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Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, July 25, 2003

INSIDE

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- **Number of university graduates on the rise**

  University students received a record number of bachelor's, first professional's and master's degrees in 2000. Overall, universities awarded an estimated 175,600 degrees, diplomas and certificates in 2000, up 1.1% from 1999.

Consumer Price Index registers slight increase

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose 2.6% from June 2002 to June 2003, having registered monthly increases of only 0.1% in both May and June 2003.

This change constitutes the weakest increase since September 2002. A jump of 48.3% in the natural gas index and a 22.6% rise in automotive vehicle insurance premiums were principally responsible for this growth.

Most of the increase in automotive vehicle insurance premiums occurred in earlier months, as they advanced by only 0.4% from May to June. The CPI excluding energy grew 2.2% from June 2002 to June 2003.

The rise in cigarette prices, homeowners' replacement cost and tuition fees were also significant factors in the increase in the All-items CPI. However, the fall in purchase prices of automotive vehicles, clothing and traveller accommodation tempered this increase.

The natural gas index rose 8.6% in June. The 8.7% price increase in Ontario was entirely due to the return to normal billing following the retroactive adjustments given to certain consumers in May. An increase in recovery costs was principally responsible for the 21.1% jump in prices in Alberta.

(continued on page 2)

Consumer Price Index, June 2003
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Shelter	Transpor-tation	Energy
Canada	**2.6**	**1.9**	**4.1**	**4.1**	**7.9**
Newfoundland and Labrador	2.2	0.1	3.0	4.9	2.7
Prince Edward Island	3.3	1.8	4.0	4.9	6.6
Nova Scotia	2.9	2.7	4.5	1.2	2.2
New Brunswick	3.0	1.9	2.3	5.4	3.3
Quebec	2.5	3.1	3.2	4.9	3.1
Ontario	2.5	1.2	4.1	4.6	10.7
Manitoba	1.1	1.2	1.4	-0.3	-1.6
Saskatchewan	1.9	2.5	3.9	1.0	4.1
Alberta	4.8	2.2	11.4	6.3	28
British Columbia	1.7	1.9	1.8	1.6	2.8
Whitehorse	1.8	1.3	1.3	3.5	1.0
Yellowknife	2.1	0.3	2.6	2.4	8.3

Consumer Price Index registers... *(continued from page 1)*

Traveller accommodation prices advanced 8.2% after rising 6.2% in May. These price increases are attributable to the onset of the peak tourist season across the country.

After posting important decreases in the two previous months, gasoline prices rose, on average, 1.2% from May to June 2003. Despite the national increase, three provinces registered a decline in gasoline prices: Prince Edward Island (-6.1%), Newfoundland and Labrador (-1.5%) and Manitoba (-0.4%).

The automotive vehicles index fell 1.5% in June. Sales in the first five months of 2003 were down 4.3% compared with the same period last year, leading some manufacturers to offer more substantial rebates in June.

The clothing index for men dropped 5.1% in June, while women's clothing fell 1.4%. Price decreases for men's clothing traditionally occur in June, but this year's decline was more substantial than usual.

After correcting for seasonal influences, the All-items CPI rose 0.1% from May to June 2003. This increase is attributable to the rise in the shelter (+0.5%), food (+0.2%), and alcoholic beverages and tobacco products (+0.1%) indexes.

These were partially offset by the decrease in the seasonally adjusted clothing and footwear (-1.9%), transportation (-0.3%) and health and personal care (-0.3%) indexes.

In June 2003, energy prices were 7.9% higher than a year earlier. A 48.3% rise in the price of natural gas is mainly responsible for this increase. Higher prices for fuel oil (+10.5%), electricity (+1.5%) and gasoline (+0.8%) also contributed to the energy index increase.

Energy prices advanced 1.9% from May to June 2003. This rise is largely due to the 8.6% rise in the natural gas index. Higher gasoline prices (+1.2%) also had an impact on the energy index.

