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A Weekly Review

Friday, November 5, 1999

OVERVIEW

◆ Economic activity growing at a brisk pace

Economic activity grew at a brisk pace in August (+0.5%). The growth marked the latest of 13 consecutive increases and was due to strong U.S. demand, improved commodity prices and an end to production difficulties.

◆ Manufacturers' shipments rise sharply

In August, manufacturers' shipments increased 3.5%. This sharp rise can be ascribed to a stronger-than-normal recovery in the auto sector.

◆ Crude oil prices up for seventh month

In September, raw material prices increased from August by 3.5% and from September 1998 by 16.1%. The major reason was significantly higher prices for crude oil, which advanced for a seventh consecutive month.

◆ Industrial prices rise at fastest annual pace in nearly four years

Fueled by soaring gasoline prices, industrial product prices rose in September at their fastest annual pace in nearly four years (+3.1%).

◆ Little change in average weekly earnings

In August, average weekly earnings edged down 0.1% from July to \$610.42. That was up from a year earlier by 0.8%.

◆ Number receiving EI benefits increases

In August, the number of Canadians receiving employment insurance benefits was up from July by 2.5%. The number of claims from the jobless for EI benefits fell 4.4%.

◆ Large retailers' sales still climbing

In August, large retailers' sales climbed from a year earlier by 5.5%. Except for food and beverages, all their major product lines saw healthy sales increases.

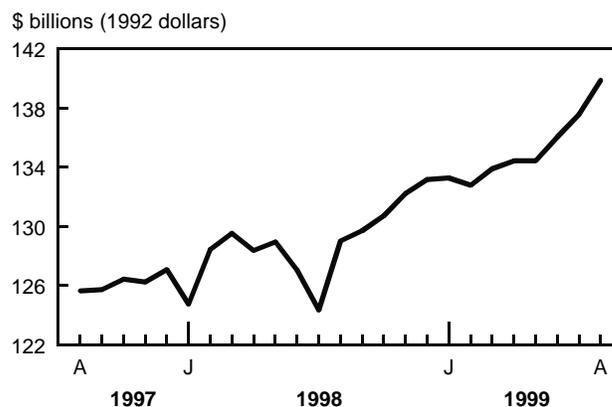
Economic activity growing at a brisk pace

Economic activity grew at a brisk pace in August (+0.5%). The growth marked the latest of 13 consecutive increases and the longest uninterrupted string of monthly advances in more than a decade. Strong U.S. demand, improved commodity prices and an end to production difficulties combined to paint a picture of strength in the middle of the third quarter.

Spurred by higher automotive production, a booming manufacturing sector (+1.7%) accounted for more than half of August's overall growth. Retail sales improved again (+0.7%), but slower computer sales sapped some momentum from wholesalers, constraining them to their smallest gain in seven months (+0.3%).

Computer and consulting services continued to grow, the transportation industries benefited from the general increase in goods shipments, and health service providers were buoyed by the return to work of striking Quebec nurses. These increases were partly offset by a sharp decline at electric and gas utilities as the weather returned to more seasonable temperatures. Mining activity declined for a sixth time this year (-0.3%) amid some significant offsetting movements.

GDP of the manufacturing sector



(continued on page 2)



... Economic activity growing at a brisk pace

Strong U.S. demand and recovery from several shutdowns propelled the manufacturing sector in August to its fifth increase in six months and to the largest so far in 1999. Overall, 14 of the 22 major industry groups, accounting for 78% of manufacturing output, expanded production. The biggest gains were in transportation equipment, primary metal products, fabricated metal products and electronic goods. Printers and publishers and makers of plastic products also experienced significant gains. These increases were partly offset by declines in the output of oil refineries (-4.0% because of scheduled maintenance), tobacco processors and makers of machinery (-0.5%). Machinery producers remain at a low ebb after a precipitous decline in 1998 that was partly brought on by the collapse in the market for farm machinery.

Automotive production accounted for almost half the overall manufacturing gain in August, as both parts and assembly plants capitalized on newly added capacity and raised output to meet heightened demand from the United States. Indeed, strong sales south of the border continued to drive dealer inventories there to multi-year lows. After a lacklustre second quarter, motor vehicle assembly picked up considerably in both July and August—rising more than 17% to record levels in these two months. The industry is now twice the size it was 10 years ago.

