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# Infomat

## A Weekly Review

Friday, August 30, 1996

# OVERVIEW

- **Retail sales are creeping upward**

  In June, retail sales crept upward for a second consecutive month.

- **Wholesale trade rises for sixth consecutive month**

  Wholesale trade rose slightly in June. It was the sixth consecutive monthly increase following a flat 1995. Once again, inventories edged down.

- **Crude oil leads raw material prices higher**

  Raw material prices climbed almost 1% in July, led by crude oil, cattle, hogs and corn.

- **Industrial prices edge lower again**

  The 12-month change in industrial prices dropped to -0.5% in July. In June, the change turned negative for the first time in over four years.

- **Weekly earnings increase slightly**

  The strong growth in weekly earnings in May was sustained, with a slight increase in June.

- **Number of UI beneficiaries declines**

  In June, 698,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance benefits, a 2.4% decline from May.

- **Florida remains Canadians' favourite winter haven**

  In the first quarter of 1996, Florida was the most popular foreign destination of Canadians escaping winter, though more vacationers are choosing Cuba and Mexico.

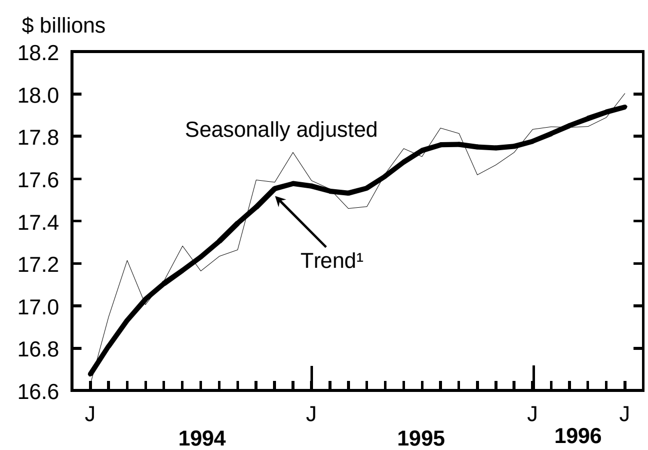
## Retail sales are creeping upward

In June, retail sales crept 0.6% higher to $18.0 billion. It was the second consecutive monthly increase (the figure for May was revised upward) in retail sales since the flat performance in March and April, and the first marked increase since the sustained growth of the 1992-to-1994 period. Five of the seven retail sectors, representing 71.0% of total sales, posted sales increases in June. During the first half of 1996, sales rose 2.3% (unadjusted) compared with the first half of 1995.

The overall increase in June was led by two sectors: general merchandise (+2.1% in June, +4.8% in the first half of 1996) and automotive (+0.5%, +6.4%). In the general merchandise sector, "other general stores" (retailers — excluding department stores — primarily engaged in selling a wide range of commodities) posted a seventh consecutive monthly advance (+5.0%, +6.1%). Department store sales, which showed a small increase of 0.5% in May, were unchanged in June but up 3.7% in the first half. In the automotive sector, the first-half gain was led by motor vehicle and recreational vehicle dealers (+4.4%); sales by gasoline service stations climbed 14.1%, due mainly to price increases between March and May 1996.

*(continued on page 2)*

**Retail sales**




[1] *Trend represents smoothed seasonally adjusted data.*

### ... Retail sales are creeping upward

In June, sales rose for drug stores, clothing retailers (-5.3% in the first half), and retail stores not elsewhere classified. The strength of the drug and general merchandise sectors, which have shown increasing sales trends since April 1995 and mid-1993 respectively, may reflect changes in consumer spending patterns. The product lines of these two sectors often overlap those of the food sector, which has experienced a falling sales trend since April 1995. The food sector's sales dropped 0.1% in June (-2.7% in the first half), while sales by the drug sector grew 0.9% (+6.5%). One bright spot in the food sector, sellers of specialty foods saw their sales rise 2.4% in the first half of 1996 compared with the first half of 1995.

Furniture dealers lost 1.1% in sales in June (-5.3% in the first half). June's drop followed a strong 6.3% gain in May and reflected weak furniture and appliance sales.

Provincial sales leaders in June included Ontario (+0.9%) and Quebec (+1.0%); sales were lower in Manitoba (-1.9%) and Newfoundland (-0.8%). Retailers in most provinces enjoyed a good first half in 1996. In all provinces except Newfoundland and Ontario, retailers had higher sales; the increases were larger in the Atlantic and Prairie provinces. Retail sales in Ontario remained virtually unchanged in the first half, following a gain of 5.5% in the first six months of 1995.

***Note to readers***

*The monthly Retail Trade Survey measures sales by kind of business, not by type of commodity. Sales estimates for a trade group include the total sales of the stores classified to the trade group and not solely sales of relevant major commodity lines. Readers should be careful not to confuse sales by certain types of stores with commodity sales.*

*Monthly data have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Year-to-date figures are based on unadjusted data.*

Early estimates for July retail sales indicate a decline in the number of new motor vehicles sold. In July, employment in trade increased 0.7%. Retail sales in the United States rebounded from a 0.5% decline in June with a 0.1% rise in July. In Canada, department store sales rose 0.7% in July to $1.2 billion — the highest level since March 1990.

***Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113, 2299, 2398-2417 and 2420.***

*The May 1996 issue of **Retail trade** (63-005-XPB, $20/$200) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Pierre Desjardins (613-951-9682), Retail Trade Section, Industry Division.*

## Wholesale trade rises for sixth consecutive month

Wholesale trade rose slightly in June (+0.3). It was the sixth consecutive monthly increase following a flat 1995. Inventories edged down again in June (-0.3%).

The strongest gains in terms of dollar value were in the following trade groups: metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies (+1.8%); motor vehicles, parts and accessories (+1.3%); and other products (+5.6%). The trade groups showing the largest declines in sales were: computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery (-7.2%); and lumber and building materials (-3.5%).

"Other products" made a strong sales gain for a second consecutive month (+4.4% in May and +5.6% in June). This large residual grouping of wholesalers accounted for about 18% of total sales in June. "Other products" includes some large exporters of commodities such as forest products, newsprint, other paper and paper products and agricultural chemicals and other farm supplies.

Wholesalers of lumber and building materials posted their first sales decline (-3.5%) in five months, while their inventories dropped for a third straight month. It appears their drop in sales is mostly attributable to the current softwood lumber agreement with the United States. Under this agreement, the volume of lumber that Canada exports to the United States is assessed on a quarterly basis. An extra fee is imposed on any shipments above a set quota. As the first quarterly cutoff date (June 30) approached, some Canadian producers reduced production, while others stopped shipping in order to avoid a penalty.

In June, for a third consecutive month, wholesalers continued to reduce the inventories that they accumulated in late 1995. At $31.2 billion, wholesalers' inventories in June dipped slightly (-0.3%) compared with May. As with sales, lower inventories were noted for computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery (-1.1%), and lumber and building materials (-1.6%). The inventories-to-sales ratio (1.48) decreased for a fifth consecutive month.

**Retail and wholesale trade,** June 1996
Seasonally adjusted

| | Retail sales | | Wholesale sales | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | $ million | % change, previous month | $ millions | % change, previous month |
| **Canada** | **17,969** | **0.6** | **21,143** | **0.3** |
| Newfoundland | 284 | -0.8 | 189 | 0.3 |
| Prince Edward Island | 80 | -0.9 | 50 | 5.6 |
| Nova Scotia | 559 | 0.2 | 478 | -0.6 |
| New Brunswick | 448 | 0.0 | 296 | -2.7 |
| Quebec | 4,264 | 1.0 | 4,641 | -0.2 |
| Ontario | 6,524 | 0.9 | 9,221 | 0.7 |
| Manitoba | 633 | -2.0 | 768 | 4.9 |
| Saskatchewan | 591 | 1.1 | 700 | 2.1 |
| Alberta | 1,906 | 0.4 | 2,015 | -0.8 |
| British Columbia | 2,619 | 0.5 | 2,762 | -0.2 |
| Yukon | 23 | -0.9 | 25 | 9.8 |
| Northwest Territories | 39 | -3.0 | 25 | 9.8 |

***Available on CANSIM: matrices 59, 61, 648 and 649.***

*The June 1996 issue of **Wholesale trade** (63-008-XPB, $18/$180) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Catherine Mamay (613-951-9683) or Sylvie Ouellette (613-951-3552), Industry Division.*

# Crude oil leads raw material prices higher

Raw material prices climbed almost 1% in July, led by crude oil, cattle, hogs and corn. Lower prices for copper, logs and wheat partly offset the overall monthly increase. If mineral fuels — 90% of which is crude oil — were excluded, raw material prices for July would have declined 0.5% from June.

On a 12-month basis, manufacturers paid 3.2% more for raw materials compared with July 1995. Higher prices for crude oil (+24%), hogs (+22%), corn (+83%) and wheat (+20%) were offset by lower prices for copper (-38%) and logs (-9%). Again, if mineral fuels were excluded, the 12-month price change in July would have shown a decrease (-3.2%).

Crude oil prices were up almost 5% in July after decreasing more than 9% through May and June. On a 12-month basis, crude oil prices were up almost 24%. Demand for crude has been spurred by a late boom in summer driving. Also, inventory buildup for the coming cold months has added upward pressure. Even if Iraq re-enters the market, it appears that present demand may keep prices from dropping significantly. However, if the U.S. economy continues to slow, crude oil prices may move lower.

On a month-to-month basis, animals and animal product prices were up almost 2% in July. Higher prices for cattle (+6%), hogs (+3%) and chickens (+2%) were the major contributors. Cattle prices rose to their highest level in almost five months on strong demand from meat packers and retailers.

