



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, October 17, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ Unemployment rate remains unchanged

Employment edged up slightly in September, while the unemployment rate held steady for the third consecutive month.

◆ More help-wanted ads

After a pause in August, the Help-wanted Index rose in September. It reached its highest level since February 1991.

◆ Once again dealers sell more vehicles

Consumer demand for new vehicles remained high in August. Dealers had their best monthly sales since the beginning of the 1990s.

◆ New housing prices steady

The New Housing Price Index remained stable between July and August, for the second month in a row. It did, however, increase compared with August 1996.

◆ More lone-parent and common-law families

Data from the 1996 Census show that common-law and lone-parent families together make up over one-quarter of all families in Canada. Almost one child in five lives with a single parent.

◆ Marriage losing its appeal, common-law unions more popular

According to the 1996 Census, the proportion of the Canadian population living in a couple has declined compared with 1991.

Unemployment rate remains unchanged

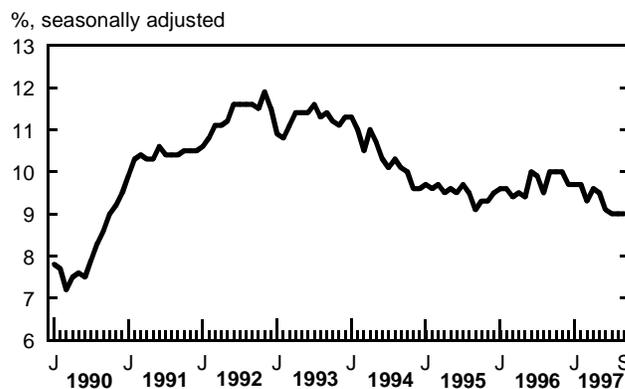
Employment edged up slightly in September (+0.1%), while the unemployment rate held steady. Since February, when job growth gained momentum, the number of employed has increased by 293,000. The number of unemployed remained virtually unchanged in September, leaving the jobless rate at 9.0% for the third consecutive month.

Youth employment increased slightly in September, bringing growth since May to 63,000 (+3.2%). This advance pushed the youth unemployment rate down from 17.2% in May to 16.4% in September. Among adults, employment for men increased by 19,000, but there was no significant change in employment for women.

Full-time employment continued to grow in September (+72,000), while the number of part-time jobs fell (-56,000). Private sector employment increased by 17,000; public sector employment was unchanged. Since February, the private sector has generated 331,000 (+2.8%) jobs, with self-employment accounting for one-quarter of the growth. In contrast, public sector employment has trended downwards, with a loss of 38,000 jobs (-1.8%) over the same period. Employment changed little in most

(continued on page 2)

Unemployment rate



... Unemployment rate remains unchanged

industries in September, as growth in mining, quarrying and oil wells was partly offset by a loss in agriculture.

In the provinces, there was virtually no employment change in September. Since February, the pace of job growth has differed across the country. More than half of the 293,000 jobs added between February and September were in Ontario, where employment grew by 3.0%. Alberta and Saskatchewan both posted growth above the national rate of 2.1%. British Columbia and Quebec also recorded increases for the same period. In the Atlantic, employment growth was relatively strong in Prince Edward Island

(+3.9%), while New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland recorded slower growth. In Manitoba, employment has changed little since February.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3450-3471, 3483-3502 and table 00799999.

Labour force information (71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103; fax version: 71-001-PFB, \$300 annually) for the week ending September 20, 1997, is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Household Surveys Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 6.)

