



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, January 10, 2003

INSIDE

◆ “Base effect” sends inflation rate to 11-year high

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◆ Jump in trade surplus

Canada's merchandise exports rose 0.9% to \$35.4 billion and, thanks partly to record-high levels of consumer goods, imports inched up 0.3% to \$30.4 billion in October. Canada's trade surplus in international merchandise jumped by nearly a quarter billion dollars to \$5.1 billion.

◆ Canadians go on shopping spree

Canadians went on a shopping spree in October, catching up primarily on clothing and automobile purchases. Retail sales advanced 1.7% in October to \$26.0 billion, after remaining essentially flat since June.

◆ Labour market fares better in Canada than in US

The labour market in Canada substantially outperformed its counterpart in the United States in the first seven months of 2002. In this period, the number of jobs in Canada increased by 290,000 or 2.3%, but employment in the United States was virtually flat.

Consumer spending spurs economic growth

Economic activity rose 0.3% in October, sustaining a 12-month stretch of consecutive monthly increases. Consumer spending continued to be the source of strength behind the numbers.

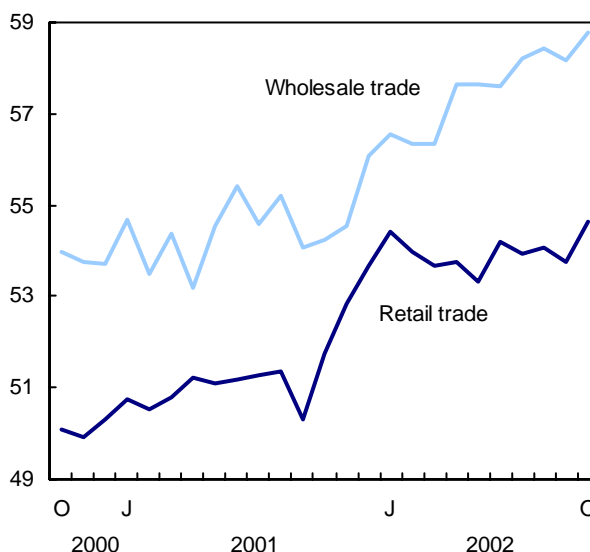
Low mortgage rates continued to stimulate demand for new and existing housing, lifting activity levels for both the construction and the real estate agent and brokerage industries. New home construction advanced a further 0.4% in October; residential construction is now 19.3% higher than in October 2001. Housing starts in October soared 10.2%, with both single and multiple dwelling starts posting gains. All areas of the country reported significant increases.

The strength in new home building continued to provide stimulus for the construction feeder industries in the manufacturing sector.

(continued on page 2)

Wholesaling and retailing activity surges

GDP \$ billions chained 1997



Consumer spending spurs... (continued from page 1)

Producers of wood products, paint, glass and glass products, and heating and air conditioning equipment all posted gains in October. Manufacturers, retailers and wholesalers of household furniture and appliances all reported increased activity in response to these new house purchases.

Shoppers were back in full force in October after a pause in spending in the previous three months. Retail activity shot up 1.6%, as consumers purchased everything from new cars to new shoes. Consumers were enticed back to new car showrooms by generous incentive offers from manufacturers on 2002 models and the introduction of 2003 models. Sales at new motor vehicle dealers increased 2.3%.

This latest shopping spree also extended into the travel and entertainment industries. Increased activity was reported for air travel, hotels, restaurants, motion picture exhibition, pay TV, and spectator sports.

Industrial production (mining, utility and manufacturing sectors) was flat in October, after a slight increase in September. Comparable US statistics on industrial production showed a decrease of 0.6%, with every component of the US index experiencing a large decline.

Output of the Canadian mining sector contracted 0.4% in October after gaining 1.3% in September. Production and exploration of oil and gas fell, as did output from coal, lead and

zinc mines. The utilities sector was buoyed by increased natural gas distribution. The electricity generation and transmission industry was hampered by lower hydro generation.

