



# Infommat

## A Weekly Review

Friday, July 9, 1999

### OVERVIEW

◆ **Economy grows for ninth consecutive month**

In April, increases in most service industries lifted gross domestic product by 0.3%. It was the economy's ninth consecutive month of growth—the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade.

◆ **Raw material prices rise for third consecutive month**

In May, the Raw Materials Price Index rose 1.4%, the third consecutive monthly advance. Price increases were widespread, with hog prices accounting for much of it.

◆ **Industrial product prices barely budge**

In May, industrial product prices remained close to their April level (-0.1%), as the Canadian dollar rose in value against the U.S. dollar. The major price declines in May were in transportation equipment, particularly exported motor vehicles.

◆ **Average weekly earnings little changed**

In April, average weekly earnings for all employees stood at \$607.42, little changed from March and about the same as in April 1998.

◆ **Department stores post second straight month of sales growth**

Department store sales advanced for a second straight month in May, growing 1.7%.

◆ **Cooler sales soar, but Canadians still prefer beer**

In 1997/98, for the first time in a decade, Canadian spirits captured a larger share of the alcoholic beverage market. Largely, this was due to the popularity of spirit-based coolers. Nevertheless, Canadians still prefer beer to any other alcoholic beverage.

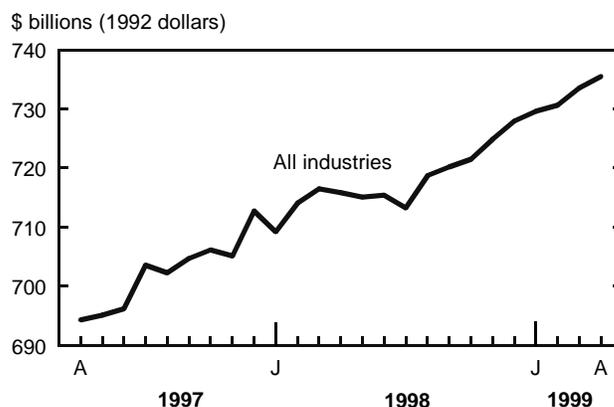
### Economy grows for ninth consecutive month

In April, broad increases in most service industries lifted gross domestic product by 0.3%. It was the economy's ninth consecutive month of growth—the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade. As well, the construction industry continued to expand after a mid-1998 slump. Meanwhile, manufacturing and mining production were little changed, while retailing activity retreated from its strong showing in the first quarter.

Booming computer sales led wholesalers higher in April by 1.2%. This extended the robust growth that has marked wholesaling for more than a year. Distributors of automotive goods also enjoyed a good month. The retreat in retail sales (-1.0%) occurred as consumers shied away from big-ticket items. Auto dealers and furniture stores showed the largest declines, but most store types reported slower sales. Moreover, sellers of many types of durable and semi-durable goods continued to move fewer wares, while service stations pumped less gasoline.

The advance in construction activity (+0.6%), the eighth in nine months, was buttressed by a surge in non-residential projects. Residential construction also rose, reflecting improved demand for new housing. Though it was still slow in the Western provinces

Gross domestic product at factor cost



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### ... Economy grows for ninth consecutive month

in April, the growth on the residential side has been robust in recent months in Ontario.

Turning to manufacturing, factory output in April was little changed. April's pause came on the heels of a strong 0.7% gain in March and an extended period of growth following the strike-induced slump in mid-1998. Twelve of the 22 major industry groups, accounting for more than 43% of total manufacturing production, advanced in April.

Machinery makers recorded their second largest percentage increase in over a year, as makers of compressors and pumps, and other machinery raised output. The industry was also buttressed by higher output of agricultural machinery, as these producers tentatively reported improving market conditions. Shrinking demand during the prior 18 months had cut into production by more than 50%.

The start of a new quota year under the Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement sparked a sharp production increase in the wood products industry. Lumber mills, whose output had been constrained by the agreement's allotments in the closing months of the previous quota period, sought to make up for the foregone production in April (+4.3%). The ongoing boom in residential construction in the United States helped exports of sawn lumber surge 20.5%.