Labour Force Survey, September 1997

Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	rate (%)
Canada	15,418.0	0.1	14,032.8	0.1	1,385.2	9.0
Newfoundland	235.4	-0.3	193.1	0.2	42.3	18.0
Prince Edward Island	71.0	-0.6	61.3	0.3	9.7	13.7
Nova Scotia	446.1	0.9	393.4	0.6	52.7	11.8
New Brunswick	360.1	0.2	317.4	0.9	42.7	11.9
Quebec	3,682.9	0.0	3,263.9	0.1	419.0	11.4
Ontario	5,946.1	0.0	5,462.7	0.1	483.4	8.1
Manitoba	577.6	0.8	539.4	0.4	38.2	6.6
Saskatchewan	506.4	0.0	476.5	-0.2	29.9	5.9
Alberta	1,560.7	0.0	1,474.0	0.4	86.7	5.6
British Columbia	2,031.7	0.2	1,851.1	-0.3	180.6	8.9

More help-wanted ads

The Help-wanted Index advanced 1.6% in September to reach its highest point since February 1991. The increase to a level of 126 followed a pause in August. Eight of the ten provinces posted advances. Since August 1996, the index has risen by approximately 26%. Recent movements are in line with improvements in other economic indicators.

Help-wanted Index, September 1997

(1996=100), seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	126	24.8	1.6
Newfoundland	123	19.4	6.0
Prince Edward Island	134	27.6	3.9
Nova Scotia	121	17.4	3.4
New Brunswick	138	43.8	6.2
Quebec	110	11.1	-0.9
Ontario	129	25.2	0.8
Manitoba	135	29.8	1.5
Saskatchewan	130	23.8	1.6
Alberta	152	44.8	0.7
British Columbia	119	16.7	0.0

Note to readers

The Help-wanted Index is compiled from the number of help-wanted ads published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas. The index measures the intention of companies to hire new workers. These indices have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons.

In British Columbia, the index remained unchanged in September. The Prairie provinces recorded its 21st consecutive increase, led by a 1.6% gain in Saskatchewan. Manitoba's index advanced for the 14th time in 15 months, while Alberta posted its 22nd consecutive monthly advance.

At 129, Ontario's index reached its highest level since November 1990. Quebec posted a slight decline in September, registering a level of 110.

Each of the Atlantic provinces recorded advances, led by a 6.2% increase in New Brunswick and a 6.0% advance in Newfoundland.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 105 (levels 8-10).

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

Once again dealers sell more vehicles

Consumer demand for new motor vehicles remained high in August. Dealers have not had such good monthly sales since the beginning of the 1990s.

Consumers bought 120,867 new cars and trucks in August, a 2.8% increase compared with July and a 21.1% rise over August 1996. Truck sales edged up 1.4% over July, reaching a new record of 56,708 units, as consumer preference for minivans and sport utility vehicles continued to push up sales. Dealers sold 64,159 new passenger cars in August, a 4.1% increase over July.

Between January and August, dealers sold 915,941 new vehicles, the highest eight-month total since 1990. This strong sales performance in 1997 is due to improved consumer confidence, modest employment growth, and lower interest rates. Leasing has also been a major factor in new vehicle sales. (Leases are counted as sales.)

The Big Three automakers reported a 7.5% increase in passenger car sales between July and August, while the other automakers reported a 0.9% decline. Cumulative sales of passenger cars for the Big Three increased 7.9% between January and August compared with the same period of 1996. The other automakers recorded a 26.2% gain for the same period. However, the Big Three did lose market share in the first eight months of this year.

Industry sources have estimated that the September sales figures will show a decline.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

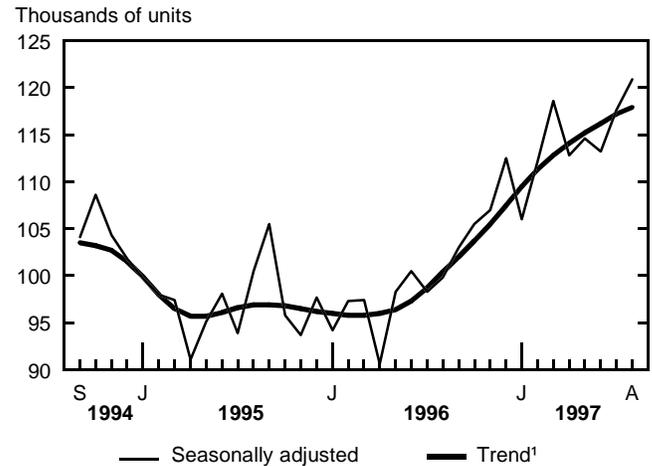
The August 1997 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XPB, \$17/\$165) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel (613-951-2210) or Doug Higgins