The June 2003 issue of the ***Consumer Price Index*** *(Internet: 62-001-XIB, $8/$77; paper: 62-001-XPB, $11/$103) is now available. For more information, contact Rebecca McDougall (1-866-230-2248; 613-951-9606; infounit@statcan.ca). (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)*

Productivity soars in business sector

Multifactor productivity in the business sector, a comprehensive measure of efficiency in production, rebounded sharply in 2002 as economic growth surged and consumer spending rose.

Multifactor productivity increased 1.9% last year, six times the 0.3% pace of growth of the previous year. It is measured as the increase in output minus the growth of the combined inputs of labour and capital. It is an important indicator as it is one of the factors that determine the increase in the standard of living over the long run.

The business sector, which accounts for about 71% of gross domestic product, covers the whole economy, except for government, non-profit institutions and the rental value of owner-occupied dwellings. Last year's rebound in productivity occurred as output in the business sector increased 3.4%, compared with only 1.3% in 2001.

Multifactor productivity growth in Canada has trailed that of the United States over the last two decades. Between 1981 and 2000, it increased in Canada at an annual average rate of 0.4%, compared with 0.9% south of the border.

University finance

Universities collected record-high revenues in 2001/02, and for the first time in 15 years, revenues from public sources increased at a faster rate than those from private sources.

Universities took in $16.9 billion in the academic year 2001/02, up 4.6% from the previous year in constant dollars, the fifth straight annual increase. Revenues from public sources, grants and contracts from all levels of government advanced 5.6% to nearly $9.4 billion.

In contrast, revenues from private sources grew a more modest 3.4% to $7.6 billion. A 6.5% increase in revenues from student fees contributed to the gain from private sources. From 1991/92 to 2001/02, revenues from student fees have slightly more than doubled.

The article "Changing patterns of university finance" is available on Statistics Canada's website (www.statcan.ca). For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-800-307-3382; 613-951-7608; educationstats@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Mad cow disease and low petroleum prices weaken manufacturing

Finished-product inventories continued to accumulate and unfilled orders remained lethargic in May, as manufacturing activity weakened further. Manufacturers' shipments fell 0.8% to $42.4 billion, following April's sharp drop of 3.4%.

The Canadian economy has faced various obstacles in recent months. The war in Iraq, the outbreak of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and the detection of a case of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in Alberta have dealt significant blows to several important industries.

The second quarter began with widespread declines in manufacturing production. April was dominated by a sharp drop in petroleum prices and lower shipments of motor vehicles and parts. In May, manufacturers reported lower shipments for a second month, as 13 of 21 industries registered decreases.

Seven provinces and the territories also reported lower shipments. Widespread decreases in Quebec's manufacturing sector contributed to a $158 million (-1.6%) drop in shipments to $9.7 billion.

Shipments in Alberta fell by $71 million (-2.0%) to $3.5 billion. Following a strong first quarter, Alberta's manufacturing sector was hit hard by April's steep decline in petroleum prices, as well as by the current problem of mad cow disease (BSE). Lower shipments of food, primarily due to the export ban, principally contributed to Alberta's decrease in shipments for May.

Alberta shipments of meat products dropped 5.6% in May, and animal slaughtering fell 8.4%. The decreases reflect the fact that the export ban on beef products has been in effect for only the last 11 days of May. The impact is expected to be more significant in the coming months as the international trade ban is maintained.

Declining US demand for primary metals and lower industrial prices in several sectors of the industry have also had a negative impact on shipments. The primary metals industry was the main contributor to the lower shipments in May as they fell 3.5% to $2.6 billion.

Shipments of petroleum and coal products eased back 2.3% to $2.9 billion, following April's steep 18.8% drop. As the war in Iraq drew to a close, prices of petroleum and coal products tumbled almost 18%.

The food industry also contributed to lower shipments in May, reporting a 1.2% drop to $5.3 billion. The slowdown in the meat products industry was mostly responsible for the decline.