Output of electrical and electronic products rose 0.7%. The electronic parts and computer equipment industries both raised production, the latter for a third consecutive month. However, these gains were partly offset by makers of telecommunications equipment and energy wire and cable, who dampened production after several months of strong growth. Meanwhile, factories making plastic products raised output 1.9%—the 11th increase in 12 months. This industry has been spurred by recent capital investment to build capacity, in order to keep pace with growing demand for new moulded plastic products.

Manufacturing of transportation equipment fell 1.2%, erasing March's gain. Automobile production fell off, paralleling a steeper drop in exports. That decline was only partly offset by an increase at auto parts plants. Despite the drop in April, output of motor vehicles was still 17% higher than in April 1998. In the railroad rolling stock industry, production dropped sharply, partly because of a strike.

Output of primary metal products dropped in April by 1.4%. A shutdown contributed to the curtailing of production at steel

#### Note to readers

*The gross domestic product (GDP) of an industry is the value added when labour and capital transform inputs purchased from other producers into outputs. Monthly GDP by industry is valued at 1992 prices. The estimates presented here are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.*

mills after a series of strong gains. Nevertheless, output of steel was still high after soaring in recent months to make up for lower imports. Production of chemicals dropped in April by 0.6%. Output of pharmaceutical products receded after increasing in March, partly due to new product launches.

Offshore oil buoyed the struggling mining sector, whose output was essentially unchanged in April. Output of the oil and gas industry surged following a return to normal production on the Hibernia platform. But that increase was only the first in seven months, and oil and gas production in April was 3.8% below April 1998 levels. Output of gold fell substantially in April, bringing that industry's production down to 15.7% below the most recent peak reached in October 1997. Potash production was hampered by layoffs caused by weak international demand. Moreover, after rising sharply in recent months, new diamond production has stabilised, depriving the mining sector of a key source of growth.

Looking at other service industries, providers of business services were spurred by demand for architects, engineers and scientists and by continuing growth at computer service and consulting firms. The end of a strike by federal grain handlers translated into higher output for the transportation and storage services industry, as a backlog of grain was cleared by rail companies and grain elevators. Rising house sales boosted activity at real estate agencies in April for a third consecutive month. Gains of 0.3% in the non-business sector resulted mainly from higher output of the health, social services and education industries, as well as by increased defence activity resulting from the crisis in Kosovo.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 4677-4681.**

*The April 1999 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (15-001-XPB, \$15/\$145) presents the full report. To purchase data, contact Kim Lauzon (1 800 877-IMAD; IMAD@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), *Industry Measures and Analysis Division*. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

### Raw material prices rise for third consecutive month

**I**n May, the Raw Materials Price Index rose 1.4%, the third consecutive monthly advance. The price increases were widespread, with hog prices accounting for much of it. Meanwhile, the vegetable products group was the only one where prices declined. On a yearly basis, raw material prices showed a positive change (+2.6%) for a second consecutive month in May. The mineral fuels category (90% of which is crude oil) strongly influenced this, since the yearly change in raw material prices excluding mineral fuels was negative (-3.2%).

#### Note to readers

*The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects the prices that manufacturers paid for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in a world market. Also, unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.*

In May, animal product prices rose 3.3%, as hog prices jumped 20.2% on strong North American demand and on expectations of rising exports to Asia. The herd size is also declining. Hog prices, which tumbled 66.9% in the second half of 1998, have been improving throughout most of 1999. Nevertheless, hog prices in

*(continued on page 3)*

### ... Raw material prices rise for third consecutive month

May remained 13.1% below their level a year earlier. Despite recent price advances, animal product prices remained 2.1% below their May 1998 level, as lower prices for hogs and chickens were somewhat dampened by higher prices for fluid milk and fish.

Non-ferrous metal prices strengthened again in May (+2.3%). Not since early 1997 have there been two consecutive monthly price increases in this category. Copper, nickel and aluminum concentrate prices were the major contributors to this increase, which was tempered by lower gold prices. Optimism for renewed demand in Asia spurred copper and nickel prices. Gold prices in May dropped 4.5% to stand at their lowest level in many years on news that Britain intended to sell more than half its gold reserves. On a yearly basis, non-ferrous metal prices fell 4.1%, reflecting sector-wide declines. In general, non-ferrous metal prices have been falling since their peak in January 1995. May's prices remained 34.8% below that peak.