Note to readers

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

All numbers are seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

New motor vehicle sales



1. The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

(613-951-9824; Internet: higgdou@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

New housing prices steady

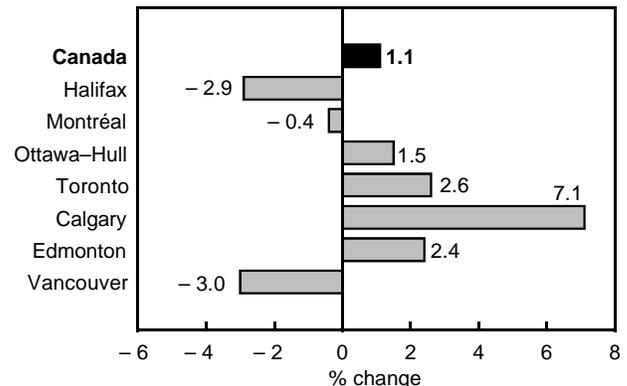
Between July and August, the New Housing Price Index, a measure of contractors' selling prices, remained stable at 132.9 (1986=100). This was the second consecutive month without a monthly gain. On an annual basis, however, the index showed an increase of 1.1% compared with August 1996.

The largest monthly advances were recorded in Halifax (+1.0%) and Hamilton (+0.9%), where some builders passed on higher construction costs. Smaller gains were noted in several other cities. However, these advances were counterbalanced by a significant monthly decline in Vancouver (-0.6%), along with small drops in several other cities. According to contractors, very competitive market conditions and a general summer slowdown of sales activity in Vancouver were behind these decreases.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2032.

The third quarter 1997 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in December. For further

New housing price indexes, August 1996 to August 1997



information, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

More lone-parent and common-law families

The 1996 Census data show that common-law and lone-parent families together made up 26% of all Canadian families, compared with 20% a decade ago. Most families were still made up of married couples, but their proportion dropped from 80% to 74% between 1986 and 1996. The total number of Canadian families rose by 6.6% between 1991 and 1996, to reach 7.8 million.

Of all family structures, common-law couple families grew the most between 1991 and 1996 (+28%): 920,635 such families were counted. In 1996, one couple in seven in Canada was living in a common-law union, compared with about one in nine in 1991. Common-law families were by far most frequent in Quebec, which had 400,265, or 43%, of all such families.

The number of lone-parent families, which reached 1.1 million, rose 19% over 1991. Those headed by women continued to outnumber those headed by men by more than four to one. The proportion of lone parents who had never been married rose to 17% in 1991 and to 22% in 1996. Nearly one-quarter of all female lone parents were single.

There were 5.8 million married couple families in 1996, an increase of only 1.7% from 1991. The proportion of married couple families fell in every province and territory. Newfoundland registered the highest proportion of married couple families in 1996 (78%), while Quebec had the lowest proportion (64%).

Families in private households, with and without children at home

	1996		1991
	Number of families	% of total	to 1996
Total families	7,837,865	100.0	6.6
Husband-wife families	6,700,355	85.5	4.7
with children at home	3,970,580	50.7	3.7
without children at home	2,729,775	34.8	6.1
Married couple families	5,779,720	73.7	1.7
with children at home	3,535,630	45.1	0.0
without children at home	2,244,085	28.6	4.5
Common-law families	920,635	11.7	28.0
with children at home	434,950	5.5	47.2
without children at home	485,690	6.2	14.6
Lone-parent families	1,137,505	14.5	19.3
male	192,275	2.5	16.4
female	945,235	12.1	19.9

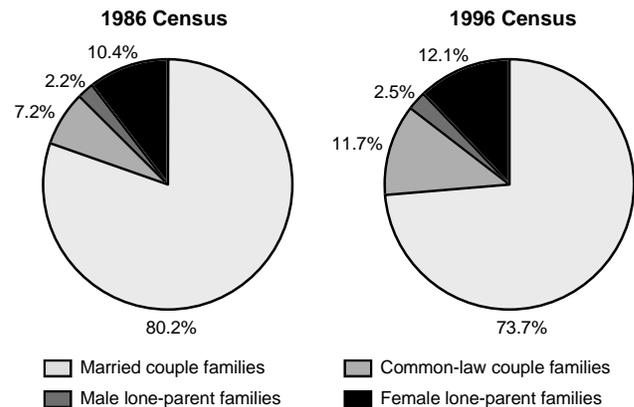
Source: Census of Population.