Compared with July 1995, animals and animal product prices increased almost 8%. Higher prices for hogs (+22%), chickens (+19%) and fish (+9%) were somewhat offset by lower prices for cattle (-3%). Hog prices remain very strong due to on-going demand and high feed costs. The industrial product price index shows a 15% price increase for pork products over the last 12 months. Canada's export sales of pork have been given a boost by sales to South Korea, an emerging market.

In July**,** vegetable product prices were up only marginally, but rose more than 15% from a year earlier. Higher monthly price changes for corn (+9%) and canola (+3%) were offset by lower prices for wheat (-6%) and rubber (-6%). The global wheat supply is expected to increase about 8% this year. Canadian wheat production could surpass the 1 billion bushel mark for the first time since 1993, according to the July Field Crop Survey. Corn prices were up due to concern over dwindling stocks.

Non-ferrous metal prices declined almost 5% from June to July. Lower prices for copper (-13%), nickel (-7%) and aluminum materials (-3%) led the decline. Many metal prices have declined along with slowing industrial activity, particularly in Japan and Europe. As well, new production (supply) is expected. Compared with July 1995, non-ferrous metal prices decreased more than 19%. Lower prices for copper (-38%) and aluminum materials (-22%) were somewhat offset by higher prices for lead (+22%).

On a month-to-month basis, wood prices were down more than 1% thanks to lower prices for logs and pulpwood. Compared with July 1995, wood prices have fallen almost 12%, with logs and pulpwood contributing almost equally. Recent increases in the demand for pulp and the potential of increased demand for lumber may strengthen wood prices in coming months.

Ferrous material prices (iron ore and scrap) have been almost flat over the last 12 months. Year-to-date (as of July 27) primary steel production was down about 2% from a year earlier.

***Available on CANSIM: matrix 2009.***

*The July 1996 issue of* ***Industry price indexes*** *(62-011-XPB, $21/$210) will be available at the end of September. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848), Prices Division (Internet: danipau@statcan.ca).*

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *The raw materials price index (RMPI) reflects the prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in world markets. Also, unlike the industrial product price index, the RMPI includes goods not produced in Canada.*

# Industrial prices edge down again

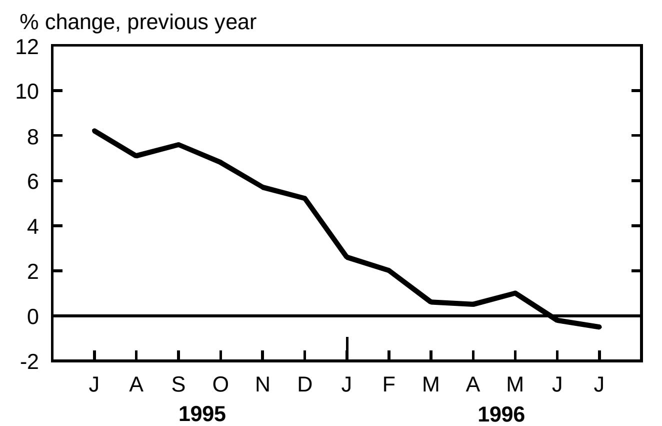
The 12-month change in industrial prices dropped to -0.5% in July, carried down by non-ferrous metal products and newsprint. The 12-month change was also negative in June (-0.2%). July's change was lower than the most recent figure for any member of the G7 except Germany and France.

The 12-month price change peaked at 10.3% in January 1995, and has been trending downward for 18 months. Pulp and paper products, non-ferrous primary metal products, and chemicals have accounted for most of the drop in the year-over-year price change since January 1995.

On a monthly basis, industrial prices edged down a further 0.2% between June and July. Important contributors to the decline were non-ferrous metal products (particularly those of aluminum, copper, copper-alloy and nickel) and newsprint. An increase in pulp prices partly offset these declines.

*(continued on page 4)*

**Industrial product prices**



### ... Industrial prices edge down again

Exchange rate movements only slightly raised the value of export prices quoted in U.S. currency in July. This particularly affected motor vehicles, pulp, paper, and wood products because producers of these items frequently quote export prices in U.S. dollars.

Prices for copper and copper-alloy products continued to fall in July, dropping almost 11%. Since May, prices for copper and copper-alloy products have fallen 24%.

Current world demand for copper remained quite weak relative to supply, a situation that seems likely to continue until an economic recovery occurs in Europe. Also, new copper mines are expected to come into production in the next year or so in South America, Indonesia and Australia.

Aluminum product prices were down 3% in July. Since peaking in February 1995, prices have declined 25% thanks to oversupply. Nickel product prices dropped 6% in July and were down 11% from their last peak in February 1996. Demand is relatively weak compared with existing and expected capacity; the same is true for stainless steel, the main use for nickel.

