fell from 3.6% in the fourth quarter of 2000 to 1.7% in the first quarter of 2001. This has more than compensated for the slight drop in labour productivity.

Note to readers

Because of a change in the treatment of business and government software purchases taking effect in the quarterly Income and Expenditure Accounts released May 31, the new labour productivity series for 1997 and following years is not fully compatible with previously released historical series prior to 1997.

Labour productivity is the ratio of output to labour input (hours worked). Economic performance as measured by labour productivity must be interpreted carefully, especially in the short run. Unit labour cost is the labour cost per unit of output.

Business sector labour productivity growth



(continued on page 4)

... First drop in labour productivity in nearly five years

Unit labour costs in Canadian businesses rose at a slower pace than in the United States in the first quarter, a situation not seen since the fourth quarter of 1999. On a year-over-year basis, unit labour costs rose 1.9% in Canada, compared with 3.5% in the United States. Furthermore, the gap between the two countries rises when Canadian unit labour costs are converted to U.S.

dollars: Canada's growth rate fell 3.0% during this period, while it rose 3.5% in the United States.

A technical note concerning the calculation of labour productivity estimates is available on request. To obtain a copy, send an e-mail to productivity.measures@statcan.ca. For more information, contact John Baldwin (613-951-8588; fax: 613-951-5403; baldjoh@statcan.ca), Micro-economic Analysis Division.

Foreigners continue to invest strongly in Canadian bonds

In April, foreign investors added \$4.7 billion in Canadian bonds to their seven-year high investment of \$6.2 billion in March. These acquisitions bring to \$13.6 billion the holdings of Canadian bonds accumulated so far in 2001. That contrasts sharply with the first four months of 2000, when foreigners divested \$3.2 billion of their Canadian bond holdings over the first four months.

Foreign investors were mainly active in the secondary market of existing issues, purchasing \$3.1 billion. For a second consecutive month, their acquisitions focused primarily on federal issues. New bond issues floated abroad continued to outstrip retiring issues but the margin of difference was \$1.2 billion, the lowest in three months. Net new borrowings (new issues less retirements) by corporations, which had reached \$4 billion in February and March, shrank to \$0.8 billion in April.

For the first time this year, foreign investors—primarily European and American investors—sold off Canadian equities. This disinvestment, which totalled \$1 billion, was focused entirely on secondary market issues. Canadian stock prices gained 4.5% in April, after shedding more than 18% of their value in February and March.

Foreign investors slightly increased their holdings of Canadian money market paper with a small investment of \$0.6 billion. In the first quarter, these holdings had declined by \$4.9 billion. The investment came solely from U.S. investors and was directed entirely to corporate paper.

Meanwhile, Canadian investors added \$3.9 billion to their holdings of foreign equities in April, bringing to \$17.8 billion their investment in the first four months of 2001. April's investment, which is attributable to the mutual and pension fund sectors, went 70% to U.S. equities. After increasing their holdings of foreign bonds by \$1.3 billion in March, Canadians sold off a small amount, \$0.3 billion, in April.

*The April 2001 issue of **Canada's international transactions in securities** (67-002-XIB, \$14/\$132; 67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176) will be available soon. For more information, contact Donald Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.*

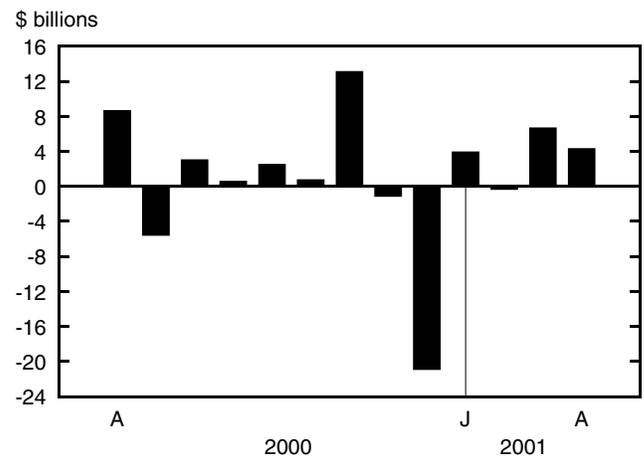
Related market information

In April, as in March, short-term interest rates fell more in the United States than in Canada. This pushed up the differential from 36 to 71 basis points, further favouring investment in Canada. By contrast, long-term rates in the United States rose slightly more than those in Canada, causing the differential to narrow. It dropped from 32 to 19 basis points, still favouring investment in Canada.