Note to readers

Census families are divided into two types: those formed by couples (married or common-law) and those headed by a lone parent. Married and common-law couples comprise husband-wife families. A lone parent, of any marital status, who lives with one or more never-married sons or daughters, regardless of age, also constitutes a family.

The Census defines common-law partners as two persons of opposite sex who are not legally married to each other, but live together as husband and wife in the same dwelling.

Family structure



These changes to family structure were reflected in the situation for children. In 1996, about 9.4 million children lived in families, up 6.3% over 1991. Most of them lived in married couple families, although that proportion decreased between 1991 and 1996, falling from approximately 78% to around 73%.

At 735,565, the number of children living in common-law couple families rose substantially (+52%) over 1991. All the provinces and territories recorded important increases in the number of children living in such families.

The number of children living with a lone parent rose 19% between 1991 and 1996, to just under 1.8 million. Almost one in every five children lived with a lone parent in 1996, compared with one in six in 1991. And four children out of every five (84%) lived with a female lone parent. Nova Scotia recorded the greatest increase in the proportion of children living with a lone parent.

For further information, contact Catherine Allen (613-951-8658), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

Marriage losing its appeal, common-law unions more popular

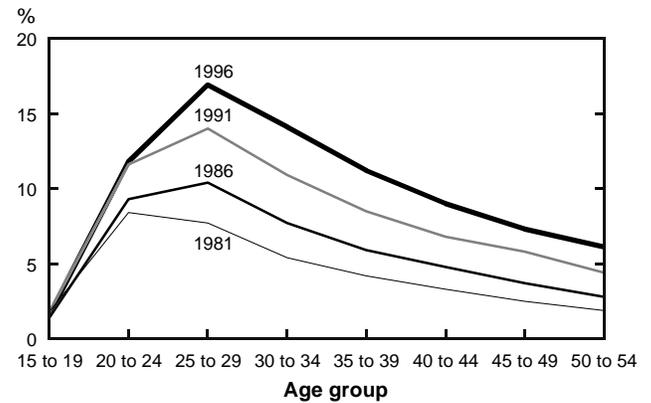
According to the 1996 Census, the proportion of the Canadian population living in a couple has declined. Among individuals aged 15 and over, 59% reported that they were either married or living in a common-law union, down from 61% in 1991. A decline in the proportion of people living in married couples, which fell from 54% in 1991 to 51% in 1996, was behind the decrease.

Single people were either waiting longer to get married or preferred to live in common-law unions. In 1996, 89% of 20- to 24-year-olds had never been married, compared with 85% in 1991. There was also a substantial increase in the proportion of singles in the 25-to-29 age group: 59% had never been married, compared with 50% in 1991. And 16% of individuals who had never married were living in common-law unions, up from 14% in 1991.

Common-law unions have traditionally been more prevalent among people in their early twenties, but they have become more popular among older individuals. The proportion of people living in a common-law union increased in all age groups between 1991 and 1996. Once again, however, the highest increase was in the 15-to-29 age group (+9.1 percentage points).