Newsprint prices continued to drop in Canada (-2.9%) and the United States (-5.3%). After peaking in February, newsprint prices in Canada had fallen 12% by July. Pulp prices were up 7.7% in Canada and 5.3% in the United States. After declining 46% between November 1995 and April 1996, Canadian pulp prices remained virtually unchanged in May and rose slightly in June; they had recovered 9% by July. Declining inventories and increased demand, particularly in Europe, Japan and East Asia, were responsible for the recovery. The Canadian Pulp and Paper Association reported that the recovery in pulp exports that began in May stalled in July when there was a drop of 14% in volume.

***Note to readers***

*The industrial product price index (IPPI) reflects the prices producers receive as goods leave their plants. It does not reflect what consumers pay. Unlike the consumer price index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all costs (including transportation, wholesale and retail) occurring from the time a good leaves a plant and a final user takes possession.*

*Since Canadian export producers often quote their prices in foreign currencies, changes in the exchange rate affect the IPPI. A 1.0% change in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar has been estimated to change the IPPI by about 0.2%.*

***Available on CANSIM: matrices 2000-2008.***

*The July 1996 issue of* ***Industry price indexes*** *(62-011-XPB, $21/$210) will be available in September. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

## Weekly earnings increase slightly

The strong growth in weekly earnings in May was sustained with a slight increase in June. Average weekly earnings edged up to $588.87, a 2.8% advance from June 1995. Hourly earnings rose 0.3% and the average number of hours worked rose 0.2%.

The number of employees on business payrolls fell for a second consecutive month in June; the losses in May and June totalled 80,000. Layoffs of temporary workers hired for the census as well as the strike by the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union in British Columbia were responsible for most of the losses in June. In Quebec, back-to-back declines in May and June resulted in a drop of 44,000 employees. The declines in Quebec, while widespread in various industries, were most notable in public administration and in finance, insurance and real estate.

***Note to readers***

*With the release of the May 1996 data, this survey has expanded it is use of administrative data. This in turn has improved coverage of employment levels and has resulted in revisions to previously released data. Consistent time series back to January 1983 are now available.*

**Average weekly earnings**, June 1996
Seasonally adjusted

| | Industrial aggregate ($) | % change, previous month | % change, previous year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Canada | 588.87 | 0.3 | 2.8 |
| Newfoundland | 531.67 | 0.4 | 0.1 |
| Prince Edward Island | 506.64 | 1.8 | 7.7 |
| Nova Scotia | 501.47 | 0.5 | 1.9 |
| New Brunswick | 509.45 | -0.8 | -0.6 |
| Quebec | 558.58 | 0.5 | 1.2 |
| Ontario | 634.01 | 1.1 | 4.4 |
| Manitoba | 516.34 | -0.6 | 2.0 |
| Saskatchewan | 511.36 | -1.1 | 4.4 |
| Alberta | 583.40 | 1.9 | 5.2 |
| British Columbia | 599.14 | -0.1 | 0.2 |
| Yukon | 655.24 | -3.2 | 1.2 |
| Northwest Territories | 699.24 | -2.3 | -1.5 |

The number of retail trade employees declined for a fifth consecutive month in June despite the recent sales resurgence. Since January, employment losses in this industry have totalled 72,000; June's decline was concentrated in Ontario and British Columbia. Weekly earnings in retail trade rose during May and June to $353.54. Despite monthly fluctuations, retail trade earnings are now 2.1% higher than last year.

After declining slightly in May, the number of employees in manufacturing rebounded in June by 10,000. The gain was concentrated in Quebec and Ontario. This resumption of employment growth coincides with a downward trend in the value of inventories, and has occurred despite a levelling off of unfilled orders in June. Weekly earnings in manufacturing increased for a third consecutive month and were 2.8% higher than in June 1995. The earnings growth was mainly due to increased hours worked by employees paid by the hour. Hourly earnings, stagnant for nearly a year, rose 1.5% in May and remained at that level in June.

*(continued on page 5)*

**... Weekly earnings increase slightly**

The work force in federal administration, which expanded in April due to the temporary census workers, returned to pre-census levels. The declining trend in provincial administration continued with declines in all provinces. Overall, governments employed 19,000 fewer workers than in June 1995. Despite an increase in June 1996 (due to census workers), weekly earnings for public administration employees are following a downward trend; weekly earnings were down $6.42 compared with June 1995.

Health and social service industries reduced employment by 15,000. This industry's downtrend in employment has been particularly evident among hospitals and other institution-based health and social services in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Weekly earnings in the industry were unchanged in June at $509.28. Since January 1996, earnings have grown only 0.5%.