Manufacturing of primary metal products rose 3.6%, due to renewed activity at several base metal mines. The end of strike and shutdown activity at several base metal mines led to higher output at related smelters, while increased drilling and rigging activity led to higher production in the steel pipe and tube industry. Fabricated metal production rose 2.0%. The stamped metal products industry reported the largest increase and makers of hardware and tools ratcheted up production. Output of heating equipment also rose.

Manufacturers' shipments rise sharply

Due to a stronger-than-normal recovery in the auto sector, manufacturers' shipments rose in August a sharp 3.5% to \$42 billion. Excluding the auto sector, shipments rose 1.3%. This sixth consecutive monthly increase carried manufacturing shipments to a new level that has revitalized the upward trend. In August, manufacturers' shipments rose in 16 of the 22 major industry groups, representing 89.0% of the total value of shipments.

The largest contributors were the motor vehicle (+14.1%) and the motor vehicle parts and accessories (+7.1%) industries. The gain in the motor vehicle industry was due to a strong recovery from some longer-than-normal plant shutdowns in July, as well as to additional hours worked in August. This strong increase in shipments coincided with the large rise in exports of motor vehicles observed in August. As for the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry, higher shipments in August were also mainly driven by a stronger-than-normal recovery in activity. The largest offsetting decreases in shipments in August were observed in the wood industry (-3.5%), due mainly to a 4.4% drop in prices in August, and in the aircraft and aircraft parts industry (-6.5%).

Note to readers

The data are at 1992 prices and are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Manufacturers of electrical and electronic products raised output 1.5%. August's rise was spurred by ongoing strength in international demand for telecommunications equipment, where output jumped 5.8%. Exports of these products have grown at breakneck speed since the beginning of this year. Manufacturers of computers and peripherals also expanded production significantly in August. However, these increases were partly offset by a drop for producers of miscellaneous electronic equipment and for makers of communications wire and cable.

Wood production rose 1.9% in August. Sawmills posted their fifth consecutive increase, buoyed by strong homebuilding activity, which in turn lifted construction activity up 0.1%. The printing and publishing industry continued to be depressed by strike activity, but it still managed to increase output 1.7%—the single largest monthly increase in a year. In the expanding plastics industry, output rose 2.7%. The industry continued to be buoyed by strong demand for new plastic molded products, which lifted the production of "other" plastic products for the 10th time in 11 months.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4677-4681.

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

Note to readers

The release of the August 1999 data for shipments, inventories and orders coincides with revisions back to January 1996. These revisions result from benchmarking to the 1996 and 1997 Annual Survey of Manufacturers. At the aggregate level, the benchmarking adjustment for shipments in 1996 was negligible, and it was up slightly (+0.2%) in 1997. As well, the Monthly Survey of Manufacturing is using a new sample designed to be more representative of the manufacturing industry at both the provincial and national levels. The new sample is linked at the detailed level to prevent data breaks and to ensure the continuity of time series. For more information, a document explaining the changes is available upon request.

The value of unfilled orders continued to swell in August, rising 1.6% to \$52.7 billion. This marked the fourth consecutive rise in unfilled orders, and it led to a moderate increase in the trend. Mainly, August's swelling occurred in the aircraft and parts (+1.7%), the electrical and electronic products (+3.6%) and the motor vehicle (+2.8%) industries.

Manufacturers' inventories grew 0.9% in August to \$53.4 billion. This buildup happened chiefly in the wood industry

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... Manufacturers' shipments rise sharply

(+3.1%) and in the aircraft and aircraft parts industry (+1.8%). Inventories maintained their upward trend in August, rising for a seventh consecutive month. The rise in inventories combined with the stronger increase in shipments led to a decline in the inventories-to-shipments ratio from 1.30 in July to 1.27. The declining trend of this ratio persists as it approaches historically low levels.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9555, 9558, 9559, 9562-9565, 9568-9579 and 9581-9595.