Shipments by province and territory
Seasonally adjusted

	April 2003	May 2003	April to May 2003
	$ millions		% change
Newfoundland and Labrador	184	195	6.2
Prince Edward Island	109	114	4.5
Nova Scotia	737	737	0.0
New Brunswick	1,087	1,018	-6.3
Quebec	9,893	9,736	-1.6
Ontario	22,830	22,819	0.0
Manitoba	982	950	-3.2
Saskatchewan	621	610	-1.8
Alberta	3,570	3,499	-2.0
British Columbia	2,782	2,760	-0.8
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	6	5	-12.8

Despite a drop of 0.5% to $63.4 billion in May, manufacturing inventories continued their upward trend. The main contributor to the decline was the aerospace products and parts industry. Aerospace inventories fell 2.8% to $7.7 billion, the first decrease in four months.

The ongoing weakness of the United States economy contributed to the recent build-up of finished-product inventories. These increased 0.3% to $20.1 billion in May, the highest level since June 2001.

The inventory-to-shipment ratio remained constant at 1.49 in May. Despite May's increase in finished-product inventories, the finished-product inventory-to-shipment ratio was unchanged at 0.47 for the second consecutive month.

In May, unfilled orders fell 3.4% to $40.5 billion, the lowest level since June 1998. Unfilled orders have decreased for nine consecutive months, the longest string of declines since 14 were reported during the 1990-1991 recession.

The ongoing downturn in the global aviation sector continued to pose obstacles for aerospace manufacturing. In May, the aerospace products and parts industry reported a 3.2% drop in unfilled orders to $12.7 billion. Unfilled orders have now decreased for 20 consecutive months, and are almost 40% below levels of September 2001.

The May 2003 issue of the ***Monthly Survey of Manufacturing*** *(Internet: 31-001-XIE, $15/$147) is now available. For further information, contact Russell Kowaluk (613-951-0600; kowarus@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.* *(See also "Current trends" on page 7.)*

Retail sales increase as consumers spend more in stores

Retail sales increased 0.3% in May to $26.2 billion, the first sales gain in three months. Sales had fallen 0.8% in April and 0.7% in March.

In the first five months of 2003, retail sales grew on average 0.3% per month, maintaining the same pace as in 2002. In constant dollars, retail sales advanced 0.7% in May, after falling 0.2% in April and 0.7% in March.

All retailers posted sales increases in May, with the exception of supermarkets and grocery stores (-2.5%), gasoline service stations (-6.6%), and alcoholic beverage stores (-3.2%). Excluding sales by these retailers, retail sales rose 2.2% in May.

In May, consumers increased their spending by 2.3% in the general merchandise sector, after staying away in the previous two months. Almost all of this increased spending occurred in department stores, which saw their sales jump 3.7% in May.

Consumers flocked back to the clothing sector in a buying mood, pushing sales up 2.0% in May, after having cut back on their spending in April (-0.7%). All types of clothing stores benefited from May's higher value of purchases in the clothing sector.

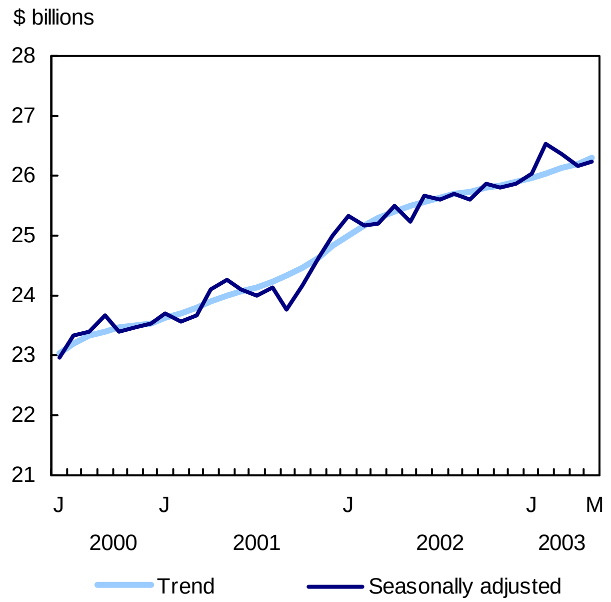
Retailers in the furniture sector posted a 1.9% sales gain in May. This was their largest monthly increase since January 2002 (+2.8%).

Sales in the automotive sector advanced 0.9% in May on the strength of motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+2.9%) and automotive parts, accessories and service stores (+2.2%). For a second consecutive month, however, lower gasoline prices at the pump continued to batter sales in gasoline service stations in May (-6.6%).