Crude oil prices stabilised in May after rising 46.5% in March and April. As a group, the mineral fuels category edged up 0.9% on higher prices for crude oil (+0.9%) and coal (+2.4%). Although oil producers seem to be succeeding at cutting production, U.S. inventories appear to be ample for the peak driving season. Overall, crude oil prices have recovered substantially in the past year to stand 21.1% above their level in May 1998. Similarly, mineral fuel prices stood 19.6% higher on a yearly basis, whereas the yearly price increases were less pronounced for coal (+2.8%) and natural gas (+6.8%).

Wood prices edged up 0.5%, advancing for a fourth straight month. Log prices gained 0.5% amid a strong housing market.

These prices followed a downward trend from the second half of 1997 to the end of 1998 but have picked up so far in 1999. For the first time since January, pulpwood prices rose (+0.2%). Recently, companies have responded to weak demand by cutting production. On a yearly basis, an 8.4% increase in log prices was somewhat dampened by a 3.0% decline in pulpwood prices, leaving wood prices up 5.8% on the year.

Vegetable product prices continued their downward trend in May, dropping 0.5%. Wheat prices fell 3.9%, as supplies remained abundant amid weak demand. Wheat prices this May stood 48.3% below their May 1996 price peak. Corn and oats were also down, while barley was the only grain whose price rose in May. An overwhelming supply also dampened the canola market in May, causing prices to slip 1.3%. Good planting weather for soybeans, canola's competitor, also led to the weaker prices. In contrast, coffee prices firmed in May (+3.7%), as a temperature drop in Brazil raised concerns about potential frost damage. May's price gain was marginal, however, because coffee prices have tumbled since their peak in June 1997 (-60.8%). On a yearly basis, vegetable product prices were down in May by 14.8%. Substantial stockpiles meant sluggish prices for most of the vegetable commodities. Canola, sugar, wheat and soybeans were all worth much less than they were a year earlier, with the price declines ranging from 12.3% to 35.5%.

#### Available on CANSIM: matrices 1879.

The May 1999 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of this month. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-3350; fax (613-951-1539; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)), Prices Division.

## Industrial product prices barely budge

In May, industrial product prices remained close to their April level (-0.1%) and stood 0.8% higher than a year earlier. May's increase in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar dampened the month-to-month change in industrial prices. (If the value of the Canadian dollar had stayed at April's level, then industrial product prices in May would have risen 0.4% from April.) The major price declines in May were in transportation equipment, particularly exported motor vehicles. These were almost completely offset by price increases for softwood lumber, non-ferrous primary metal products and pork.

Motor vehicle prices fell from April to May by 1.6%. The decrease was largely due to the Canada-U.S. exchange rate. About 90% of the vehicles made in Canada are exported, mostly to the United States. Export prices were down 1.8% for cars and 1.7% for trucks. Domestic prices declined 0.8% for cars and 0.3% for trucks as manufacturers adjusted their incentive programs. Monthly prices also declined for motor vehicle parts (-0.7%) and other transport equipment (-1.3%). Again, the exchange rate was almost entirely the cause.

Softwood lumber prices overall were up 2.9%. Increases were noteworthy for varieties of spruce, pine and fir. Prices climbed countrywide except on the B.C. coast, where prices declined for

### Exchange-rate effect on industrial prices, May 1999

	12-month change	Excluding exchange- rate effect
	%	
<b>Manufacturers' prices</b>		
All goods	0.8	0.5
Intermediate goods <sup>1</sup>	0.0	-0.2
First-stage goods <sup>2</sup>	-2.6	-2.9
Second-stage goods <sup>3</sup>	0.3	0.1
Finished goods <sup>4</sup>	1.9	1.6
Food and feeds	1.8	1.8
Capital goods	1.7	1.3
Other finished goods	2.1	1.7
<b>Other prices</b>		
Raw material prices (RMPI)	2.6	..
Retail prices (CPI)		
Food bought at stores	1.4	..
Goods except food bought at stores	1.6	..
U.S. manufacturers' prices	1.0	..