The August 1999 issue of *Monthly Survey of Manufacturing* (31-001-XPB, \$20/\$196) presents the full report. Detailed data on shipments by province are available on request. For further information, contact Craig Kuntz (613-951-7092, kuncrai@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

Manufacturers' shipments, August 1999

Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	41,971	3.5
Newfoundland	150	-14.7
Prince Edward Island	80	1.7
Nova Scotia	670	8.7
New Brunswick	766	2.1
Quebec	9,573	2.7
Ontario	23,282	4.6
Manitoba	848	2.2
Saskatchewan	512	0.5
Alberta	2,963	2.0
British Columbia	3,123	0.5
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	4	-7.2

Note: With the August 1999 data release, estimates for shipments have been revised. See Note to readers for more information.

Crude oil prices up for seventh month

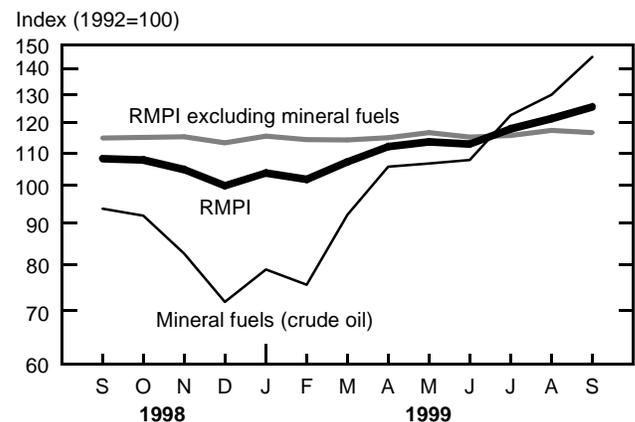
In September, raw material prices increased from August by 3.5%. The major reason was significantly higher prices for crude oil. The Raw Materials Price Index was up from a year earlier by 16.1%, topping August's yearly increase of 13.9%, which was the highest in almost three years. In September, crude oil was also the major contributor to the yearly increase. Crude oil exerts considerable influence on the Raw Materials Price Index. If mineral fuels (90% of which is crude oil) were excluded from the index, raw material prices in September would have gone in a different direction on a monthly basis (-0.6%) and would have increased on a yearly basis by only 1.6%.

Crude oil prices in September advanced 12.4%, marking the seventh consecutive monthly increase. Since February, oil prices have more than doubled (+105.6%). This September, crude oil prices were almost the same as they were at the most recent peak in December 1996. The recent move upward is due to the agreement by oil producers to restrict output until at least March 2000 and to low inventories of crude oil and gasoline in the United States. As well, new demand for crude oil to satisfy heating oil requirements this winter has added to the pressure on prices.

Raw material prices were also lifted in September by non-ferrous metal prices (+1.9%, up 4.4% on the year). Compared with August, prices were higher for copper concentrates, nickel concentrates and aluminum materials. Lower prices were seen for lead concentrates. Compared with September 1998, prices rose for nickel concentrates (+64.3%), aluminum materials (+8.1%) and zinc concentrates (+12.5%). These were partly offset by lower prices for lead concentrates (-11.7%) and other non-ferrous refined metals.

Copper prices have recently strengthened on positive expectations for the Asian economies and on increased demand for copper in Europe. As well, housing construction in the United

Raw materials price index



States, which is the largest consumer of copper in the world (for wiring and pipes), rose unexpectedly in August to its highest level in five months. Nickel concentrate prices have been on the rise since the beginning of this year.

Turning to September's price declines, animal and animal product prices fell 2.3%. Lower prices for hogs (-12.8%) and cattle (-0.9%) were marginally offset by higher prices for furs, hides and skins (+1.4%). Because of the breeding cycle of the hog herd, hogs for slaughter are typically in abundance at this time of the year, leading to lower prices. Compared with September 1998, animal and animal product prices were up 3.0% on higher prices for hogs (+12.2%) and cattle (+7.5%).

Vegetable product prices in September edged down 0.5%. The major contributors were coffee (-13.6%) and soybeans (-3.5%),

(continued on page 4)

... Crude oil prices up for seventh month

partly offset by unrefined sugar (+8.8%). Compared with a year earlier, vegetable product prices were down 7.7%, due mainly to oilseeds (-19.1%), coffee (-21.9%) and cocoa beans (-38.1%). Oilseed prices have been following a downward trend since mid-1998 (canola -34%, soybeans -24%). Grain prices edged up 0.7% in September; however, most grain prices are now only about half what they were back in the second quarter of 1996.