Retailers in the automotive sector have experienced some large monthly swings in sales since the start of 2003, partly because of fluctuations in gasoline prices and incentive-driven motor vehicle sales.

Sales in supermarkets and grocery stores fell 2.5% in May, after reaching record levels in the previous two months. May's decline, which was widespread across provinces, brought sales back more in line with the upward trend observed since early 1999. The most significant decline in May was reported by supermarkets and grocery stores in Ontario.

Retail sales



Alcoholic beverage stores posted a 3.2% drop in sales in May, reflecting the weaker growth reported by these retailers since the middle of 2002. Nevertheless, they have been enjoying annual sales gains above 5% since 1997.

Retail sales advances in May were concentrated in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba. All other provinces posted declines.

Retailers in Ontario bounced back with a 1.6% sales gain, after a 2.3% drop in April. With the exception of food, all retail sectors in Ontario enjoyed rising sales in May. The most significant increase occurred in the automotive sector, where the number of new motor vehicles sold jumped 10.7%.

Retail sales in Quebec rose 0.6% in May, offsetting the loss in April. Quebec retailers have generally been reporting sales advances since the fall of 2001. In Manitoba, retail sales increased 0.3% in May, adding some strength to the weak upward movement observed since the start of 2003.

*The May 2003 issue of **Retail trade** (Internet: 63-005-XIB, $16/$155) is now available. For more information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; paul.gratton@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades.*

Strong automobile and farm machinery sales push wholesales up

Wholesale sales edged up 0.2% in May with $35.9 billion in goods and services sold, ending three consecutive months of contraction.

Since the start of 2003, sales have fallen an average of 0.1% per month. Despite this weakness, however, total sales for the first five months of the year were up 6.1% from the same period of 2002.

US wholesalers posted a 0.2% decline in May. From January to May, sales of US wholesalers grew only 2.3% from the same period of 2002. Like Canadian wholesalers, US wholesalers have seen their sales decline in three of the past four months. Previously, US wholesalers' sales had followed a slightly upward trend since October 2001.

In May, 7 of the 11 trade groups recorded an increase. The groups that contributed the most to the increase were motor vehicles, parts and accessories (+1.4%) and farm machinery (+10.6%). These increases were partly offset by declines in wholesale sales of computer and electronic equipment (-2.9%) and metals and hardware (-1.9%).

In constant prices, wholesale sales rose 1.5%, indicating that the volume of sales increased in May. Price declines in both the automotive sector and the lumber and building materials sector contributed to the boost in sales volume.

Wholesale sales of automotive products rose 1.4% in May. The increased number of new motor vehicles sold by car dealers in May (+8.4%) helps explain this month's turnaround in sales. Despite May's increase, however, wholesale sales in this industry have been following a downward movement in recent months.

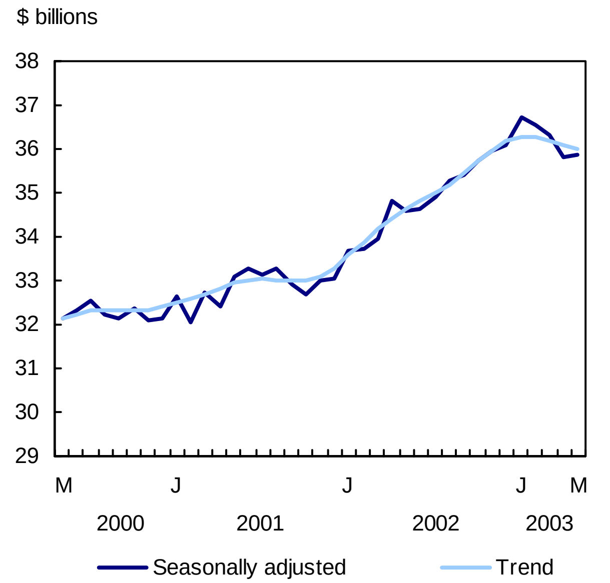
Sales of farm machinery advanced 10.6% in May to $823 million. Sales have generally been following an upward trend since the fall of 2002.