Manufacturing output remained unchanged from September as gains by durable goods producers were offset by declines of non-durable producers. Increases by manufacturers of wood products, chemicals, machinery and clothing were offset by declines in the production of paper, computers, electrical equipment and transportation equipment. Lower production of computers and telecommunications equipment hampered output of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) manufacturing sector. ICT manufacturing declined 1.5% in October after rising 2.3% in September.

Motor vehicle manufacturing output was flat in October after a significant decline in September. Low consumer confidence levels in the United States translated into slower new motor vehicle sales south of the border. Canadian motor vehicle manufacturers curtailed production to deal with this flagging demand and higher inventory levels.

*The October 2002 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (Internet: 15-001-XIE, \$11/\$110) is now available. For general information, contact Yolande Chantigny (1-800-887-4623; imad@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Jo Ann MacMillan (613-951-7248; joann.macmillan@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)*

Canadian economic observer

The December issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in November and presents a feature article titled "Cyclical implications of the rising import content in exports." 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 December 2002 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (paper: 11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For more information, contact Philip Cross (613-951-9162; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.*



“Base effect” sends inflation rate to 11-year high

Canada's inflation rate, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, reached an 11-year high of 4.3% in November. However, the increase was more the result of substantial declines in consumer prices a year ago than of rising prices late this year.

November's jump was considerably higher than the 3.2% year-over-year rise in the all-items index in October. But as in October, the strong increase was largely attributable to what is known as the “base effect”.

Price comparisons in November 2002 are based on prices in November 2001, which were falling as a result of the September 11 terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington.

The impact of these post-September 11 prices will eventually stabilize, since the all-items CPI stopped falling in December 2001. The “base effect” is expected to fade away by March 2003 when the index used as a base for comparison returns to a level comparable to that of September 2001.

For example, on a year-over-year basis, energy prices soared 14.0% in November 2002 after rising 5.6% in October 2002. The difference between the two 12-month increases was entirely due to the base effect.

Energy prices plunged after the collapse of worldwide demand for crude oil in the wake of the terrorist attacks. If energy had been excluded in November, the inflation rate would have been 3.5% instead of 4.3%.

Other major factors that contributed to the 12-month increase in the all-items CPI in November were higher automotive vehicle insurance premiums (+22.5%) and cigarette prices (+31.9%). Among the few moderating factors was a decrease in the cost of mortgage interest.

The core inflation rate, which excludes volatile prices for food and energy among others, and which the Bank of Canada focusses on, increased to 3.1%.

On a month-to-month basis, the all-items CPI advanced 0.2% in November, compared with a 0.3% increase in October. Upward

Consumer Price Index, November 2002

% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	4.3	2.6	3.3	9.7	14.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	5.2	1.5	4.2	16.6	10.8
Prince Edward Island	5.1	2.8	3.0	12.1	9.5
Nova Scotia	5.5	2.9	3.7	14.0	14.5
New Brunswick	6.1	3.2	2.4	17.7	14.0
Quebec	3.7	2.0	2.2	9.4	9.1
Ontario	3.8	2.9	2.4	8.4	10.1
Manitoba	3.7	3.5	1.1	6.5	9.8
Saskatchewan	4.3	2.4	2.7	6.6	8.2
Alberta	9.7	3.4	16.5	16.2	67.9
British Columbia	3.5	2.5	0.8	8.0	8.7
Whitehorse	2.7	1.8	-0.2	8.4	4.8
Yellowknife	4.1	0.5	5.3	5.7	14.0

pressures from automotive vehicles, fresh vegetables, automotive vehicle insurance premiums and bakery products were offset to some extent by a drop in the prices of traveller accommodation, gasoline, women's clothing and electricity.

The price of fresh vegetables rose 18.6%, as imported produce was shipped in to compensate for exhausted supplies of some local produce.

The index for the purchase of automotive vehicles rose 2.6%. Manufacturers' rebates and discounts offered by dealers were smaller for the new 2003 models in November than they were in recent months for the 2002 models.

Gasoline prices fell 1.8% from October, the first monthly decrease since June. The largest declines were in Saskatchewan (-5.0%) and Quebec (-4.0%).