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

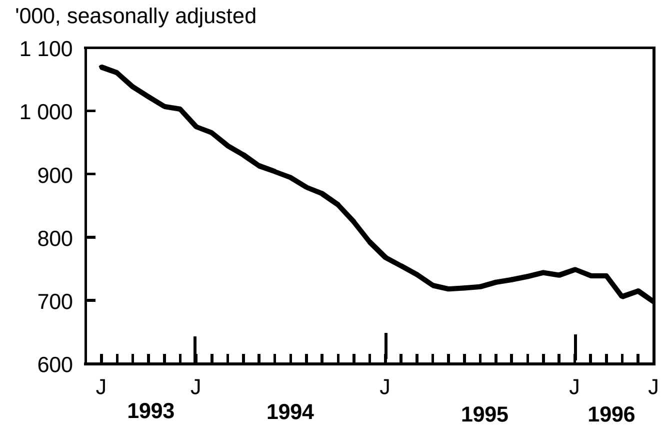
*The June 1996 issue of* ***Employment, earnings and hours*** *(72-002-XPB, $31/$310) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Stephen Johnson (613-951-4090 , fax: 613-951-4087, Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.*

# Number of UI beneficiaries declines

In June, 698,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, a 2.4% decline from May. The number of beneficiaries declined significantly from May 1992 through June 1995 (-37.5%), then grew modestly from July 1995 through January 1996 (+4.0%). Since then, the number of recipients has declined 6.8%. In June, the number of UI beneficiaries fell in 10 provinces and territories, with the largest drops recorded in New Brunswick (-7.7%), Ontario (-3.9%) and British Columbia (-3.3%).

For a second consecutive month, the amount of benefits paid out decreased in June (-3.2% to $773 million), down in all provinces and territories except Newfoundland and Manitoba. The largest percentage monthly drops were recorded in the Yukon (-8.9%), the Northwest Territories (-5.4%) and New Brunswick (-6.1%). Looking at the first half of 1996, the amount of regular benefits paid was 0.2% more than in the first half of 1995 (unadjusted data).

**Number of UI beneficiaries paid regular benefits**




**UI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits**, June 1996
Seasonally adjusted

| | Total '000 | % change, previous month | % change, previous year |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Canada** | **698** | **-2.4** | **-3.0** |
| Newfoundland | 36 | 1.8 | -4.3 |
| Prince Edward Island | 9 | -1.3 | -13.8 |
| Nova Scotia | 34 | 0.1 | -8.5 |
| New Brunswick | 37 | -7.7 | -9.4 |
| Quebec | 248 | -1.4 | -0.7 |
| Ontario | 177 | -3.9 | -1.7 |
| Manitoba | 18 | 0.5 | -7.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 15 | -3.0 | -0.3 |
| Alberta | 45 | -2.9 | -11.5 |
| British Columbia | 79 | -3.3 | 1.3 |
| Yukon | 1 | -2.5 | -4.0 |
| Northwest Territories | 1 | 1.4 | 20.2 |

The number of individuals who applied for UI benefits increased 1.4% to 249,000 in June. The number rose in eight provinces and territories; the largest increases occurred in New Brunswick (+5.3%) and Quebec (+5.0%). The number of claims filed in the first six months of 1996 was 1.6% higher than during the same period in 1995 (unadjusted).

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5717 and 5735-5736.**

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

# Florida remains Canadians' favourite winter haven

Although New York state receives the most overnight visits by Canadians travelling outside the country during the course of a year (largely because of its proximity to Canada's two most populous provinces), Canadians most often head to Florida to escape winter. In the first quarter of 1996, Canadians made 915,000 overnight visits to the Sunshine state, a 17% jump from the first quarter of 1995 after two years of declines. This compares with a 9% increase in the number of trips to the United States by Canadians who did not visit Florida.

The increase in the number of trips to the United States that included a visit of at least one night in Florida was entirely due to a 33% jump in air travel, thanks to the Open Skies agreement signed in February 1995.

Winter stays of at least one night by Canadians in Florida peaked at 1.1 million in 1993. The weakness of the Canadian dollar was one factor behind the declines in 1994 and 1995. Other factors included reduced out-of-country medical coverage, increased costs of supplemental medical insurance, stricter enforcement of residency requirements to maintain medical coverage within Canada and acts of violence against foreign tourists (including some Canadians).

While travelling in the United States during the winter of 1996, Canadians spent 42% of their nights in Florida, staying an average 15 nights and spending $830 per visit. Overall, spending by Canadians during overnight visits to Florida amounted to $762 million, a third of the total spending by all Canadians travelling in the United States.

Canadians who chose Florida as their favourite sun spot came mainly from Ontario and Quebec; they made 572,000 and 216,000 overnight visits respectively. Residents from Western Canada looking for milder climates favoured California, Nevada and Hawaii.

When it wasn't the southern states, it was the states bordering Canada that welcomed Canadians most often for overnight stays. Residents of Western Canada, in particular, visited these states more frequently than the "warmer" states. However, Canadians' visits to bordering states were shorter in duration (averaging about three nights).

Mexico was the overseas country most often visited by residents of all provinces during the winter of 1996. Canadians' attraction to Mexico has grown over the years. During the first three months of 1996, they made 246,000 overnight visits there and spent $206 million; this compares with 60,000 such visits in the first quarter of 1981.

Cuba, in the last few years, has also gained in popularity, receiving an unprecedented 139,000 visits from Canadians in the first quarter of 1996. This compares with 65,000 during the first three months of 1991 and 87,000 last winter. Canadian travellers contributed $110 million to the Cuban economy in the first quarter of 1996, double the amount of the previous year. As with Florida, but unlike Mexico, the main market for Cuba in Canada is concentrated in Quebec and Ontario.

