



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, September 19, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ **Membership in pension plans sags**

At the beginning of 1996, the number of Canadians who were members of registered pension plans was down somewhat from 1994 and remained lower than the peak attained in 1992.

◆ **New motor vehicle sales up in July**

Strong truck sales were mostly responsible for higher motor vehicle sales in July. Car sales also edged up during the month.

◆ **Upward trend in department store sales continues**

Department stores sales continued to move up in July. In addition to the monthly gain, the highest year-over-year increase since January was recorded.

◆ **Canadians make more overseas trips**

Canadians made a near-record number of trips to overseas destinations in July, while travellers from overseas made fewer overnight trips to Canada.

◆ **Fewer women interrupting their careers**

In the 1990s, women have been less likely than those of earlier decades to interrupt their careers for family or other reasons. And those who have taken a hiatus tend to return to paid work more quickly.

◆ **Back to school—for adults**

More and more adults are returning to school full time, particularly those between the ages of 25 and 29, those with postsecondary education, and young single mothers.

◆ **Youths' literacy skills vary dramatically across country**

The literacy levels of youth aged 16 to 25 are the highest among all age groups in Canada. However, there are dramatic variations in average youth literacy scores across the country.

Membership in pension plans sags

At the beginning of 1996, 5.1 million Canadians were members of nearly 15,500 registered pension plans (RPPs). The number of participants represented a slight drop of 1% compared with 1994 and stood 3% lower than the peak in 1992 (5.3 million). A drop in RPP membership does not mean that fewer Canadians are preparing for retirement. In 1995, savings in registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) surpassed those in RPPs.

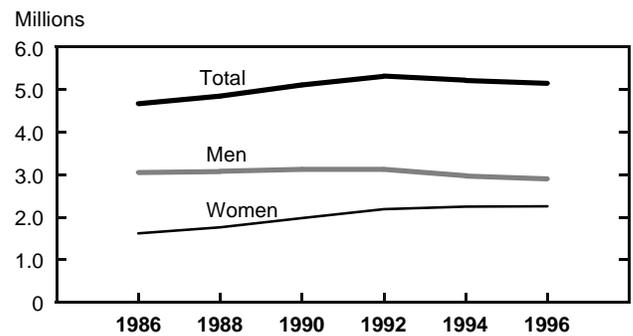
As of January 1, 1996, women accounted for 44% of all RPP members compared with 35% in 1986. Female membership grew rapidly during the late 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s as a result of both increased numbers in the paid work force and legislative changes regarding the RPP eligibility of part-time employees.

While the number of female members was behind the growth in membership up to 1992, the drop in membership that followed was entirely attributable to the drop in the number of male members. Since the beginning of 1992, the number of male RPP members has dropped 7.5%, falling to 2.9 million members in 1996. Between 1994 and 1996, the number of female members remained almost unchanged at 2.3 million.

Registered pension plan members represented about 42% of the paid work force as of January 1, 1996. The coverage rate, which reached a 10-year high in 1992, has since declined. The drop in coverage between 1994 and 1996 reflects both the decline in RPP

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Number of registered pension plan members at January 1



... Membership in pension plans sags

membership and an increase in the paid work force. Among paid workers, the coverage rate for men (44%) remained higher than that for women (41%), but the gap was much closer than at the beginning of the decade.

Public sector plans (8% of the total) accounted for close to half of all members at the beginning of 1996. Downsizing in the federal and provincial governments contributed to declining membership in public sector plans between January of 1994 and 1996.

Provincially, the coverage rate for paid workers was highest in Newfoundland (57%) followed by Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Nova Scotia. These provinces all had a higher-than-average proportion of paid workers in the public sector, where coverage is close to universal. Prince Edward Island, the only

Note to readers

The reference date for these data is January 1. However, membership data are generally taken from the end of the preceding calendar year, as are employment data used to calculate coverage rates. Registered pension plans are established for employees and can be sponsored by an employer or a union.

province without regulatory legislation for pensions, had the lowest coverage rate (34%).