Wood prices showed little change in September (-0.4%), while ferrous material prices showed no change.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

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

Industrial prices rise at fastest annual pace in nearly four years

In September, the prices of manufactured goods were up from a year earlier by 3.1%—the largest yearly price increase since December 1995. From August to September, industrial prices rose 0.5%. This seventh consecutive monthly increase was boosted by ongoing strength in gasoline and fuel oil prices. If petroleum and coal products were excluded from the picture, prices would have remained virtually unchanged in September compared with August, and the yearly increase would have been only 1.6%.

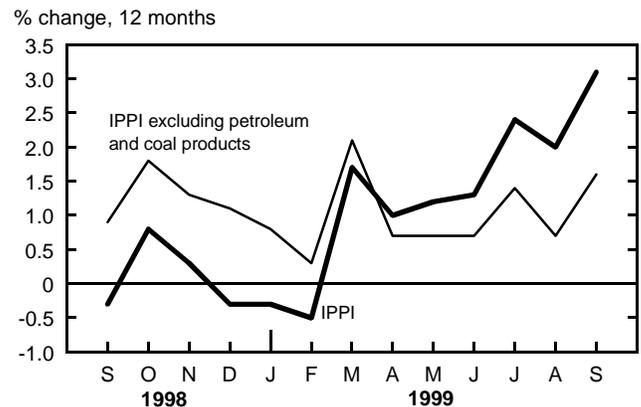
Prices for gasoline and fuel oil products continued their strong upward trend in September, increasing from August by 5.3%. Prices in this group stood 42.9% above their most recent low in February and were 31.7% higher than in September 1998—the largest yearly gain in almost two decades. This gain was mainly a result of a year-over-year increase of 59.7% in crude oil prices as measured by the Raw Materials Price Index.

Crude oil prices have rebounded following the March 1999 decision by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to reduce production in order to boost prices. Since then, prices have been supported by ongoing compliance from its members and by their recent commitments to maintain production restrictions through March 2000.

Paper and paper product prices, which have remained relatively stable most of this year, rose from August to September by 1.8%. This advance was primarily due to pulp prices, which increased 5.7%. Low inventories and prospects of stronger Asian economies helped to push up prices for pulp in September. Pulp prices were also quite robust on a yearly basis, climbing 10.1%. However, this gain was overshadowed by newsprint prices, which tumbled on a yearly basis by 21.8%.

Lumber prices fell from August to September by 2.9%. This occurred on the heels of a 9.5% decline in August. As the building season begins to wind down in North America, lumber sales generally taper off, pulling prices down accordingly. In general, lumber prices had been on an upswing during most of 1999, primarily because of the solid North American housing market.

Industrial product price index



Meat product prices weakened in September, dropping 2.7% on lower hamburger and pork prices. American meat packers stepped up pork output just as retail demand was beginning to wane. In contrast to the monthly picture, meat product prices rose on a yearly basis, advancing 2.3% on higher hamburger and pork prices.

Prices of primary metal products stepped up again in September (+1.2%), a result of widespread increases. The largest gain was in nickel prices (+7.3%), in part reflecting a strike at an important Canadian nickel operation. September's price of nickel stood 67.1% above its level of a year earlier. After hitting a five-year low in 1998, nickel product prices have been rebounding during most of 1999. Prices for aluminum products and for copper and copper alloy products were both buoyed by the strong American economy and by the prospects of a recovery in Asia. On a yearly basis, prices for primary metal products were also up (+3.5%), with only iron and steel products showing a decline.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.

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

Little change in average weekly earnings

In August, average weekly earnings for all employees edged down \$0.76 or 0.1% from July to \$610.42. Compared with a year earlier, however, average weekly earnings gained 0.8%. The annual gains in average weekly earnings continue to be moderate and below the annual inflation rate in consumer prices. In August, the strongest annual growth in average weekly earnings went to employees in the construction industry (+2.4%).