*The November 2002 issue of the **Consumer Price Index** (Internet: 62-001-XIB, \$8/\$77; paper: 62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For more information, contact Andréa Montreuil (1-866-230-2248; 613-951-9606; infounit@statcan.ca) or Joanne Moreau (613-951-7130), Prices Division. (See also “Current trends” on page 7.)*

Perspectives on labour and income

“The labour market: Up north, down south” is the feature article in the December 2002 online issue of *Perspectives on labour and income*. The article looks at some of the differing trends in the Canadian and US labour markets following the 2001 economic slowdown in the United States. In addition, the issue contains two articles on older workers: “Older workers and the labour market” examines the relative importance of retirement and involuntary job loss, and “Men 55 and older: Work or retire?” looks at reasons for labour market inactivity among men in this age group.

*The December 2002 online edition of **Perspectives on labour and income** (Internet: 75-001-XIE, \$5/\$48) is now available. For more information, contact Henry Pold (613-951-4608; henry.pold@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.*

Jump in trade surplus

Canada's merchandise exports rose 0.9% to \$35.4 billion and imports inched up 0.3% to \$30.4 billion in October. As a result, Canada's trade surplus in international merchandise jumped by nearly a quarter billion dollars to \$5.1 billion.

Canadian companies sent \$30.0 billion in goods to the United States in October, a slight decline from September. Imports from south of the border increased only slightly to \$21.5 billion. The trade surplus with the United States fell to \$8.4 billion.

Canada's trade deficit with countries other than the United States improved from \$3.7 billion in September to \$3.3 billion in October.

Canadian plants exported \$8.2 billion of automotive products in October, down 6.2% from August, when automotive products were at their highest level of 2002. Exports of trucks fell 3.0% from September, and passenger automobile exports fell 5.0% as US demand continued to soften.

Forestry product exports sagged in October, falling 2.4% to \$3.0 billion. Newsprint and other paperboard exports decreased 3.5%, as demand softened among Canada's trading partners in Asia and the United States.

In the machinery and equipment sector, exports rose slightly to \$8.0 billion. International demand for corporate aircraft took off, especially in the United States, pushing aircraft, engines and parts exports up 22.3% to \$1.6 billion.

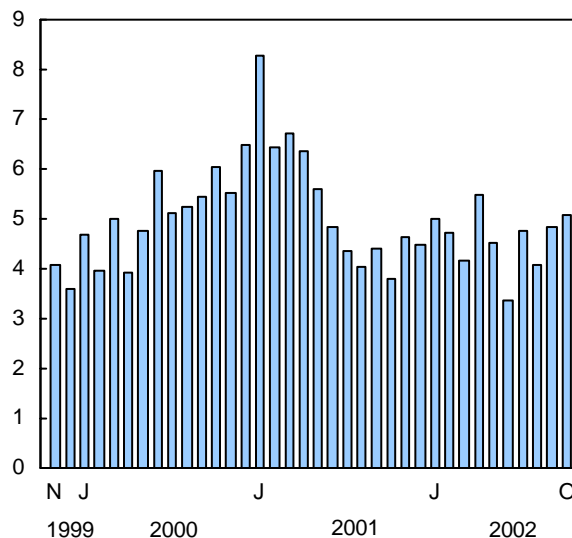
Exports of energy products rose 9.9% to \$5.0 billion, mainly the result of a nearly \$300 million increase in natural gas. Crude petroleum exports rose 4.4% to \$1.8 billion, a result of increased volume.

Merchandise imports levelled off to \$30.4 billion in October. Automotive products and agricultural products were the only import sectors that declined in October.

Automotive product imports fell 3.0% from September's record levels to \$6.9 billion in October. Imports of passenger autos decreased 5.7%, but imports of trucks and other motor vehicles increased 3.8%.

Trade balance

\$ billions



Imports of machinery and equipment, Canada's largest import sector, increased slightly to \$8.9 billion in October. Imports of aircraft and other transportation equipment fell 2.2%, and industrial and agricultural machinery imports increased 2.4%.

This was the year of the consumer for imports, with all major groupings of consumer goods reaching record high levels in 2002. In October, consumer goods imports rose 1.4% to \$4.0 billion, the largest month on record.