Pension plans in Canada, January 1, 1996 (74-401-XPB, \$41) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Thomas Dufour (613-951-2088; fax: 613-951-4087) or Gabriella Martello (613-951-4012), Labour Division.

New motor vehicle sales up in July

New motor vehicle sales rose 3.3% to 116,973 (seasonally adjusted) in July. Although car sales edged up during the month, the increase was almost entirely due to higher truck sales. Compared with July 1996, motor vehicle sales were up 19%—the 10th consecutive year-over-year increase.

For the past three years, new motor vehicle sales have been slower in July than in June. This year, however, the trend was reversed when 3,725 more units were sold in July than in June. Truck sales advanced 7.1% from June and accounted for 99% of the advance in new motor vehicle sales. Car sales increased 0.1% in July. Both passenger cars (+11.4%) and trucks (+28.6%) posted strong year-over-year sales advances.

Consumer preference for minivans and sport utility vehicles has been growing since the minivan first appeared on the market in the fall of 1983. That year, dealers sold 3.5 cars for every truck. By 1996, the gap had declined to 1.2 cars for every truck, and this level held during the first seven months of 1997.

Industry sources have indicated that sales will continue to advance in August, given consumer confidence, low interest rates and incentive programs.

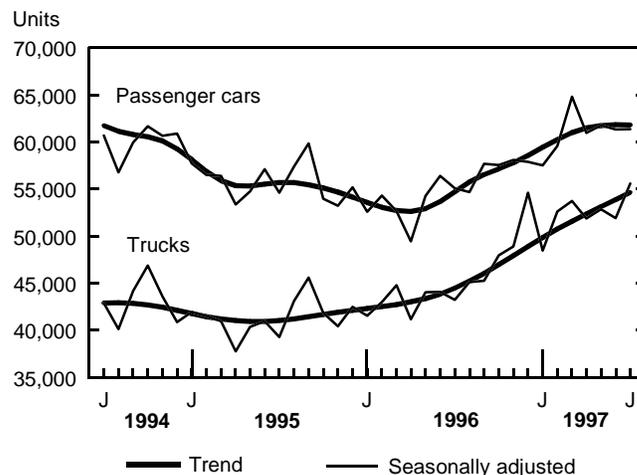
Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

The July 1997 issue of New motor vehicle sales (63-007-XPB, \$17/\$165) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel (613-951-2210), Distributive Trades Division.

Note to readers

Passenger cars include those used for personal and commercial purposes (such as taxis and rental cars). Trucks include minivans, sport utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

New motor vehicle sales



Upward trend in department store sales continues

In July, department store sales rose 1.2% from June to \$1,335.5 million (seasonally adjusted). Compared with July 1996, sales were up 11.3%—the highest year-over-year gain since January. With the exception of a pause in the last half of 1995, department store sales have been increasing since the end of 1993.

On an unadjusted basis, consumers spent \$1,146.3 million in department stores, 12.4% more than in July 1996. Sales for the first seven months of 1997 were up 9.8% from the same period of 1996.

The largest year-over-year gain was recorded in Alberta (+16.4%), followed by the combined sales of Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island (+15.3%), then Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia

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... Upward trend in department store sales continues

and Ontario. In Quebec and New Brunswick, department stores posted their highest year-over-year gains so far this year.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

The July 1997 issue of *Department store sales and stocks* (63-002-XPB; \$17/\$165) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Irwin Bess (613-951-4166), Distributive Trades Division.