Marriage appears to be a fragile bond for more and more Canadians. Over 1.6 million people stated that they were divorced, up 28% from 1991. Women accounted for more than half of these divorced individuals. The number of respondents reporting they

Proportion of persons living in common-law unions



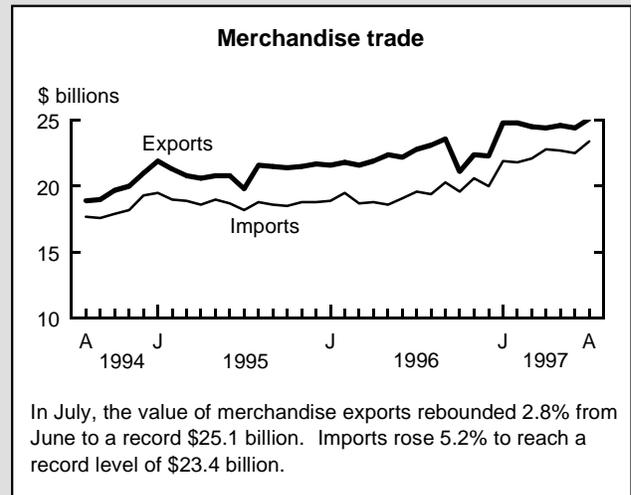
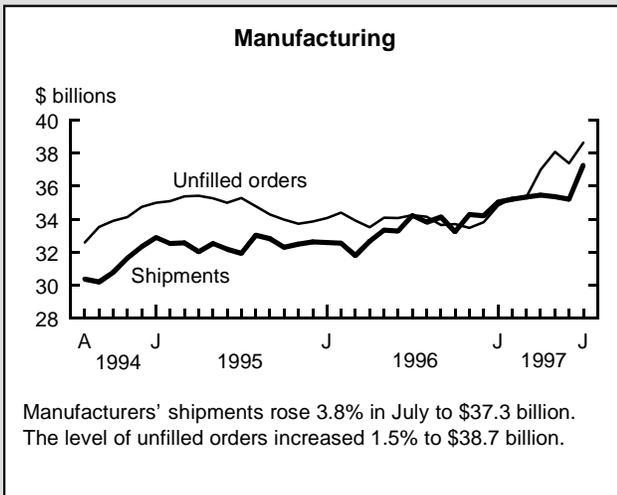
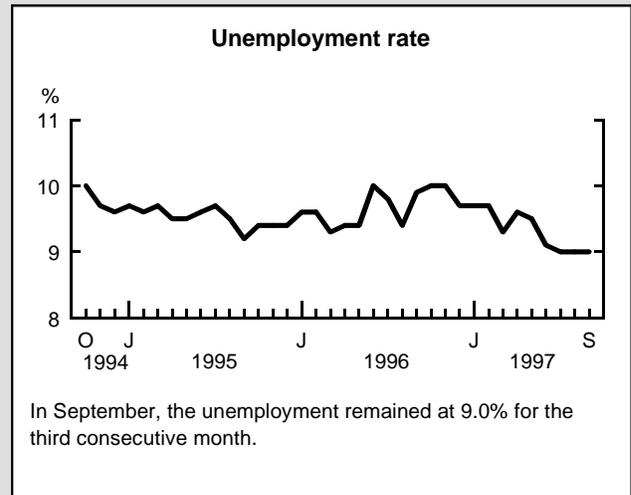
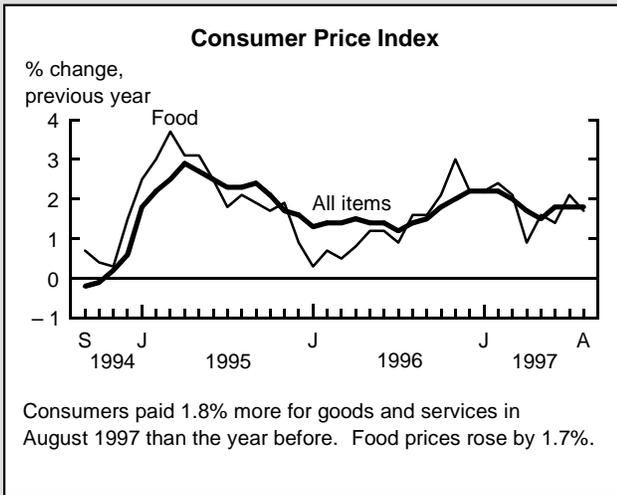
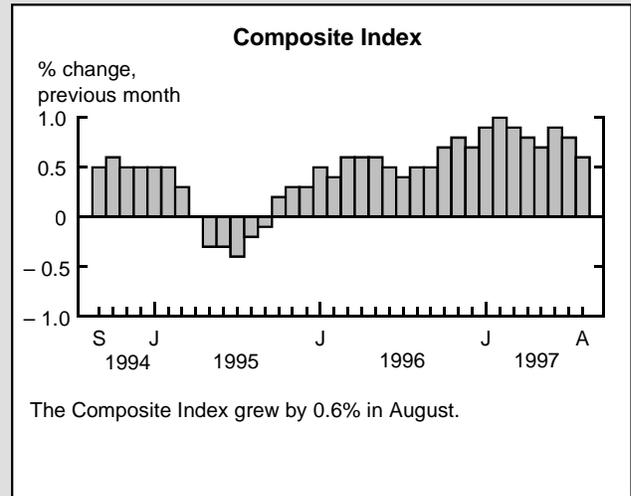
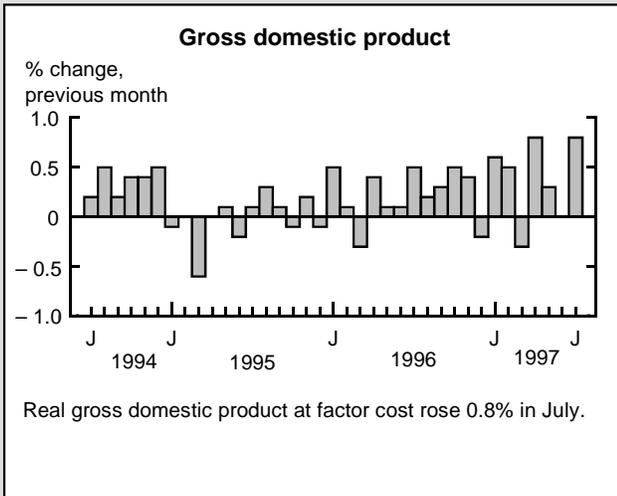
Source: Census of Population