Canadian international merchandise trade (Internet: 65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141; paper: 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188) is now available. For more information, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647; 1-800-294-5583). For analytical information, contact Daryl Keen (613-951-1810), International Trade Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Police personnel and expenditures in Canada

Per capita police strength in Canada increased for the fourth consecutive year in 2002, up 1%. At 186 officers per 100,000 population, Canada has about 25% fewer police per capita than the United States or England and Wales. As of June 15, there were 58,414 police officers in Canada, an increase of 1,338 officers.

Among the provinces, Saskatchewan, Quebec and Manitoba reported the most officers per capita; Newfoundland and Labrador, Prince Edward Island and Alberta reported the fewest.

Policing costs totalled \$7.3 billion in 2001, equal to \$234 per Canadian. This was an increase of 4% in constant dollars from 2000, the fifth consecutive annual increase.

The report **Police resources in Canada, 2002** (Internet: 85-225-XIE, \$26) is now available. For more information, contact Client Services (1-800-387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Canadians go on shopping spree

Canadians went on a shopping spree in October, catching up primarily on clothing and automobile purchases. Retail sales advanced 1.7% in October to \$26.0 billion, after remaining essentially flat since June. All retail sectors posted higher sales in October.

Despite the lack of sustained growth so far this year, retail sales for the first 10 months of 2002 were up 6.4% from the same period of 2001.

After staying away for three consecutive months, consumers were back shopping for clothing and footwear in October. Sales in clothing stores jumped 5.1% in October. Just as cool weather in May pushed forward some purchases to June, warmer-than-usual weather in August and September may have led some consumers to postpone their back-to-school clothing purchases. All types of clothing stores posted significant sales increases in October, with shoe stores (+7.4%) and other clothing stores (+6.2%) leading the way.

General merchandisers also benefited from increased spending on clothing and footwear in October. Sales in the general merchandise sector advanced 1.6% in October, after three consecutive monthly declines. Within this sector, department stores posted a 3.7% sales gain in October.

Sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers jumped 2.3% in October, after remaining essentially unchanged since April. Consumers were back in showrooms in October, pushing the number of new vehicles sold in that month to an all-time record of 148,626 units. With financing incentives still in place in October, the new 2003 models and the liquidation of 2002 vehicles provided added stimulus for sales.

Sales in food stores increased 1.1% in October, after remaining flat in September. Food retailers have generally experienced solid growth so far in 2002, pushing year-to-date sales up 4.6% from the same period of 2001.

In October, consumers spent about the same in furniture stores (+0.2%) as in September. Sales in furniture stores have plateaued since May, after increasing rapidly since the spring of 2001. For

Retail sales, October 2002 Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	26,028	1.7	7.4
Newfoundland and Labrador	422	-3.7	-0.5
Prince Edward Island	112	1.3	3.8
Nova Scotia	778	0.7	5.5
New Brunswick	613	0.8	2.9
Quebec	5,985	1.9	8.9
Ontario	9,786	1.8	7.4
Manitoba	892	1.6	5.6
Saskatchewan	764	3.1	7.4
Alberta	3,187	2.0	8.2
British Columbia	3,394	1.6	6.4
Yukon	35	3.0	9.5
Northwest Territories	43	-1.6	14.5
Nunavut	17	-1.7	8.8

the first 10 months of 2002, sales in furniture stores were up 12.1% from the same period of 2001.

Nearly all provinces posted healthy gains in retail sales in October, ranging from 0.7% in Nova Scotia to 3.1% in Saskatchewan. The only exception was a 3.7% decline in Newfoundland and Labrador, which offset the increase observed in the previous month.

October's sales advances in Quebec (+1.9%) and Ontario (+1.8%) followed four months of little growth. Sales gains by retailers in Alberta (+2.0%) and British Columbia (+1.6%) followed three months of essentially flat sales.