<sup>1</sup> Used as inputs into industry.

<sup>2</sup> Used as inputs into basic industries.

<sup>3</sup> Used as inputs into other industries.

<sup>4</sup> Used for immediate consumption or for capital investment.

.. Figures not available.

(continued on page 4)

### ... Industrial product prices barely budge

Douglas fir and western red cedar. In Canada, domestic softwood lumber prices rose 4.2%, while export prices were hurt by the exchange rate and only increased 2.6%. In the United States, softwood lumber prices were up 2.1%.

Among the non-ferrous primary metal products, prices were up 4.4% for aluminum products, 4.2% for copper products, and 4.3% for nickel products. In all three cases, the size of the price increase was dampened by the rise in the value of the Canadian dollar. May marked the third consecutive increase for primary aluminum products and the second for primary copper products. Zinc, lead and tin were among other base non-ferrous metals to see price increases.

Pork prices in May jumped 15.8% to stand slightly above their level of last September. This followed a 6.6% recovery in April.

In the United States, Canada's major trading partner, total industrial production edged up 0.2% in May as manufacturing output rose 0.4%. In Japan, Canada's second largest national export market, industrial production dropped 3.4% in April, falling almost to the low point plumbed in January. The 12-month change in Japanese domestic wholesale prices was -1.7% in May, after being unchanged in April at -1.9%.

Elsewhere in East Asia, hopeful economic signs have emerged. The 12-month increase in industrial production in the People's Republic of China was reported at 9.0% in April. In South Korea, industrial production was 17.1% higher in April than a year earlier. Export and domestic markets both contributed to the recovery. Taiwan's industrial production was 6.4% higher in April than 12 months earlier. Its yearly increase in gross domestic product in the first quarter (+4.3%) was up slightly from its figure for the last quarter of 1998. In April, industrial production was also higher than a year earlier in both Thailand and Malaysia.

The European Union (EU) is an even larger export market for Canada than Japan. The most recent figures for the 12-month change in industrial prices for the G7 nations in the EU were as follows: -1.6% in Italy (April), -1.7% in Germany (April), -2.6% in France (April) and +0.9% (-0.3% excluding excise taxes) in the United Kingdom (May).

#### Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.

The May 1999 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of the month. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-1539; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)), Prices Division.

## Average weekly earnings little changed

In April, average weekly earnings for all employees stood at \$607.42, little changed from March (+0.2%) and about the same as in April 1998 (-0.1%). However, average earnings for the "other" category of employees (includes commissioned salespersons and substitute teachers) were down in April from a year earlier by 6.5%. Within the "other" category, the year-over-year earnings decline was sharpest for employees in transport and storage, health and accommodation, education and the food industries.

For hourly rated employees, average weekly earnings have risen since April 1998 by 2.1%. This is due both to higher average hourly earnings (+1.1%) and to more average weekly hours (+0.8%). For salaried employees, average weekly earnings in April remained practically unchanged from a year earlier.

In all industries, hourly-rated employees worked an average 31.3 hours per week (includes overtime) in April, down from 31.4 hours in March. The decrease in hours was mainly due to a slight decline in overtime. Average hourly earnings paid to hourly rated employees in April amounted to \$15.27.

Payroll employment remained virtually unchanged in April. A modest number of employees were added to payrolls in retail trade and business services. That increase was offset by strikes in the manufacturing and telecommunications sectors. The return to work of 4,500 striking nurses in Newfoundland boosted employment in that province in the health and social services industry.

### Average weekly earnings, all industries, April 1999

Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
<b>Canada</b>	<b>607.42</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-0.1</b>
Newfoundland	549.18	1.9	4.0
Prince Edward Island	481.27	-0.7	-1.9
Nova Scotia	520.02	1.2	1.8
New Brunswick	523.58	1.0	-0.8
Quebec	569.11	0.2	-1.2
Ontario	646.67	0.2	-0.6
Manitoba	545.74	1.0	1.7
Saskatchewan	539.62	0.2	0.9
Alberta	622.19	0.3	1.0
British Columbia	626.02	0.1	1.3
Yukon	675.92	0.4	-1.5
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	729.82	0.9	-0.2

#### Available on CANSIM: matrices 4285-4466, 9438-9452, 9639-9664 and 9899-9911.

The April 1999 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours* (72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320) presents the month's industry data and other labour market indicators in detail. Custom tabulations of the data are available on demand. Annual averages for 1998 are now available through CANSIM, on diskette, CD-ROM, via the Internet and by custom tabulation. For further information, contact Jean Leduc (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; [labour@statcan.ca](mailto:labour@statcan.ca)), Labour Division.