Department store sales including concessions, July 1997 Unadjusted

	July 1997	July 1996 to July 1997	January 1997 to July 1997	January- July 1996 to January- July 1997
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
Canada	1,146.3	12.4	7,599.6	9.8
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island	22.8	15.3	134.8	7.7
Nova Scotia	36.0	14.2	227.1	8.5
New Brunswick	27.1	11.0	167.9	5.7
Quebec	214.3	12.2	1,425.6	7.3
Ontario	468.3	13.0	3,173.7	11.5
Manitoba	47.9	8.3	319.2	6.3
Saskatchewan	38.9	14.9	249.5	11.5
Alberta	131.5	16.4	851.0	12.3
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories	159.4	8.1	1,050.7	8.3

Canadians make more overseas trips

In July, Canadians made 336,000 (+2.0%) trips to overseas destinations—a near-record level. At the same time, residents of overseas countries (countries other than the United States) took 345,000 overnight trips to Canada (-1.7%).

Americans made more overnight trips to Canada in July than they did in June (+1.0%). The number of such trips has been fluctuating around 1.1 million per month since early 1995. Overall, foreigners took 1.4 million trips of at least one night to Canada in July, practically unchanged from June.

Travel between Canada and other countries, June 1997

	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	% change, previous year
	seasonally adjusted		unadjusted	
Canadian trips abroad				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same-day	2,896	1.4	3,523	-2.8
One or more nights	755	-3.0	1,320	-6.8
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,238	-2.5	1,793	-4.3
Other countries	336	2.0	299	11.2
Travel to Canada				
Auto trips from the United States				
Same-day	2,073	0.4	3,004	5.5
One or more nights	707	-0.4	1,565	1.7
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,092	1.0	2,280	3.4
Other countries ²	345	-1.7	664	-8.5

1. Estimates for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and estimated numbers for planes, trains, boats and other methods.

2. Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only, via the United States.

Note to readers

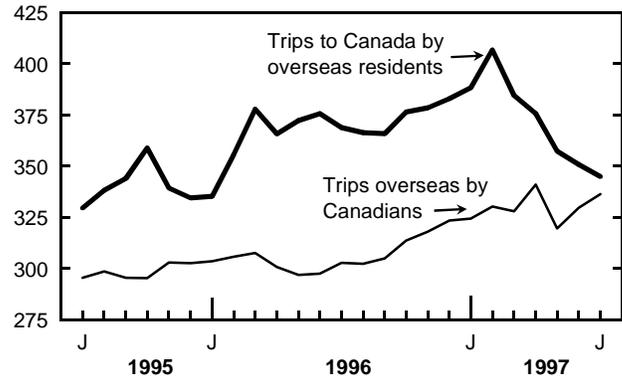
Unless otherwise specified, data are seasonally adjusted (adjusted for variations that repeat annually and for variability caused by the different volumes of travellers associated with different days of the week).

Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data. Year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data (the actual traffic counts).

A tourist is a traveller who spends at least one night in a place visited. Excursions are same-day trips.

Overnight trips between Canada and overseas countries

Thousands, seasonally adjusted



Canadians made 1.2 million overnight trips to the United States, a 2.5% decline. Although the United States remains the most popular destination for Canadian tourists, the relative popularity of overseas destinations has been growing since early 1991.

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... Canadians make more overseas trips

Canadians made 2.9 million same-day car trips to the United States in July, up 1.4% from June. Americans made 2.1 million cross-border car trips to Canada, practically unchanged from the previous month. Meanwhile, the number of Americans travelling to Canada by car via the Rainbow and Whirlpool bridges in Niagara Falls continued to increase in July compared with the same month last year, although the growth has slowed in the last few months.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2661–2697, 5780–6046 and 8200–8328.

The July 1997 issue of *International travel, advance information* (66-001-PPB, \$8/\$73) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Luc Dubois (613-951-1674; fax: 613-951-2909; Internet: duboluc@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Fewer women interrupting their careers

In the 1990s, women have been less likely than those of earlier decades to interrupt their careers for family or other reasons, according to data from the 1995 General Social Survey (GSS). In addition, those who did take a hiatus were more likely to return to paid work, and to return more quickly.