Meanwhile, sales in the "other products" category rose only slightly in May (+0.3%). However, some components of this category showed strong growth, including products related to the agricultural industry, such as seeds and seed processing, agricultural chemicals and other farm supplies.

Sales of computers, software and other electronic products declined in May (-2.9%). Sales have been following a declining trend since the start of the year, cancelling out the increases recorded in the fall of 2002.

In May, all provinces in the Prairie and Atlantic regions contributed to the rise in wholesale sales. On the other hand,

Wholesale trade



Quebec, Ontario, British Columbia and the territories all experienced declines.

The largest gains were recorded in the Prairies, with 7.9% for Saskatchewan, 6.0% for Manitoba and 3.5% for Alberta. These provinces benefited from the strong performance of farm machinery sales and the "other products" category.

In contrast, Quebec sales declined 1.7%. They were affected by lower sales of food products and beverage, drug and tobacco products. However, despite this decrease, the trend remains slightly upward in Quebec.

The inventory-to-sales ratio edged down to 1.29 in May from 1.30 in April. Since the start of the year, this ratio has ranged between 1.24 and 1.30. It has generally been rising since the start of the year, partly because of weak sales during this period.

Inventories declined in May (-0.3%). Lower inventories in the "other products" category and in the beverage, drug and tobacco products sector were the main source of the general decrease observed among wholesalers.

*The May 2003 issue of **Wholesale trade** (Internet: 63-008-XIB, $14/$140) is now available. For further information, contact Jean Lebreux (613-951-4907; jean.lebreux@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

Number of university graduates on the rise

University students received a record number of bachelor's, first professional's and master's degrees in 2000. Overall, universities awarded an estimated 175,600 degrees, diplomas and certificates in 2000, up 1.1% from 1999. Of these, 145,200 or 83% were at the undergraduate level.

A record 128,000 students obtained a bachelor's or first professional's degree, up 1.2% from 1999. In addition, a record 24,000 students obtained a master's degree. However, universities awarded only 3,800 doctorates in 2000, a 4.9% decline from 1999 and the lowest level in five years.

Women again accounted for the majority of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded by universities in 2000, receiving 59% of the total. Only at the doctoral level did men outnumber women.

Even though bachelor's, first professional's and master's degrees reached record highs, the overall number of degrees, certificates and diplomas awarded by universities in 2000 were down from levels seen in the mid-1990s.

In 2000, universities awarded a total of 175,600 degrees, certificates and diplomas, down 1.4% from 178,100 in 1995. A sharp drop in these qualifications at the undergraduate level accounted for this decline.

This decrease in undergraduate qualifications occurred only among diplomas and certificates. Universities awarded 16,700 undergraduate diplomas and certificates in 2000, down 2.2% from 1999 and 27.1% from 1995.

At the graduate level, however, a record 2,700 diplomas and certificates were awarded in 2000, up 18.1% from 1999 and 21.2% from 1995.

Despite the decline in doctorates, students received a record-high 30,400 graduate degrees, diplomas and certificates from universities in 2000, up 3.1% from 1999.

Graduate students at Canadian universities showed particular interest in social sciences and related studies. The growth in graduate degrees, diplomas and certificates was driven almost entirely by an increase of 1,200, or 10.2%, in this field.

From 1999 to 2000, the number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded declined in three key fields: health professions and occupations (-6.1%), humanities and related studies (-1.5%), and agricultural and biological sciences (-0.8%).

University qualifications awarded by program level and gender

	1998	1999	2000
Total degree certificate and diploma	**172,100**	**173,600**	**175,600**
Female	100,100	101,400	102,800
Male	71,900	72,200	72,800
Undergraduate			
Total degree, certificate and diploma	**143,700**	**144,100**	**145,200**
Female	85,600	86,200	86,800
Male	57,500	57,300	57,900
Graduate			
Total degree, certificate and diploma	**28,400**	**29,500**	**30,400**
Female	14 200	14 900	15 800
Male	14 200	14 600	14 700

** Figures for totals may not add-up because of rounding.*
Note: *Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.*

However, all other fields of study were up, with the biggest rates of increase in arts and science (+11.1%), mathematics and physical sciences (+7.6%) and engineering and applied sciences (+4.3%). For all fields of study showing an increase except arts and science, the rate of increase for women outpaced the rate among men.