Average weekly earnings, all industries, August 1999 Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	610.42	-0.1	0.8
Newfoundland	543.94	-0.3	3.1
Prince Edward Island	483.70	0.6	1.6
Nova Scotia	524.97	-0.8	2.7
New Brunswick	537.00	1.1	0.9
Quebec	568.16	-0.7	-0.2
Ontario	653.18	0.1	1.5
Manitoba	543.22	-0.4	0.2
Saskatchewan	542.69	0.1	1.1
Alberta	620.72	-0.1	0.8
British Columbia	617.88	-0.8	-0.3
Yukon	692.13	1.3	2.3
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	793.01	0.5	10.2

Looking at all industries, hourly-rated employees in August worked an average of 31.7 hours (including overtime), up from July by 0.2 hours. The average of their overtime hours stood at 1.1 hours per week, unchanged from July. Their average hourly earnings were up from August 1998 by 0.8%. Significant earnings gains occurred in the goods-producing industries, especially mining and durable goods manufacturing.

The number of employees on payrolls in August was virtually unchanged from July. The only employment changes of significance were reductions in construction and in retail trade. Employment levels in almost all the provinces were also virtually unchanged from July.

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

The August 1999 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours* (72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320) presents the month's industry data and other labour market indicators in detail. Custom tabulations of the data are available on demand. Annual averages for 1998 are available in a variety of formats. For further information, contact Jean Leduc (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087, labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

Number receiving EI benefits increases

In August, an estimated 509,520 Canadians received the regular type of employment insurance (EI) benefits. That was 8.4% lower than a year earlier, but it was up from July by 2.5%. Monthly increases occurred in most provinces and territories. The only decreases in EI beneficiaries occurred in New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Alberta. (The number of beneficiaries is a measure of all persons who received EI benefits for the week containing the 15th day of the month.)

The amount paid out as regular benefits advanced from July to August by 2.7% to \$646.4 million. (The amount paid as regular benefits is the total of all monies received by individuals for the entire month.) The number of claims that the jobless made for EI benefits in August fell 4.4% to 215,048 claims.

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

For more information, contact Gilles Groleau or Robert Keay (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087, labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

EI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, August 1999 Seasonally adjusted

	Beneficiaries	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	509,520	2.5	-8.4
Newfoundland	37,650	6.9	4.0
Prince Edward Island	8,780	3.3	-4.5
Nova Scotia	28,400	4.5	-7.6
New Brunswick	34,410	-2.0	-7.6
Quebec	179,250	6.2	-6.4
Ontario	101,270	5.3	-18.0
Manitoba	12,990	5.6	-3.0
Saskatchewan	12,200	-3.8	6.0
Alberta	33,040	-5.6	2.9
British Columbia	60,790	0.0	-12.4
Yukon	1,070	2.6	-16.5
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	1,240	0.9	2.6

Large retailers' sales still climbing

In August, the large retailers' sales hit \$5.9 billion, up from a year earlier by 5.5%. Excluding food retailers, the yearly sales increase in August was 9.6%. Except for food and beverage sales (-1.3%), all their major product lines saw healthy sales increases compared with August 1998.

Sales of health and personal care products increased the most (+13.7%). This increase was fueled by a 26.5% rise in sales of prescription and over-the-counter drugs. In August, consumers purchased 38.6% of their health and personal care products from the large retailers' food stores. In the first half of 1999, total retail sales of health and personal care products rose from a year earlier by 9.8%, whereas the large retailers saw sales of these products surge 16.2%. As a result, their market share of health and personal care products grew from just over 27.0% of total retail sales to nearly 29.0%.

The large retailers' sales of home furnishings and electronics rose from August 1998 by 11.7%. Within this category, the largest percentage sales increases were for artwork and other home decorating products (+40.1%), bedding, linens and bathroom

Large retailers' sales

Not seasonally adjusted

	August 1998	August 1999	August 1998 to August 1999
	\$ billions		% change
All commodities	5,567	5,875	5.5
Food and beverages	1,988	1,963	-1.3
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,197	1,292	8.0
Home furnishings and electronics	743	830	11.7
Health and personal care products	378	429	13.7
Housewares	265	287	8.4
Sporting and leisure goods	219	241	10.0
Hardware, lawn and garden products	184	200	8.7
All other goods and services	594	633	6.4

Note to readers

The group of large retailers that is surveyed was affected by an industry restructuring of the large supermarket chains. A significant number of food stores that were included in the August 1998 estimates have now left the group. All data in this release are unadjusted for seasonal factors. Sales in August include those made by Eaton's before its bankruptcy and those made afterward by its merchandise liquidator.