In the 1950s, 88% of all career interruptions for women were due to family matters (marriage, maternity leave and child care). By the early 1990s, this proportion had fallen to 47%. Now we are seeing an increase in career interruptions for economic reasons, such as layoffs, the expiry of contracts, lack of work, seasonal work or company closures. At the beginning of the 1990s, 22% of women had placed their careers on hold for economic reasons, compared with 1% of women in the 1950s.

Only one out of eight women returned to paid work within two years in the 1950s, compared with 55% in the 1990s. In addition, the first completed work interruptions became much shorter: 1.4 years on average for women aged 25 to 34 in 1995, compared

with 8.1 years for those aged 55 to 64. University graduates were less likely to interrupt their careers, and those who did so returned to their jobs much more quickly than women without degrees.

The GSS data indicated that the majority of women (71%) returned to their jobs after a long-term interruption. About one-third settled back into the same jobs. Slightly less than half (47%) of women who had full-time jobs before their interruptions returned to full-time jobs. One-quarter traded full-time work for part-time employment. And 4 out of 10 women who had worked part time returned to part-time employment.

Women experienced more frequent and longer employment breaks than men. In 1995, close to two-thirds (62%) of all women who had ever had a paid job took at least six months off, compared with just over one-quarter of men (27%). These career interruptions have serious implications for women in terms of earnings, employability and long-term well-being.

The autumn 1997 issue of *Canadian social trends* (11-008-XPE, \$11/\$36) is now available. For further information, contact Susan Crompton (613-951-2556), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

Back to school—for adults

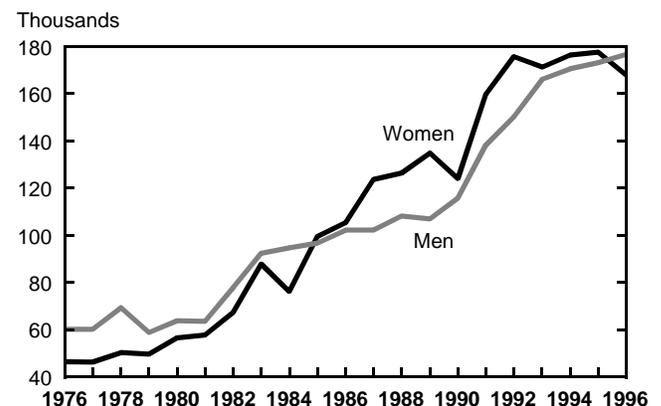
More and more adults are returning to school full time. Some of the groups more likely to do so are those aged 25 to 29, those with postsecondary education, and young women who are single parents. From October 1976 to October 1996, the number of adults attending school full time more than tripled, from 107,000 to 344,000.

In 1976, men were close to one-and-one-half times more likely than women to be attending school full time. By the start of the 1990s, however, around 20,000 more women than men were in school. But the attendance of women appears more volatile than that of men, and by the mid-1990s men and women were found in the classroom in roughly equal numbers.

Among the adults who returned to school full time, young adults in their late twenties were more than twice as likely as people in their early thirties to do so, and 10 times as likely as people aged 40 to 64. More men than women in their late twenties went back to school; however, by their late thirties, a higher proportion of women had returned to their studies.

Those with postsecondary education are also most likely to upgrade their qualifications later on, while people who did not complete high school are least likely to do so. Men who left high

Number of adult women and men attending school full time



Source: Labour Force Survey, October data.

school are much less likely to return to school as adults than those who graduated from high school. In contrast, women who return do so whether they finished high school or not.

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... Back to school—for adults

Improving one's work prospects is the dominant reason for going back to school full time. Among adults living with partners, having children seems to discourage a return to full-time school for both men and women up to age 40. Young women who are single parents stand out: 10.4% of female single parents under age 30 go back to school, more than young adults as a whole (6.7%). The unemployment rate for young single mothers is by far the highest of all groups studied.