The number of students receiving degrees, diplomas or certificates in health has declined 8.7% since 1997, with women accounting for more than three-quarters of the decrease. From 1999 to 2000, the second largest decline occurred in humanities and related studies (-1.5%).

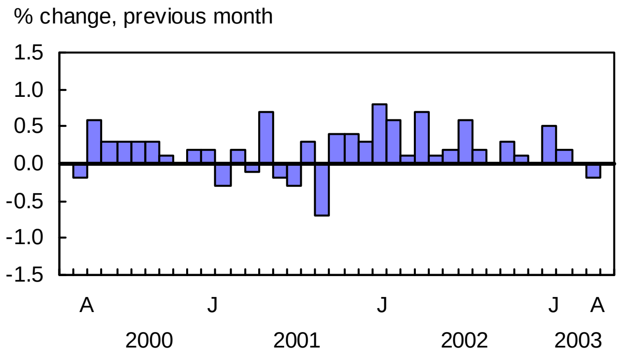
The number of degrees, diplomas and certificates awarded in social sciences and related studies fell during the mid-1990s. However, the estimated 67,800 graduates in this field were still more than twice the number in any other field of study.

The number of graduates in education increased in 2000 for the second straight year, reversing a previous three-year downward trend. Even so, the 27,000 graduates in this area represented an 11.8% decline from 1995, the biggest five-year drop in any field.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-800-307-3382; 613-951-7608; educationstats@statcan.ca).

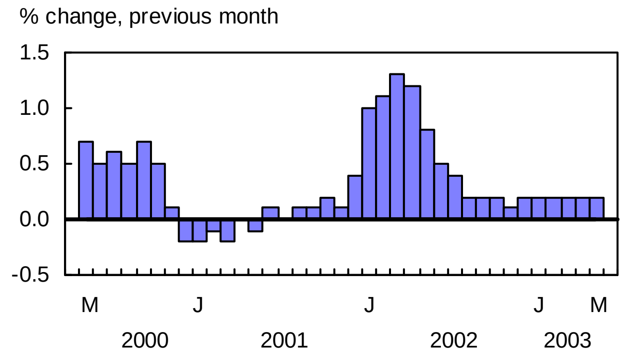
Current trends

Gross domestic product



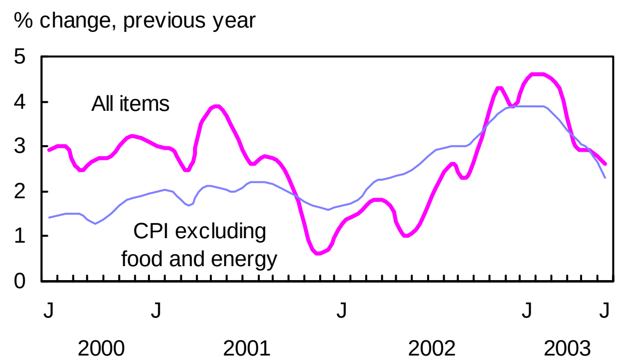
Total economic activity dropped 0.2% in April, after remaining unchanged in March.

Composite Index



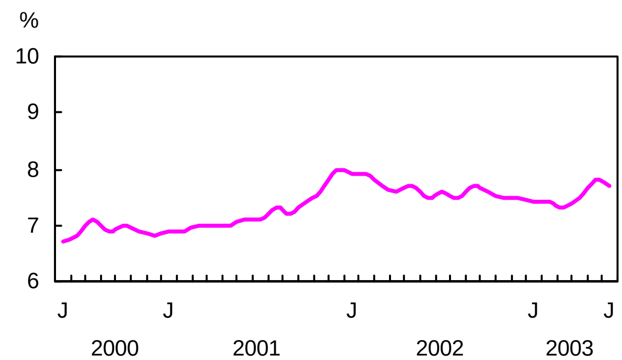
The leading indicator grew 0.2% in May after rising 0.2% in April.