Overall, Canadians made 4.6 million overnight trips abroad in the first quarter of 1996. While 70% of overnight trips to the South Atlantic region of the United States and 87% of trips to Bermuda and the Caribbean were for pleasure, recreation or holiday, many Canadians travelled to other parts of the world and for other reasons.

More than half the trips of at least one night to the south-central United States were business trips, while close to half the trips to the United Kingdom were to visit friends and relatives. The main purpose of travel to Asia was split equally between visits to friends and relatives and for pleasure, recreation or holiday, at 35% of overnight trips each.

*Various statistical profiles and microdata files of the characteristics of international travellers for the first quarter of 1996 are now available on request. For further information, contact Luc Dubois (613-951-1674, fax: 613-951-2909, Internet: duboluc@statcan.ca), Education, Culture and Tourism Division.*

***Note to readers***

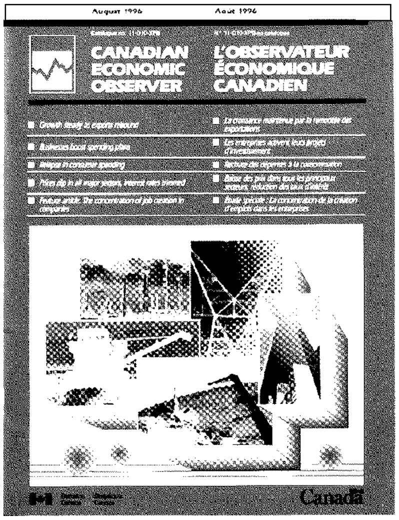
*Winter is the first quarter of the year (the months of January, February and March).*

*Western Canada includes Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.*

*The states in the South Atlantic region of the United States are Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. The region also includes Washington, D.C.*

*States in the south-central United States include Alabama, Arkansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas.*

# New from Statistics Canada




## Canadian economic observer

August 1996

The August 1996 issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, presents a summary of the economy and the major economic events that occurred in July. As well, a feature article looks at the concentration of job creation in companies. A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

The *Historical statistical supplement* can now be purchased for the first time ever in electronic format. Adobe's Windows-based Acrobat Reader is built right into this diskette product, allowing you to view, print and transport the CEO's extensive range of data and graphics into the software of your choice. Documentation is included, and additional assistance can be obtained from the Current Economic Analysis Group.

*The August 1996 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, $22/$220) is now available. To order the **Historical statistical supplement** 1995/96 on diskette (11-210-XDB, $50), contact Cynthia Bloskie (613-951-3634; fax: 613-951-5403). For further information on this release, contact Cynthia Bloskie or Dominique Pérusse (613-951-1789), Current Economic Analysis Group (Internet: ceo@statcan.ca).*

## Energy statistics handbook on diskette

The *Energy statistics handbook* is a comprehensive source of detailed information on the energy field. Data are presented in an easy-to-use manner, organized by energy type: total energy, petroleum, natural gas, electricity, uranium and coal. The *Handbook* also provides sections on prices and conversion factors, such as how to change natural gas and crude oil volumes to a heat-equivalent measure. Economic indicators such as employment, automobile sales and investment expenditures are included to facilitate understanding of energy data in a global context.

The electronic format offers many advantages over the print copy. Access to data and reference material is easy: you can search by key word or topic, and copy and paste data from tables into spreadsheet applications such as Lotus or Excel. Moreover, with a few keystrokes, entire tables from the *Handbook* can be loaded directly into spreadsheets to allow for easy data manipulation.

*The **Energy statistics handbook** (57-601-XDE, $275) is now available on diskette. To order this electronic product, contact the Regional Reference Centre nearest you or order via the Internet (order@statcan.ca). For further information on this release, contact Irfan Hashmi (613-951-3501; Internet: hashirf@statcan.ca), Industry Division.*

## Seniors

1994

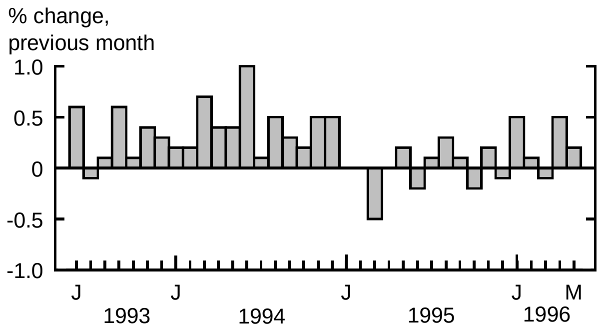
Demographic and financial data on senior individuals and senior families are now available. Close to 5.7 million Canadians are aged 55 and over, while close to 4.5 million are aged 65 and over. Derived from the 1994 income tax returns filed in the spring of 1995, these data are a unique source of information on small areas, and are ideal for supporting market analyses and policy decisions.