were separated rose 15% from 1991; again, more than half were women.

Divorced individuals accounted for almost one-fifth (19%) of people living alone in 1996, up from 17% in 1991. Four out of ten people who lived alone were single, about the same proportion as in 1991. Overall, about 2.6 million people, or 12% of the population aged 15 and over, lived alone, up slightly from 1991. Seniors accounted for more than a third of this group, and most of them (71%) were widows.

For more information, contact Louise Marmen (613-951-2954), Demography Division.

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)	July	575.4	0.8%	4.4%
Composite Index (1981=100)	August	197.7	0.6%	10.1%
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)	July	19.5	1.3%	8.0%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	August*	120.9	2.8%	21.1%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	September*	14.0	0.1%	2.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	September*	9.0	0.0†	- 1.0†
Participation rate (%)	September*	64.9	0.0†	0.1†
Labour income (\$ billion)	June	37.32	0.1%	3.9%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	July	603.69	0.9%	2.6%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	July	25.1	2.8%	5.5%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	July	23.4	5.2%	16.4%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	July	1.7	- 0.5	- 2.0
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	July	37.3	3.8%	7.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	July	37.8	7.2%	9.0%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	July	38.7	1.5%	12.5%
Inventory/shipments ratio	July	1.25	- 0.06	- 0.06
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1986=100)	August	135.7	0.1%	1.8%
Industrial Product Price Index (1986=100)	August	130.8	0.7%	0.9%
Raw Materials Price Index (1986=100)	August	133.3	- 0.1%	- 2.8%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	August*	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 October 10 to 16, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS				
Labour force information	week ending September 20, 1997	71-001-PPB	11/103	11/103
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	August 1997	46-002-XPB	7/62	7/62
Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard	July 1997	36-003-XPB	7/62	7/62
Steel wire and specified wire products	August 1997	41-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
PRICES				
Farm Input Price Index	Q2 1997	62-004-XPB	25/83	25/83
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REDESIGN PROJECT				
Communications: Service bulletin, Cable television statistics, 1996 Vol. 27, no. 2		56-001-XPB	13/42	13/42

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