## Department stores post second straight month of sales growth

Department store sales advanced for a second straight month in May, growing 1.7% to \$1,485.5 million (seasonally adjusted). Compared with May 1998, sales were up 4.9%. In general, department store sales have rebounded since the fall of 1998. They were flat throughout the spring and summer of 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

Accounts receivable data for department stores are also now available. To purchase data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; 1 877 421-3067, retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Cl rance Kimanyi (613-951-3592; kimacle@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

### Department store sales including concessions

Not seasonally adjusted

	May 1999	May 1998 to May 1999	January-May 1999	January-May 1998 to January-May 1999
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1,459.9</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>5,993.1</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island <sup>1</sup>	26.2	12.5	107.2	6.7
Nova Scotia	44.8	10.2	179.2	4.9
New Brunswick	31.9	7.2	127.9	1.3
Quebec	288.0	7.1	1,128.5	4.9
Ontario	623.4	8.7	2,554.5	5.5
Manitoba	59.9	4.2	251.3	4.4
Saskatchewan	47.3	5.7	199.2	5.5
Alberta	166.2	4.0	701.6	4.2
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut <sup>1</sup>	172.3	1.5	743.6	-0.8

<sup>1</sup> For reasons of confidentiality, the data for Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island are combined, as are the data for British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

## Cooler sales soar, but Canadians still prefer beer

In 1997/98, for the first time in a decade, Canadian spirits captured a larger share of the alcoholic beverage market. That year, sales of Canadian spirits grew 9.9% to 103.5 million litres, whereas sales of imported spirits slipped 3.2% to 34.7 million litres. That totals out to 138.3 million litres of spirits sold, up from 1996/97 by 6.3%.

The substantial sales jump for Canadian spirits was largely due to an 80.9% upward spike in the sales volume of spirit-based coolers. As a result, Canadian spirits captured 75.0% of the Canadian market in 1997/98, up from 72.4% the year before. It was the first increase since 1988/89, when domestic distillers captured 74.0% of the market. Ontario accounted for 64% of all 1997/98 sales of spirit-based coolers.

Canadians also purchased more wine in 1997/98 (+2.9% to 259.9 million total litres). Sales of Canadian wines rose 3.0% (to 119.9 million litres), while sales of imported wines advanced 2.8% (to 140.0 million litres). Wine drinkers still prefer white wines, but red wines keep gaining market share. In 1997/98, white wines held 46% of the Canadian market, down from 56% in 1993/94. Meanwhile, red wine captured 37% of the market, up from 26%.

### Note to users

These fiscal year data on sales of alcoholic beverages by volume—which include sales by liquor authorities and their agents, as well as sales by wineries and breweries and their licensed outlets—should not be confused with data on actual consumption of alcoholic beverages. Data on consumption would also include homemade wine and beer, wine and beer made through brew-on-premises operations, all sales to Canadian residents in duty-free shops, and any unrecorded transactions.

Nevertheless, Canadians still prefer beer to any other alcoholic beverage. In 1997/98, beer sales reached 2.0 billion litres (+1.2%). Sales of imported beers climbed 12.1% (to 91.1 million litres), so that the market share of domestic brands fell to 95.5%. (It was as high as 98.1% in 1987/88.)

On a per capita basis, sales of alcoholic beverages were up for the first time in 12 years in 1997/98. As the table shows, Canadians (aged 15 and over) bought 99.2 litres of alcoholic beverages per capita that year, consisting of 5.7 litres of spirits, 10.7 litres of wine and 82.8 litres of beer.