The data are available by province and territory, city, town, census metropolitan area and census division, as well as by forward sortation area (the first three characters of the postal code) and letter carrier walk (a grouping of postal codes).

*For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9720; fax: 613-951-4745; Internet: saadinfo@statcan.ca), Small Area and Administrative Data Division.*

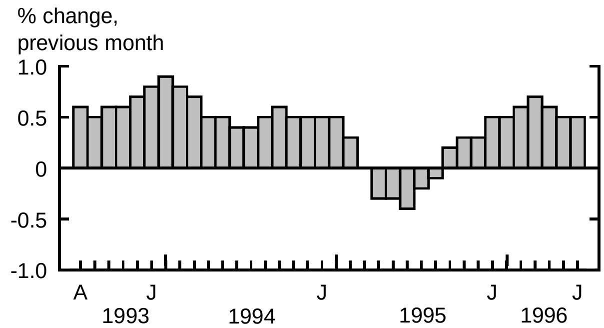
# Current trends

### Gross domestic product



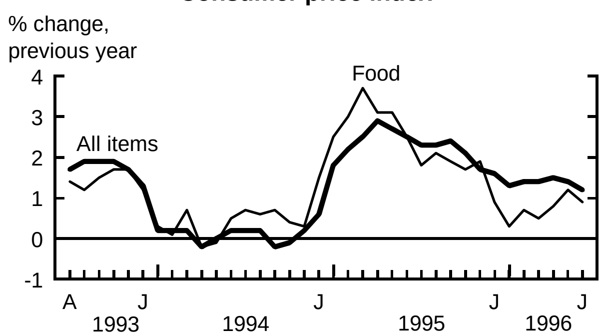

Real gross domestic product at factor cost rose 0.2% in May.

### Composite index



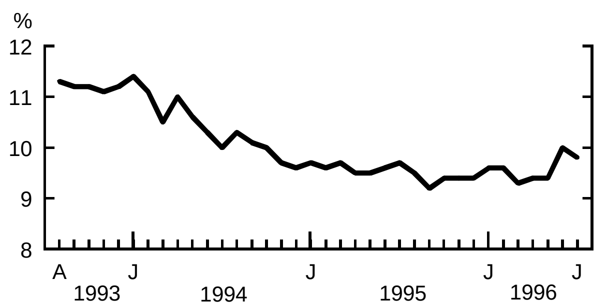

The composite index grew by 0.5% between June and July.

### Consumer price index



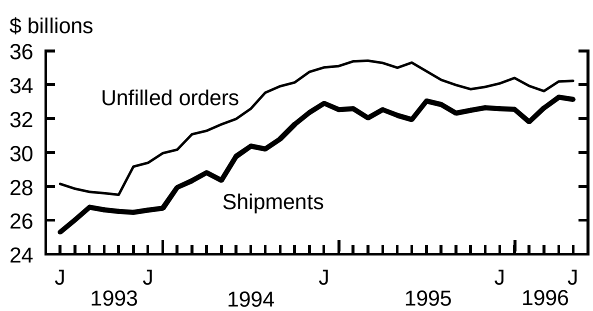

Consumers paid 1.2% more for goods and services in July 1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 0.9%.

### Unemployment rate



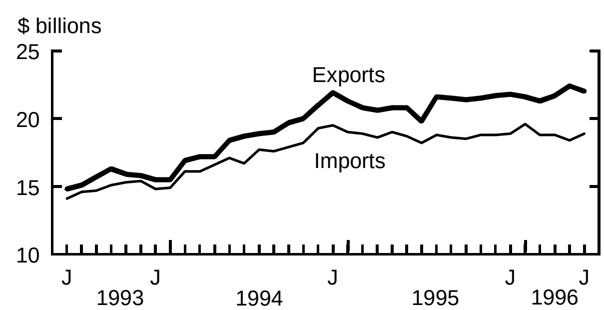

In July, the unemployment rate fell to 9.8%.

### Manufacturing




Manufacturers' shipments slipped 0.4% in June to $33.1 billion. The level of unfilled orders rose 0.1% to $34.2 billion.

### Merchandise trade




In June, the value of merchandise exports fell 1.8% from May to $22.0 billion. Imports advanced 2.3% to $18.9 billion.