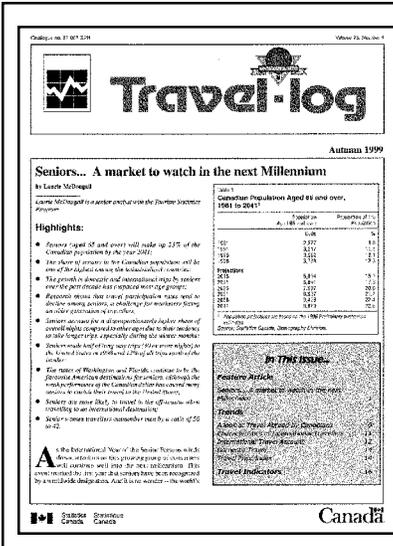
accessories (+17.5%), nursery furniture and equipment (+16.3%) and computers and related equipment (+14.9%). In the first half of 1999, large retailers accounted for 48.7% of total retail sales of home furnishings and electronics.

Sporting and leisure goods accounted for 4.1% (\$241.1 million) of the large retailers' total sales in August. In the first half of 1999, large retailers accounted for 32.8% of total retail sales in this category. Sales of sporting goods alone (\$103.5 million in August) rose 13.5%. For every \$100 that consumers spent on sporting goods at large retailers, \$44 went to buy hunting, fishing and camping equipment, \$34 went to specialised sports equipment and accessories (e.g., hockey, ski, soccer and golf), another \$16 was spent on bicycles, equipment and accessories, and \$6 went into exercise and fitness equipment.

Turning to sales of leisure goods, the sale of crafts and fabrics rose 11.5%, sales of toys, games and hobby supplies were up 8.1%, sales of audio and videotapes increased 7.2%, and sales of books, newspapers and magazines rose 4.5%. For the first half of 1999, almost 51.0% (\$324.2 million) of all consumer purchases of toys, games and hobby supplies and 40.6% (\$246.2 million) of all purchases of pre-recorded audio and video tapes were made at large retailers. As well, over the same period, 14.8% (\$148.9 million) of all books, newspapers and magazines sold were purchased from large retailers.

For the list of large retailers included in the survey, or for data or general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549 or 1 877 421-3067, retailinfo@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Catherine Draper (613-951-0669, drapcat@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Travel-log Autumn 1999

The Autumn 1999 issue of *Travel-log*, Statistics Canada’s quarterly tourism newsletter, features an article titled “Seniors... a market to watch in the next millennium”. As the International Year of the Senior Persons winds down, this article looks at several aspects of senior travel, including the growth in domestic and international trips by seniors over the past decade, their travel participation rates, and the challenge for tourism marketers as the aging population expands.

Each quarter, *Travel-log* also examines the trends in the Travel Price Index, profiles the latest travel indicators, looks at travellers’ characteristics, and updates the international travel account.

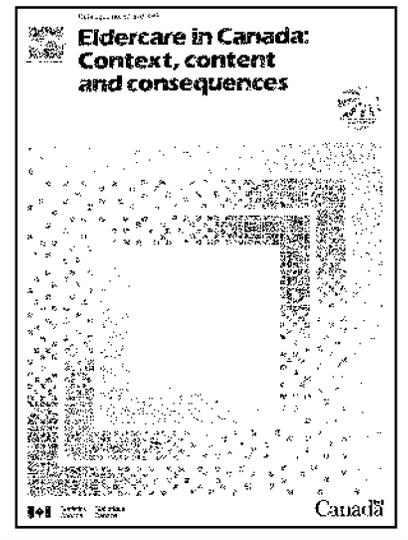
The Autumn 1999 issue of *Travel-log* (paper: 87-003-XPB, \$13/\$42; online at www.statcan.ca: 87-003-XIB, \$10, \$32) is now available. For further information, contact Monique Beyrouti (613-951-1673, fax: 613-951-2909; monique.beyrouti@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Eldercare in Canada 1996