Looking at value, the combined sales of spirits, wine and beer in 1997/98 were worth \$11.6 billion (+3.9%). Of that amount,

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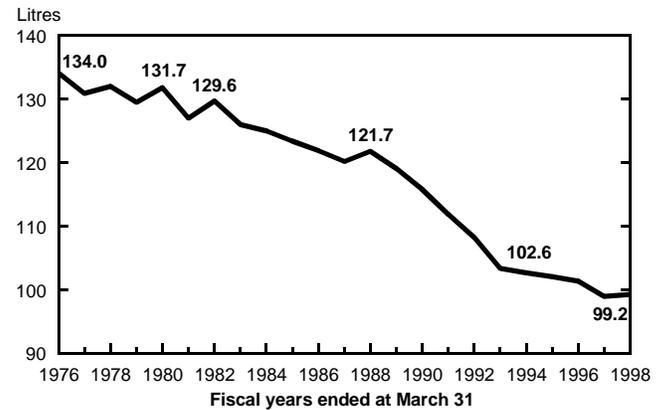
### ... Cooler sales soar, but Canadians still prefer beer

beer accounted for \$6.1 billion—more than half the total and up from the previous year by 2.8%. Wine sales grew 2.9% in volume terms, but the value of wine sales jumped 7.1% to \$2.4 billion. Sales of spirits climbed 3.6% to \$3.1 billion. The liquor authorities of the provincial and territorial governments earned \$2.7 billion in 1997/98 (+4.3%), while their control revenue (mainly, revenues from the sale of permits and licenses) dropped slightly to \$0.7 billion, for a net income of \$3.4 billion (+3.2%).

#### Sales of alcoholic beverages per capita (15 years and older) Fiscal year ended March 31, 1998

	Spirits	Wine	Beer	Total
	Litres			
<b>Canada</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>82.8</b>	<b>99.2</b>
Newfoundland	6.8	3.8	86.0	96.6
Prince Edward Island	6.3	5.7	74.2	86.2
Nova Scotia	6.7	6.5	73.8	86.9
New Brunswick	5.4	5.4	74.8	85.5
Quebec	2.5	13.0	87.5	103.0
Ontario	6.3	10.0	81.0	97.2
Manitoba	8.0	6.9	76.7	91.7
Saskatchewan	7.7	4.6	71.9	84.3
Alberta	7.9	11.1	88.5	107.5
British Columbia	6.9	14.0	82.5	103.5
Yukon	12.6	18.8	146.8	178.3
Northwest Territories	10.0	6.4	78.2	94.6

#### Per capita sales of spirits, wine and beer



Available on CANSIM: matrices 2728, 2730 and 2731.

The electronic publication, *The control and sale of alcoholic beverages in Canada, for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998* (63-202-XIB, \$29), will be available shortly at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca). A print-on-demand paper version is offered at a higher price. For general information about related products and services, including custom data tabulations, contact Viola Jabbour (613-951-0767). For further analytical information, contact Richard Sauriol (613-951-1829) or Jean-Francois Carbonneau (613-951-8561), Public Institutions Division.

## New from Statistics Canada



### Education in Canada 1998

Do you need more data on education in Canada? Do you want to research education issues and trends in more depth? Then consult *Education in Canada*, Statistics Canada's annual review that summarizes the latest data on institutions, enrolment, graduates, teachers and finance for all levels of education. It also presents a comprehensive overview of the key data variables for Canadian education, including demographic data from the Census of Canada, as well as information on educational attainment, labour force participation rates and unemployment rates of the adult population.

*Education in Canada, 1998* (paper: 81-229-XPB, \$51; Internet at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 81-229-XIB, \$38) can now be ordered. For further information, contact Jim Seidle (613-951-1500; fax: 613-951-9040; [seidjim@statcan.ca](mailto:seidjim@statcan.ca)), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