***Note:*** *All series are seasonally adjusted except the consumer price index.*

## Latest monthly statistics

| | Period | Level | Change, previous period | Change, previous year |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **GENERAL** | | | | |
| Gross domestic product ($ billion, 1986) | May | 549.6 | 0.2% | 1.4% |
| Composite index (1981=100) | July | 179.1 | 0.5% | 4.2% |
| Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion) | Q2 1996 | 22.1 | -1.6% | -6.4% |
| Capacity utilization (%) | Q1 1996 | 82.8 | -0.1 † | -3.0 † |
| **DOMESTIC DEMAND** | | | | |
| Retail trade ($ billion) | June | 17.9 | 0.6% | 1.4% |
| New motor vehicle sales ('000 units) | June | 99.4 | 1.9% | 1.5% |
| **LABOUR** | | | | |
| Employment (millions) | July | 13.6 | 0.1% | 1.1% |
| Unemployment rate (%) | July | 9.8 | -0.2 † | 0.1 † |
| Participation rate (%) | July | 64.7 | -0.1 † | -0.1 † |
| Labour income ($ billion) | May | 35.4 | 0.2% | 2.6% |
| Average weekly earnings ($) | June* | 588.87 | 0.3% | 2.8% |
| **INTERNATIONAL TRADE** | | | | |
| Merchandise exports ($ billion) | June | 22.0 | -1.8% | 5.8% |
| Merchandise imports ($ billion) | June | 18.9 | 2.3% | 1.1% |
| Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion) | June | 3.1 | -0.8 | 1.0 |
| **MANUFACTURING** | | | | |
| Shipments ($ billion) | June | 33.1 | -0.4% | 2.9% |
| New orders ($ billion) | June | 33.2 | -2.1% | 3.9% |
| Unfilled orders ($ billion) | June | 34.2 | 0.1% | -2.2% |
| Inventory/shipments ratio | June | 1.35 | -0.01 | -0.03 |
| **PRICES** | | | | |
| Consumer price index (1986=100) | July | 135.6 | 0.0% | 1.2% |
| Industrial product price index (1986=100) | July* | 128.8 | -0.2% | -0.5% |
| Raw materials price index (1986=100) | July* | 135.8 | 0.9% | 3.2% |
| New housing price index (1986=100) | June | 131.6 | 0.1% | -2.2% |

**Note:** *All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*
* *new this week*
† *percentage point*

# Infomat
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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **AGRICULTURE** | | | | | |
| Farm cash receipts | Jan.-June 1996 | 21-001-XPB | 19/62 | 23/75 | 27/87 |
| Field crop reporting series no. 5: Estimates of production of principal field crops | July 31, 1996 | 22-002-XPB | 15/85 | 18/102 | 21/119 |
| Livestock statistics updates | August 1996 | 23-603-UPE | 36/144 | 44/173 | 51/202 |
| **INDUSTRY** | | | | | |
| Crude petroleum and natural gas production | May 1996 | 26-006-XPB | 18/180 | 22/216 | 26/252 |
| Electric lamps (light bulbs and tubes) | April 1996 | 43-009-XPB | 6/60 | 8/72 | 9/84 |
| Energy statistics handbook | | | | | |
| electronic version | August 1996 | 57-601-XDE | 275 | 330 | 385 |
| paper version | August 1996 | 57-601-UPB | 375 | 450 | 525 |
| Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation | July 1996 | 44-004-XPB | 6/60 | 8/72 | 9/84 |
| New motor vehicle sales | June 1996 | 63-007-XPB | 16/160 | 20/192 | 23/224 |
| Production and disposition of tobacco products | July 1996 | 32-022-XPB | 6/60 | 8/72 | 9/84 |
| The dairy review | April-June 1996 | 23-001-QXPB | 35/115 | 42/138 | 49/161 |
| Wholesale trade | June 1996 | 63-008-XPB | 18/180 | 22/216 | 26/252 |
| **INTERNATIONAL TRADE** | | | | | |
| Canadian international merchandise trade | June 1996 | 65-001-XPB | 19/182 | 22/219 | 26/255 |
| **PRICES** | | | | | |
| Average prices of selected farm inputs | July 1996 | 62-012-XPB | 9/48 | 11/58 | 13/68 |

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# Key release calendar: September 1996

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 3<br>**Perspectives on labour and income**, Autumn 1996 | 4<br>**Building permits**, July 1996 | 5<br>**Help-wanted index**, August 1996 | 6<br>**Labour force survey**, August 1996 |
| 9 | 10<br>**Field crop reporting series: Grain stocks,** July 31, 1996<br>**Industrial capacity utilization rates**, Second quarter 1996 | 11<br>**New housing price index**, July 1996 | 12<br>**Adult literacy: Canadian results**, 1994<br>**New motor vehicle sales**, July 1996 | 13<br>**Consumer price index**, August 1996 |
| 16 | 17<br>**Monthly survey of manufacturing**, July 1996 | 18<br>**Canadian international trade**, July 1996<br>**Travel between Canada and other countries**, July 1996 | 19<br>**Composite index**, August 1996 | 20<br>**Retail trade**, July 1996 |
| 23<br>**Wholesale trade**, July 1996 | 24<br>**Canada's international transactions in securities**, July 1996 | 25<br>**Unemployment insurance**, July 1996 | 26<br>**Employment, earnings and hours**, July 1996<br>**Migration estimates**, 1994-95 | 27<br>**Industrial product price index**, August 1996<br>**Raw materials price index**, August 1996 |
| 30<br>**Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry**, July 1996 | | | | |

* Release dates for International Trade, the Consumer Price Index and the Labour Force Survey are fixed; dates for other data series may change.