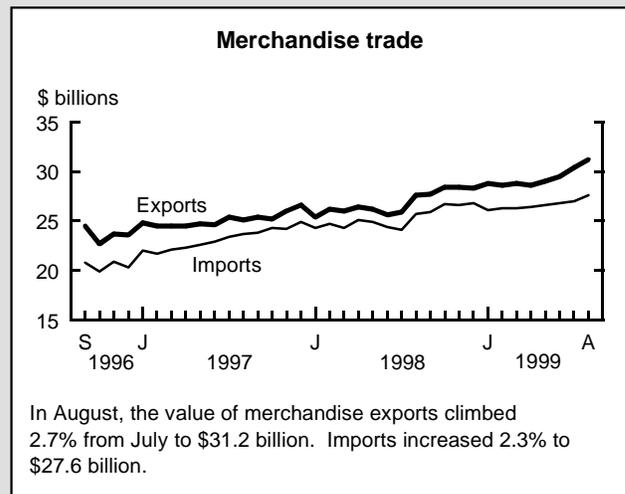
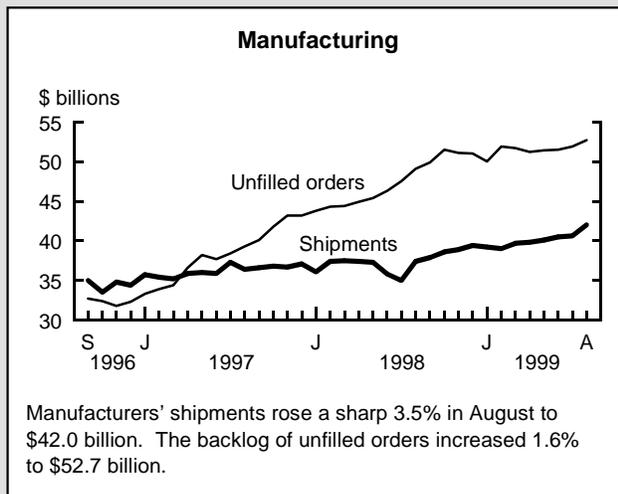
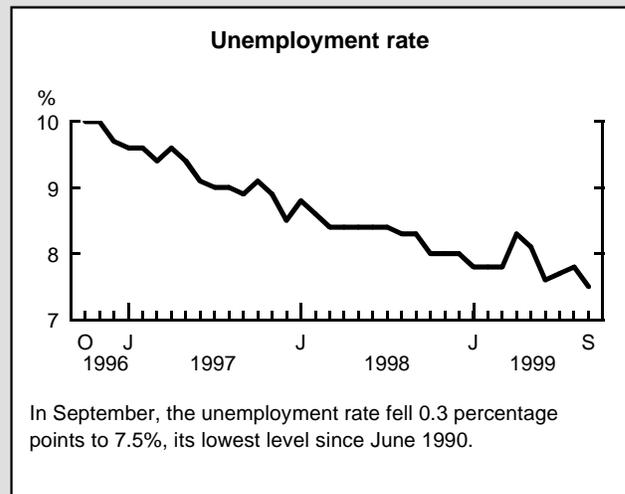
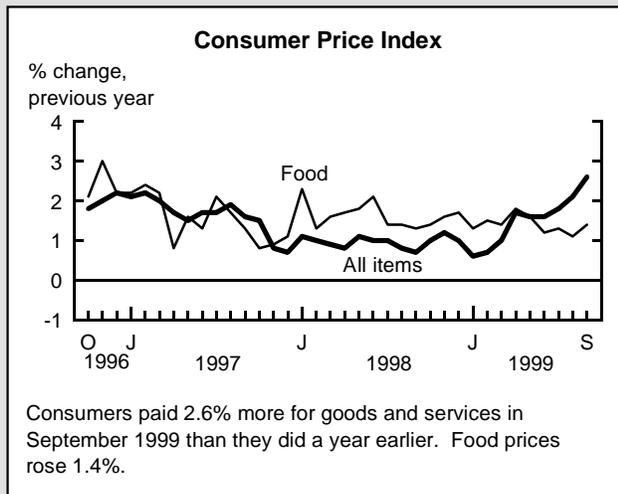
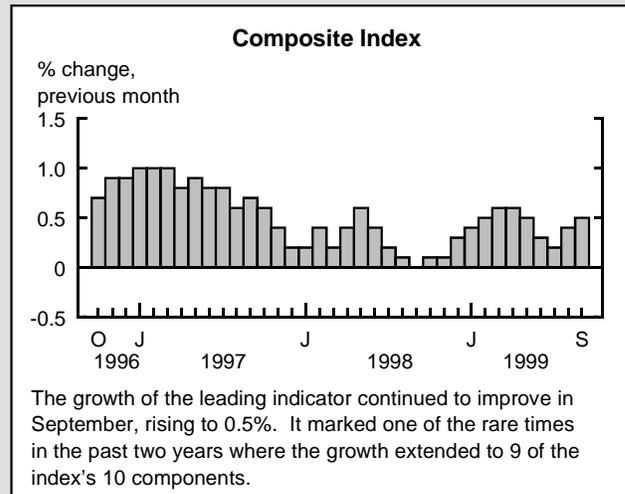
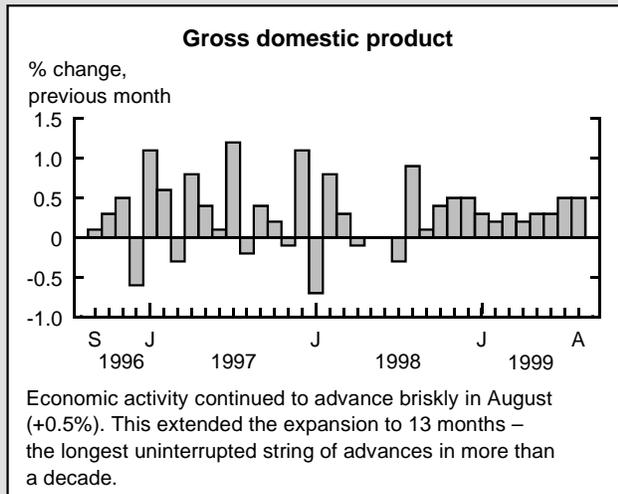
This new monograph about eldercare presents a detailed analysis of the nature and extent of the informal care provided to seniors who require help because of a long-term health or activity limitation. It is based on the 1996 General Social Survey.