Many of the people who appear to have the greatest need for improved economic prospects are not participating in adult

education. For example, the unemployment rate for individuals who did not complete high school is nearly three times that of university graduates (12.5% compared with 4.8%). But the percentage of high school leavers who return to school full time (1.0%) is much lower than that of those with a university degree (3.9%).

*The autumn 1997 issue of **Perspectives on labour and income** (75-001-XPE, \$18/\$58) is now available. For further information, contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4628), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.*

Youths' literacy skills vary dramatically across country

Data from the 1994 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) show that literacy levels of youth aged 16 to 25 are the highest among all age groups in Canada. However, literacy scores for this age group vary dramatically across the country, even after demographic, employment and educational characteristics are taken into account.

Average youth literacy scores that have not been adjusted to account for differences in socio-economic characteristics among provinces can be clustered into three groups. Youth in Manitoba and Saskatchewan scored more than the equivalent of about one year of additional schooling above the national average. Ontario, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island scored about the equivalent of one year of schooling below the national average. The rest of the provinces scored around the national average.

Approximately 39% of the variation in youth literacy scores among provinces was attributable to differences in socio-economic background (such as educational attainment, occupational status and parental educational attainment). Years of schooling alone cannot account for all of this variation. Indirect factors, ranging from a school's culture towards academic success to the extent of parental participation in school activities, may influence performance.

Provinces also differ dramatically in the relationship between literacy skills and socio-economic status. After accounting for differences in socio-economic backgrounds, Quebec and the Prairie provinces show both higher average literacy scores and a more equitable distribution of scores by socio-economic status. Youth from advantaged backgrounds performed well in all provinces. However, among all provinces, youth from disadvantaged backgrounds had wide variation in their literacy scores.

Note to readers

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS), a seven-country initiative, was conducted in the fall of 1994. The IALS provides data for three distinct literacy domains:

Prose literacy—the knowledge and skills needed to understand and use information from texts such as editorials, news stories, poems and fiction.

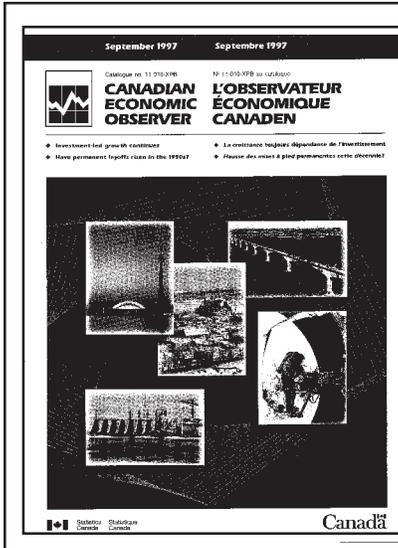
Document literacy—the knowledge and skills required to locate and use information contained in various formats, including job applications, payroll forms, transportation schedules, maps, tables and graphics.

Quantitative literacy—the knowledge and skills required to apply arithmetic operations, either alone or sequentially, to numbers embedded in printed materials, such as balancing a chequebook, figuring out a tip, completing an order form or determining the amount of interest on a loan from an advertisement.

*The 1997 study **Literacy skills of Canadian youth** examines literacy distributions and provincial variation in youth skills across Canada. In the study, youths were examined by socio-economic status (a composite measure of the education level of the youth's parents and of the prestige of the occupation of the youth's father). "Disadvantaged" refers to those in the bottom 15% using this composite measure and "advantaged" refers to youth in the top 15%.*

*The IALS monograph **Literacy skills of Canadian youth** (89-552-MPE, no. 1, \$10) is now available. For further information, contact Scott Murray (613-951-9476) or Jean Pignal (613-791-9509), Special Surveys Division. You can download the entire report, including tables and charts, from Statistics Canada's website @ www.statcan.ca, under "Downloadable products."*

New from Statistics Canada



Canadian economic observer September 1997

The September issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, analyses the current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in August, and presents a feature article on whether permanent layoffs have increased in the early 1990s. 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 September 1997 issue of Canadian economic observer (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For further information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634; Internet: ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.