The TSE 300 advanced 4.5% in April. However, it remained almost 30% below its record high closing in August 2000. The Standard & Poor's 500 index performed better, gaining 7.7% in April but still remaining 18% below its record close in August 2000.

With a gain of 1.64 U.S. cents, the Canadian dollar recovered half the 3.28 U.S. cents it lost in February and March.

Foreign investment in Canadian securities¹



¹ Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

Weekly earnings remain unchanged

In April, average weekly earnings for all employees were virtually unchanged at \$661.05. On a year-over-year basis, average weekly earnings were up 1.8%.

Average weekly earnings were almost unchanged in April in both goods- and services-producing industries. In goods-producing industries, there were slight earnings decreases in mining, construction and manufacturing. Earnings in services-producing industries were reduced slightly by declines in real estate and leasing as well as education and health. These declines were somewhat offset by earnings gains in wholesale and professional services. Public administration average earnings were also down in April because of the addition to payrolls of casual census workers.

Average hourly earnings for hourly paid employees were \$16.65 in April, up five cents from March. Average weekly hours for hourly paid employees were down a slight 0.2 to 31.6 hours. Average overtime hours remained unchanged.

The number of employees on payrolls rose 13,000 in April. However, this increase includes the addition of temporary census workers and the offsetting impacts of strikes and work stoppages in education and transportation. With the temporary employment impacts excluded, payroll employment in April was virtually unchanged.

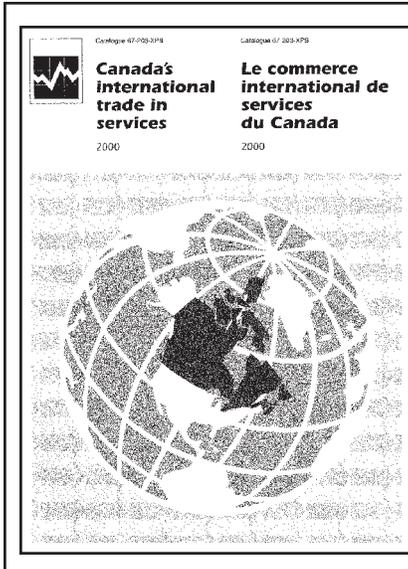
*The April 2001 issue of **Employment, earnings and hours** (Internet: 72-002-XIB, \$24/\$240) presents detailed industry data and other labour market indicators. For more information, contact Robert Frindt or Jean Leduc (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.*

Average weekly earnings by industry, April 2001

Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
All industries	661.05	-0.1	1.8
Forestry, logging and support	829.09	1.4	2.8
Mining and oil and gas	1143.95	-0.5	1.9
Utilities	997.45	0.1	0.3
Construction	803.65	-0.2	-0.8
Manufacturing	798.63	-0.1	1.1
Wholesale trade	770.47	1.2	1.4
Retail trade	430.42	-0.3	1.2
Transportation and warehousing	735.99	0.0	1.2
Information and cultural industries	786.93	0.4	2.3
Finance and insurance	843.94	0.3	0.8
Real estate and rental and leasing	604.99	-1.1	5.7
Professional, scientific and technical services	886.53	0.7	3.7
Management of companies and enterprises	839.29	0.0	2.2
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	532.14	0.0	4.6
Educational services	685.83	-0.7	1.7
Health care and social assistance	574.50	-0.6	3.4
Arts, entertainment and recreation	476.41	0.1	3.1
Accommodation and food services	283.90	0.3	4.8
Other services (excluding public administration)	516.28	0.0	3.2
Public administration	746.94	-0.8	-0.1

New from Statistics Canada



Canada's international trade in services 2000

Annual details of Canada's trade in services for 2000 are now available in *Canada's international trade in services*. This publication covers transactions in travel, transportation, and commercial and government services with Canada's trading partners. The main tables have been revised from 1997.

Annual data for these broad categories are now available for El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, bringing the number of individual countries covered to 59. In addition, a table has been expanded to show total services by broad category for seven global trading areas, main countries and the total for remaining countries of each area. A memorandum item has been added for the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Canada's international trade in services, 2000 (Internet: 67-203-XIB, \$30; paper: 67-203-XPB, \$40) is now available. For more information, contact Hugh Henderson (613-951-9049; hendhug@statcan.ca) or Denis Caron (613-951-1861; caroden@statcan.ca), Balance of Payments Division.

Health indicators

Volume 2001, number 2

The publication *Health indicators*, Vol. 2001, no. 2, contains all highlights and data tables from Vol. 2001, no. 1, plus two additional tables related to measures of health system accessibility (screening mammography and influenza immunization) plus an additional table on health behaviour (breast-feeding practices). Also included are age-standardized mortality rates by selected causes and sex for Canada, provinces and health regions, and age-standardized cancer incidence rates by primary site and sex for Canada, provinces and selected health regions.