*The October 2002 issue of **Retail trade** (Internet: 63-005-XIB, \$16/\$155) is now available. For general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; paul.gratton@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

Canada's international transactions in securities

In October, foreign investors made their largest monthly investment in Canadian securities thus far in 2002, \$3.8 billion, as they bought debt instruments but sold equities. At the same time, Canadian investors sold off a record amount of foreign securities, mostly foreign bonds.

Canadian investment in foreign stocks has slowed since April and turned into a record \$0.6 billion divestment in October, consisting entirely of overseas equities.

Foreign investors reduced their holdings of Canadian stocks by \$0.9 billion in October, similar to September. The selling continued to come from American investors. Canadian stock prices (S&P/TSX composite index) managed a small 1.1% gain in October, after registering a sharp 6.5% loss in value in September.

*The October 2002 issue of **Canada's international transactions in securities** (Internet: 67-002-XIE, \$14/\$132) is now available. For more information, contact Donald Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.*

Labour market fares better in Canada than in US

The labour market in Canada substantially outperformed its counterpart in the United States from December 2001 to July 2002. In this period, the number of jobs in Canada increased by 290,000 or 2.3%, but employment in the United States was virtually flat (-0.1%).

In Canada, the unemployment rate fell from 7.1% in December 2001 to 6.8% in July 2002. In the United States, the unemployment rate was 5.9% in July, up slightly from 5.8% in December 2001.

By mid-year, almost all of the gap in unemployment was the result of higher labour market participation in Canada. In July, the participation rate in Canada was 67.0%, somewhat higher than the rate in the United States, 66.5%.

Canada's stronger gross domestic product growth had a more positive influence on its labour market in 2002. From the third quarter of 2001 to the third quarter of 2002, output in Canada increased 4.0%, compared with 3.2% in the United States.

With manufacturing shipments up 8.2%, compared with 3.5% in the United States, the manufacturing employment gain in Canada (+2.7%) was much stronger than that of the United States (-1.9%).

Housing construction boomed in January 2002 as consumers reacted to low interest rates. This boom had a much bigger effect on employment in Canada. By July, construction employment was up 1.2% from the start of 2002. In the United States, the number of construction jobs fell 1.7%.

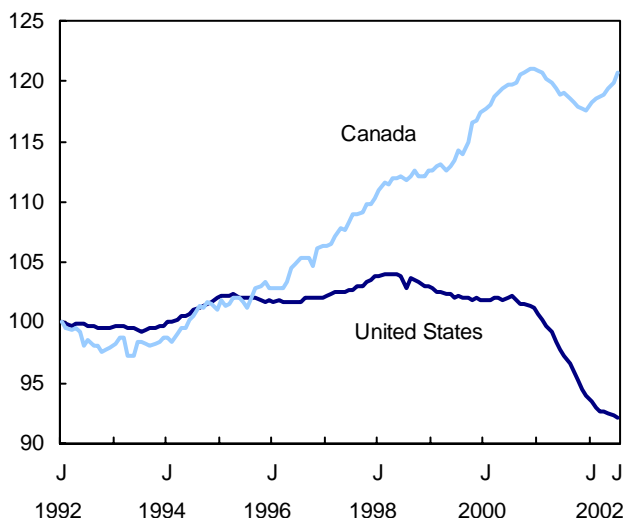
In Canada, the increase in home construction and sales meant more employment in real estate services. Much of the 3.1% increase in finance, insurance, and real estate employment can be attributed to a gain in real estate, as well as added work at banks.

In Canada, the overall employment rate for men aged 16 and over increased from 67.5% in December 2001 to 68.3% in July 2002. Among women, it rose from 56.1% to 56.8%.

Employment rates in the United States continued to decline. Among men, they fell from 69.9% to 69.5%, and among women, from 56.5% to 56.3%. The declines were particularly strong

Manufacturing employment in Canada and the United States

(January 1992=100)



among youth and core-age workers; older workers continued to find employment.

By July, employment increased in nine of the 10 provinces, with Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta experiencing the bulk of the job increases. Eight provinces had declines in their unemployment rate by mid-2002.

In the same period, employment declined in 11 states but increased more than 2% in 16. Unemployment rates increased in 24 states, and only two experienced an increase of a full percentage point or more.