Because the population is aging and Canada’s health and social programs are changing, more focus is being placed on issues related to eldercare and social support to seniors. This report describes the characteristics of the seniors receiving informal care by comparing their characteristics with those of all seniors. It also presents a detailed analysis of the men and women who provide different types and amounts of care. The analysis examines the hidden costs incurred by those who provide care, which range from guilt to the impact on their jobs. Finally, the report examines the significance for an aging population of these caregiving patterns.

The new report titled *Eldercare in Canada: Context, content and consequences* (89-570-XPE, \$45) is now available. For further information, contact Kelly Cranswick (613-951-4339, 613-951-0387, kelly.cranswick@statcan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.



Current trends



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 (\$ billion, 1992)	August*	752.6	0.5%	4.1%
Composite Index (1981=100)	September	217.4	0.5%	4.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 1999	37.2	1.6%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1999	83.8	0.5†	1.0†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	August	22.1	1.2%	7.0%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	August	131.6	0.5%	10.3%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	August	30.6	1.4%	10.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	September	14.74	0.4%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	September	7.5	-0.3†	-0.8†
Participation rate (%)	September	65.4	0.0†	0.2†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	August*	610.42	-0.1%	0.8%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	October*	162	1.3%	11.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	August	31.2	2.7%	12.8%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	August	27.6	2.3%	7.6%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	August	3.6	0.2	1.6
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	August	42.0	3.5%	12.2%
New orders (\$ billion)	August	42.8	4.5%	9.6%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	August	52.7	1.6%	7.3%
Inventory/shipments ratio	August	1.27	0.03	-0.10
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	September	111.4	0.3%	2.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	September	123.1	0.5%	3.1%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	September	125.5	3.5%	16.1%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	August	101.1	0.3%	0.9%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

.. figures not available yet due to a survey redesign

Infomat

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