StatCan: CANSIM disc September 1997

A comprehensive collection of data, simple retrieval software and excellent documentation make the *StatCan: CANSIM disc* a valuable source of socio-economic information about Canada. This September 1997 edition of the CD-ROM puts over 700,000 series of current and historical data at your fingertips.

Finding data and reference material is easy. You can search by keyword or choose from a list of topics, selecting progressively narrower topics to locate the information you need. A few keystrokes will give you detailed information on subjects ranging from agriculture to zinc mining.

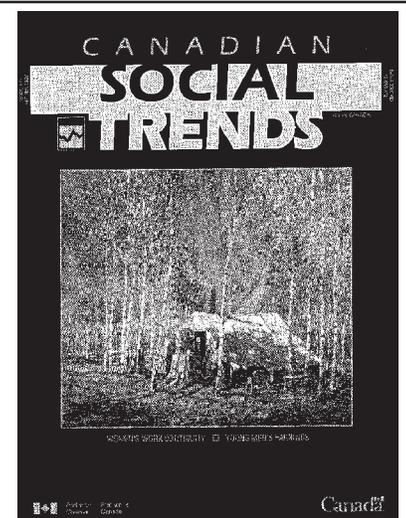
The September 1997 StatCan: CANSIM disc (single issue: \$1,995 in Canada, US\$1,995 outside Canada; subscription [two issues]: \$2,994 in Canada, US\$2,995 outside Canada) is now available. For further information, or to order, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.

Canadian social trends Autumn 1997

The autumn 1997 issue of *Canadian social trends* features the following articles: "Changes in women's work continuity," "Declining earnings of young men," "Attitudes toward women, work and family," "The leisurely pursuit of reading," "Everyday technology: Are Canadians using it?" and "Stalking: Criminal harassment in Canada."

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

The autumn 1997 issue of Canadian social trends (11-008-XPE, \$11/\$36) is now available. For further information, contact Susan Crompton (613-951-2556), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.