Health indicators (82-221-XIE, free) is available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the "Our products and services" page, choose "Free publications", then "Health". For more information, contact Jason Gilmore (613-951-7118; jason.gilmore@statcan.ca), Statistics Canada, or Karen McCarthy (613-241-7860), Canadian Institute for Health Information.

New from Statistics Canada

Innovation in Canadian manufacturing: National estimates 1999

The working paper *Innovation in Canadian manufacturing: National estimates* is the first in a series that analyses results from the 1999 Survey of Innovation.

This working paper contains descriptive statistics and statistical tables on percentage of innovative firms, novelty of innovation, sources of information, activities linked to innovation, research and development, co-operative and collaborative arrangements, intellectual property, objectives, problems and obstacles, government support programs, impact and human resources. It also includes a description of survey methodology.

Innovation in Canadian manufacturing: National estimates (88F0006XIB01010, free) is now available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the "Our products and services" page, choose "Research papers (free)", then "Science and technology". For more information, contact Susan Schaan (613-951-1953; susan.schaan@statcan.ca) Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.

Extraction system of agricultural statistics on CD-ROM 2001

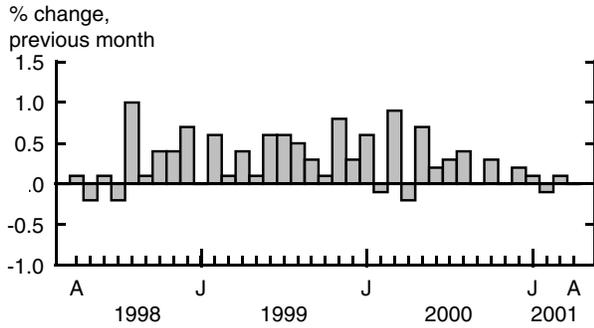
The 2001 *Extraction system of agricultural statistics* on CD-ROM, released today, contains an extensive collection of physical and financial data on farming. The product is a co-operative effort involving Statistics Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

This software allows users to extract data by Census Agricultural Region, farm type and revenue class. The flexibility of this CD-ROM enables users to reorganize reports, perform calculations and create graphs. Selected tables can be viewed, printed or exported for use in other applications. The 2001 version of ESAS contains a full year of new data and a revised user's guide and reference manual.

The 2001 *Extraction system of agricultural statistics* on CD-ROM (21F0001XCB, \$625) is now available. To order, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or call 1-800-267-6677. For more information, contact Linda Brazeau (613-951-5027; linda.brazeau@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division, or the Agriculture Division rural data advisory line (1-800-465-1991; agriculture@statcan.ca).

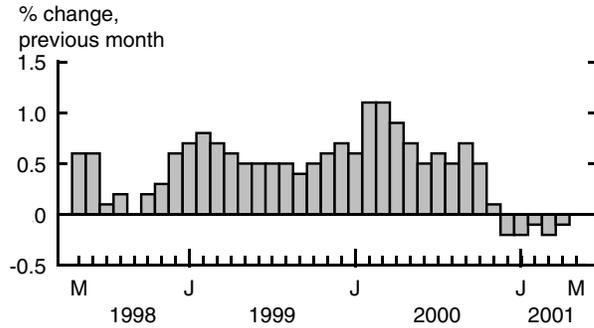
Current trends

Gross domestic product



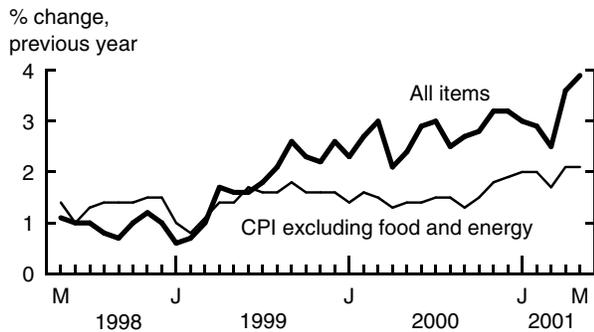
Total economic activity was unchanged in April, after edging up 0.1% in March.