Consumer Price Index



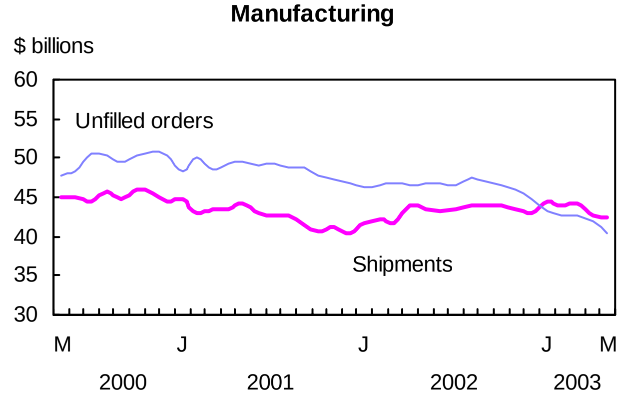
Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.6% higher in June than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices also rose 2.3%.

Unemployment rate



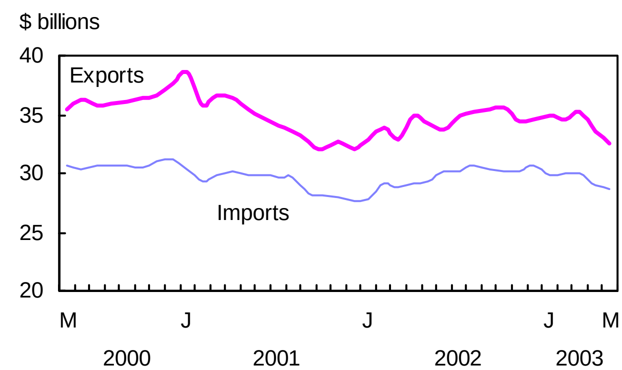
In June, the unemployment rate fell 0.1 percentage points to 7.7%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments fell 0.8% in May to $42.4 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders declined 3.4% to $40.5 billion.

Merchandise trade



In May, the value of merchandise exports dropped 2.8% to $32.6 billion. Imports fell 1.1% to $28.6 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 ($ billions, 1997)[1]	April	991.3	-0.2%	1.8%
Composite Index (1992=100)	June*	181.5	0.3%	2.3%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billions)	Q1 2003	42.9	10.6%	26.6%
Capacity utilization rate (%)[2]	Q1 2003	82.8	0.3†	1.2†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billions)	May*	26.2	0.3%	4.0%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	May	144.3	8.4%	-0.9%
Wholesale trade ($ billions)	May*	35.9	0.2%	3.7%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	June	15.7	0.3%	2.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	June	7.7	-0.1†	0.2†
Participation rate (%)	June	67.5	0.0†	0.7†
Average weekly earnings ($)	April	687.17	0.1%	1.3%
Regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries (in thousands)	April	543.4	1.3%	1.2%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billions)	May	32.6	-2.8%	-4.5%
Merchandise imports ($ billions)	May	28.6	-1.1%	-2.3%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billions)	May	4.0	-0.6	-0.9
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billions)	May	42.4	-0.8%	-2.2%
New orders ($ billions)	May	41.0	-2.5%	-5.7%
Unfilled orders ($ billions)	May	40.5	-3.4%	-13.3%
Inventory/shipments ratio	May	1.49	0.00	0.07
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	June*	122.1	0.1%	2.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1997=100)	May	105.2	-2.0%	-1.7%
Raw Materials Price Index (1997=100)	May	113.0	-2.5%	-0.5%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	April	114.3	0.4%	4.5%

Note: *All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*
* *new this week*
† *percentage point*
1 *1997 replaces 1992 as the base year used in determining prices for gross domestic product by industry. Also, valuation has been changed from factor cost to basic prices.*
2 *Calculation of the rates of capacity use is now based on the 1997 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which has replaced the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.*

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A weekly review

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Quarterly demographic statistics	Q1 2003	91-002-XPB	10/33
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Wholesale trade	May 2003	63-008-XIB	14/140
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