New from Statistics Canada – concluded

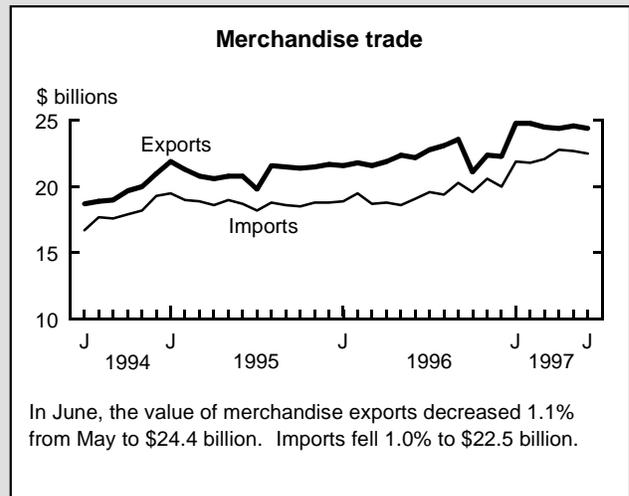
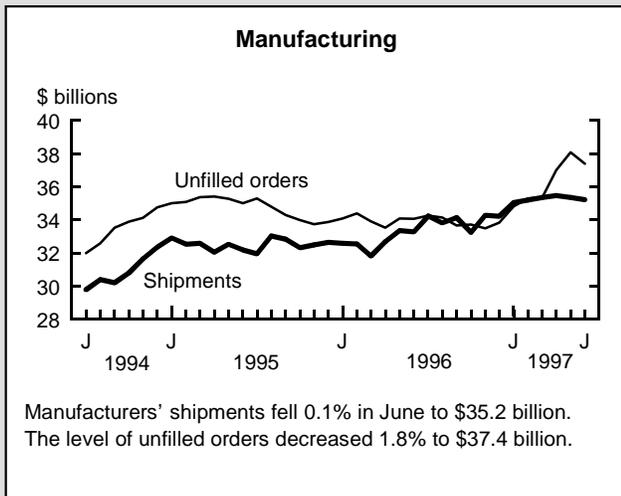
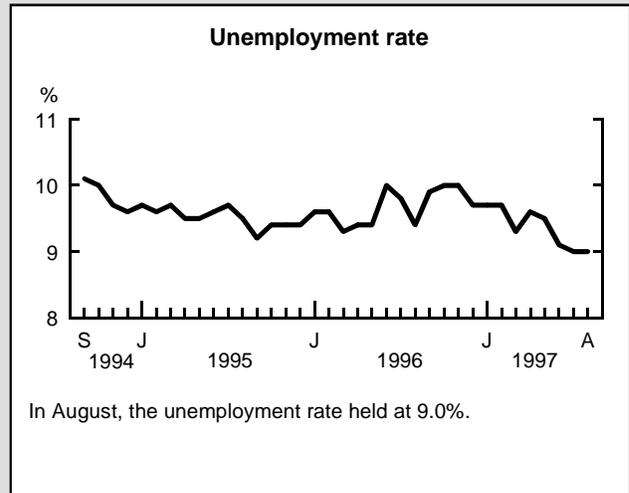
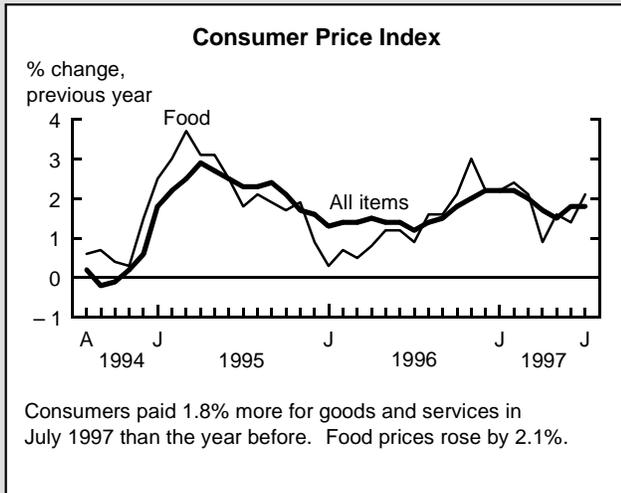
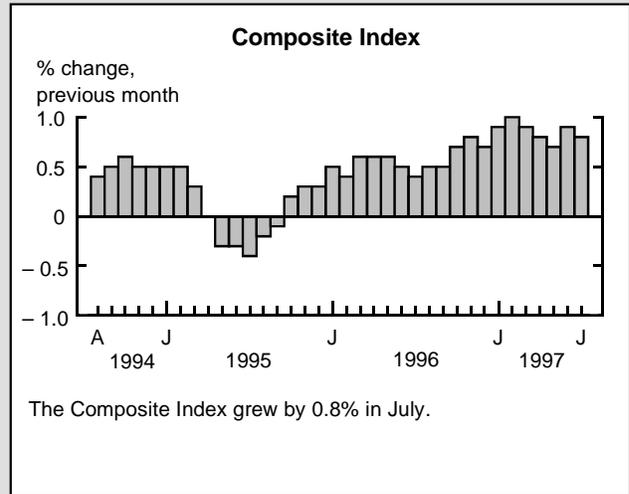
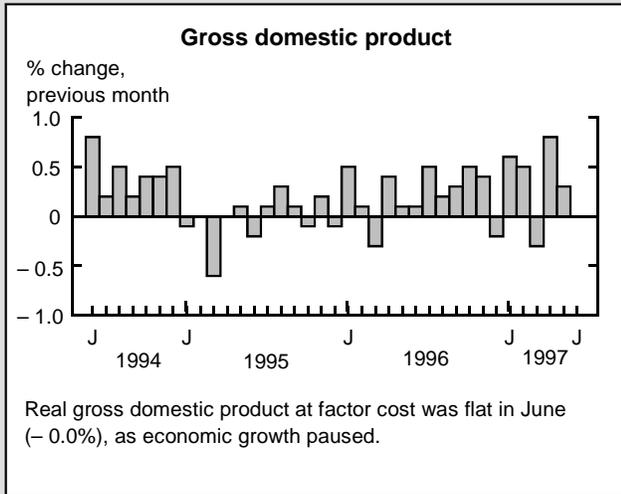
StatCan: CANSIM directory September 1997