Composite Index



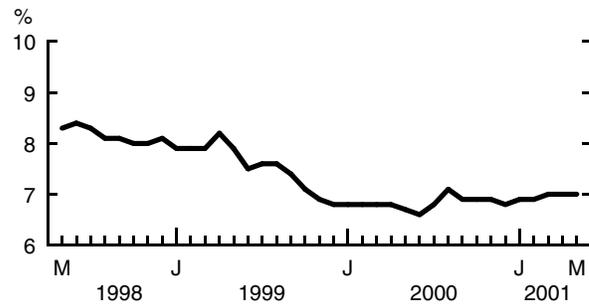
In May, the leading indicator showed its sixth straight month without an increase. The weakness in the stock market and manufacturing in recent months spread to services.

Consumer Price Index



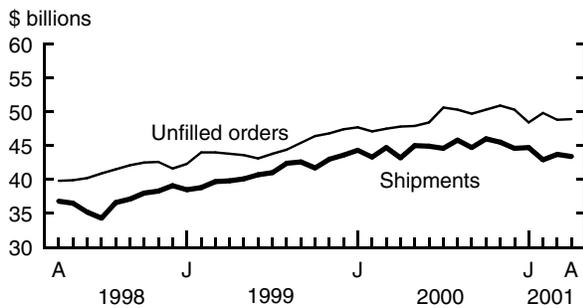
Consumer prices for goods and services were 3.9% higher in May than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 2.1%.

Unemployment rate



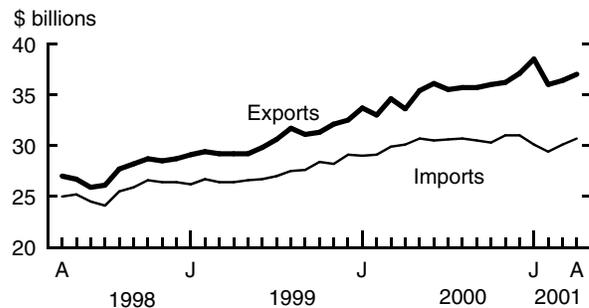
In May, the unemployment rate stood at 7.0% for the third consecutive month.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments fell back 0.6% in April to \$43.4 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders posted a slight 0.2% increase to \$48.9 billion.

Merchandise trade



In April, the value of merchandise exports increased 1.7% to just over \$37.0 billion. Imports rose 1.9% to \$30.7 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)	April*	796.7	0.0%	2.2%
Composite Index (1992=100)	May	166.2	0.0%	2.2%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q1 2001	44.9	-6.9%	-9.7%
Capacity utilization rate (%)	Q1 2001	84.1	-1.0†	1.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	April	24.2	1.6%	6.8%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	May*	1.64	0.0%	8.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	April	134.4	5.9%	1.1%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	April	31.9	-0.9%	1.4%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	May	15.11	0.1%	1.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	May	7.0	0.0†	0.3†
Participation rate (%)	May	66.1	0.0†	0.3†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	April	661.05	-0.1%	1.8%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	June*	161	-1.8%	-6.4%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	April	37.0	1.7%	10.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	April	30.7	1.9%	2.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	April	6.3	0.1	2.8
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)	April	43.4	-0.6%	0.4%
New orders (\$ billions)	April	43.5	1.7%	-0.1%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	April	48.9	0.2%	2.4%
Inventory/shipments ratio	April	1.50	0.01	0.09
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	May	117.4	0.9%	3.9%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	May	131.0	0.3%	2.7%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	May	144.6	0.6%	2.0%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	April	105.5	0.3%	2.7%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

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Products released from June 28 to July 4, 2001

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Cereals and oilseeds review, Vol. 24, no. 4	April 2001	22-007-XIB	11/112
Cereals and oilseeds review, Vol. 24, no. 4	April 2001	22-007-XPB	15/149
Extraction system of agricultural statistics	2001	21F0001XCB	625/295
Farm Product Price Index, Vol. 1, no. 4	April 2001	21-007-XIB	no charge
Food consumption in Canada, Part I	2000	32-229-XIB	26
Food consumption in Canada, Part I	2000	32-229-XPB	35
Fruit and vegetable production, Vol. 70, no. 1	June 2001	22-003-XIB	23/46
Preliminary estimates of principal field crop areas, Canada (Field crop reporting series, Vol. 80, no. 4)		22-002-XIB	11/66
Preliminary estimates of principal field crop areas, Canada (Field crop reporting series, Vol. 80, no. 4)		22-002-XPB	15/88
Rural and small town Canada analysis bulletin, Vol. 3, no. 1	1981-1998	21-006-XIE	no charge
Stocks of frozen meat products	June 2001	23-009-XIE	no charge
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS			
Family violence in Canada: A statistical profile	2001	85-224-XIE	no charge
Juristat: Children witnessing family violence, Vol. 21, no. 6	1998-1999	85-002-XIE	8/70
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