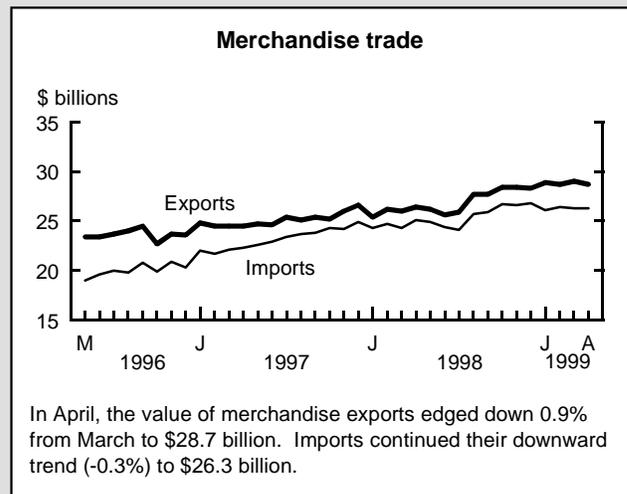
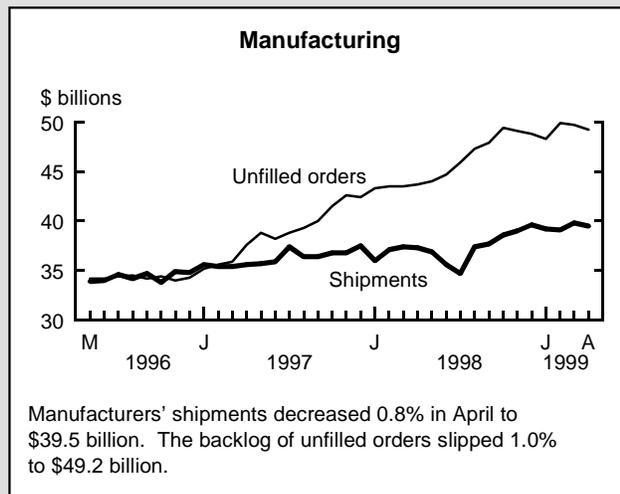
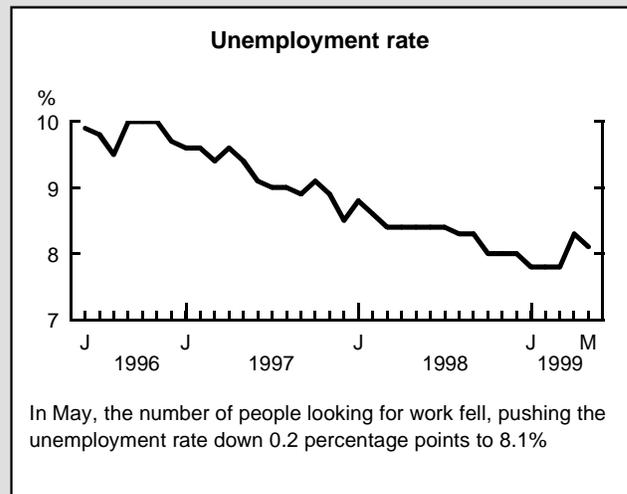
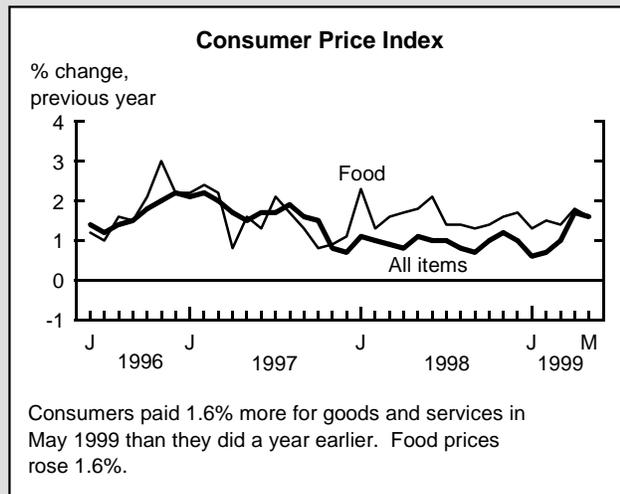
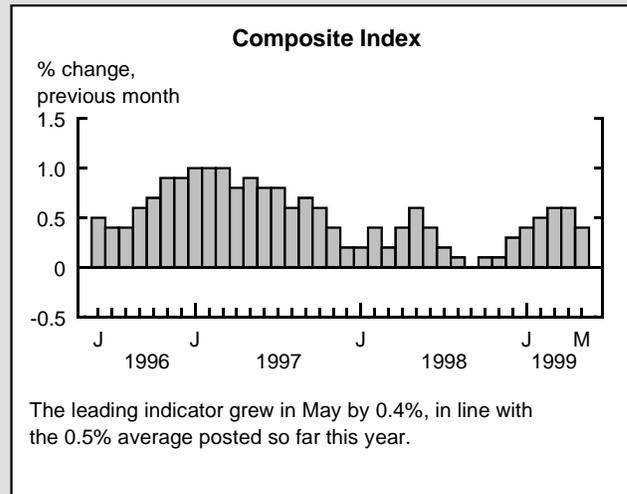
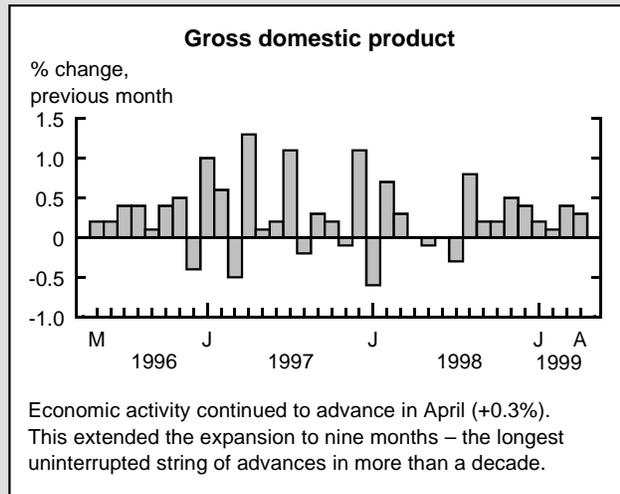
### Annual estimates of employment, earnings and hours 1986 to 1998

The Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours has just released its most recent annual estimates in electronic format. Once again, it has been produced with the user-friendly Adobe Acrobat software, so accessing these data is very simple. What's more, it is now possible to download this product immediately from the Internet.

*Annual estimates of employment, earnings and hours, 1986 to 1998* contains data tables for more than 200 industries at the national, provincial and territorial levels. These cover items such as employment, average weekly and hourly earnings, average weekly hours and total weekly payrolls. Also included is the *Help-wanted Index, 1981 to 1998 supplement*.

*Annual estimates of employment, earnings and hours, 1986 to 1998* (diskette: 72F0002XDB, \$120; CD-ROM: 72F0002XCB, \$140; Internet version: 72F0002XIB, \$113; diskette and paper: 10-3000XKB, \$150; CD-ROM and paper: 10-3009XKB, \$170) is now available. For further information on this electronic product, or to order, contact Client Services (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; [labour@statcan.ca](mailto:labour@statcan.ca) or [order@statcan.ca](mailto:order@statcan.ca)), Labour Division.

## Current trends



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

## Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	April	735.5	0.3%	2.7%
Composite Index (1981=100)	May	214.0	0.4%	4.0%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q1 1999*	36.3	4.7%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 1999	83.1	0.5†	- 0.3†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	April	21.2	0.4%	2.7%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	April	128.2	1.5%	3.2%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	April	29.3	0.0%	5.1%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	May	14.64	- 0.1%	2.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	May	8.1	- 0.2†	- 0.3†
Participation rate (%)	May	65.7	- 0.3†	0.6†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	April	607.42	0.2%	- 0.1%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	June*	159	1.3%	11.2%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	April	28.7	- 0.9%	8.5%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	April	26.3	- 0.3%	4.7%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	April	2.4	- 0.2	1.1
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	April	39.5	- 0.8%	5.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	April	39.0	- 1.5%	4.1%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	April	49.2	- 1.0%	12.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	April	1.27	- 0.02	- 0.03
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	May	110.4	0.3%	1.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	May	119.9	- 0.1%	0.8%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	May	113.5	1.4%	2.6%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	April	100.6	0.1%	0.7%

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

\* new this week

† percentage point

.. figures not available yet due to a survey redesign

# Infomat

## A weekly review

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<b>BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL FLOWS</b>				
Canada's balance of international payments	Q1 1999	67-001-XPB	38/124	38/124
<b>DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES</b>				
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<b>MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY</b>				
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Energy statistics handbook	June 1999			
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