The *StatCan: CANSIM directory* on CD-ROM guides you through the data in the CANSIM time series database. Online access to this database is available worldwide through a number of distributors.

The *StatCan: CANSIM directory* disc makes finding data easy. You can search the directory by keyword or by topic. The disc also contains the Statistical Data Documentation System (a database of information about the surveys and statistical programs used at Statistics Canada), a thesaurus of terms used by Statistics Canada, and an instructional module called "About Statistics Canada data" (which contains additional information on the data and services available).

*The September 1997 edition of the **StatCan: CANSIM directory** is now available on compact disc (\$103, four quarterly issues). For further information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.*

Current trends



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)	June	569.8	0.0%	3.8%
Composite Index (1981=100)	July	197.2	0.8%	10.3%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 1997	26.5	0.5%	13.9%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1997	84.8	0.9†	2.8†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	June	19.3	- 0.2%	7.1%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	July*	117.1	3.3%	19.0%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	August	14.0	0.4%	2.1%
Unemployment rate (%)	August	9.0	0.0†	- 0.5†
Participation rate (%)	August	64.9	0.2†	0.1†
Labour income (\$ billion)	June	37.32	0.1%	3.9%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	June	599.55	- 0.5%	1.8%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	June	24.4	- 1.1%	5.1%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	June	22.5	- 1.0%	15.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	June	1.9	0.0	- 1.7
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	June	35.2	- 0.1%	5.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	June	34.5	- 4.6%	3.8%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	June	37.4	- 1.8%	9.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	June	1.32	0.01	- 0.02
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1986=100)	July	135.6	0.0%	1.8%
Industrial Product Price Index (1986=100)	July	130.1	- 0.2%	1.0%
Raw Materials Price Index (1986=100)	July	133.4	- 0.4%	- 1.8%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	July	132.9	0.0%	1.1%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

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Publications released from September 12 to 18, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS				
Canada's balance of international payments	Q2 1997	67-001-XPB	38/124	38/124
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Touriscope: International travel, advance information, Vol. 13, no. 7		66-001-PPB	8/73	8/73
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS				
Canadian economic observer	September 1997	11-010-XPB	23/227	23/227
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES				
Retail trade	June 1997	63-005-XPB	21/206	21/206
HOUSING, FAMILY AND SOCIAL STATISTICS				
Canadian social trends	Autumn 1997	11-008-XPE	11/36	11/36
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Imports by commodity:				
microfiche version	June 1997	65-007-XMB	37/361	37/361
paper version	June 1997	65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
LABOUR				
Employment, earnings and hours	June 1997	72-002-XPB	32/320	32/320
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Oils and fats	July 1997	32-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
Oil pipeline transport	June 1997	55-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
Primary iron and steel	July 1997	41-001-XPB	7/62	7/62
Refined petroleum products	June 1997	45-004-XPB	21/206	21/206
Steel wire and specified wire products	July 1997	41-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
PRICES				
Industry price indexes	July 1997	62-011-XPB	22/217	22/217
TRANSPORTATION				
Railway carloadings	July 1997	52-001-XPB	11/103	11/103

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