*The article "The labour market: Up north, down south" is available in the December 2002 online edition of **Perspectives on labour and income** (Internet: 75-001-XIE, \$5/\$48). For more information, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325; geoff.bowlby@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.*

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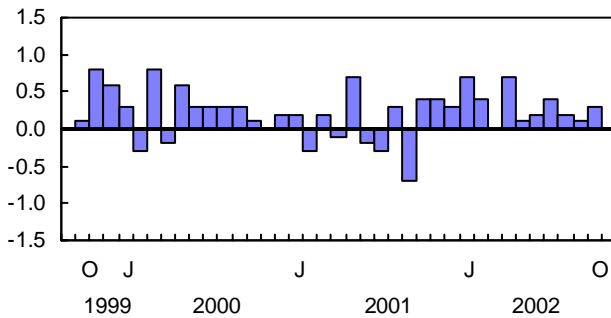
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Current trends

Gross domestic product

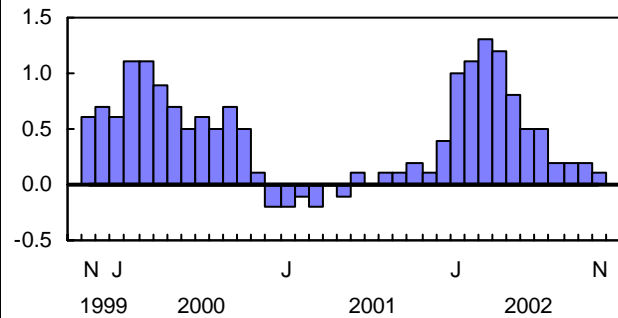
% change, previous month



Total economic activity edged up 0.3% in October, following a 0.1% increase in September.

Composite Index

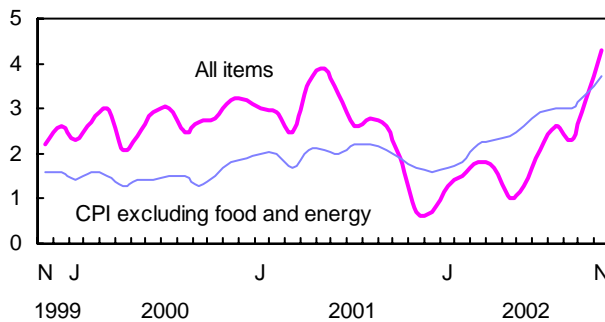
% change, previous month



The leading indicator continued to grow slowly in November, up 0.1% after three straight monthly increases of 0.2%.

Consumer Price Index

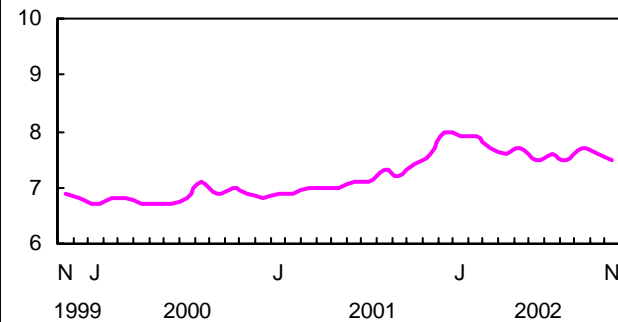
% change, previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 4.3% higher in November than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 3.7%.

Unemployment rate

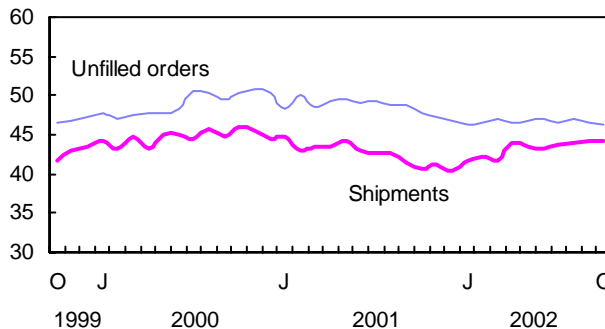
%



In November, the unemployment rate fell 0.1 percentage points to 7.5%.

Manufacturing

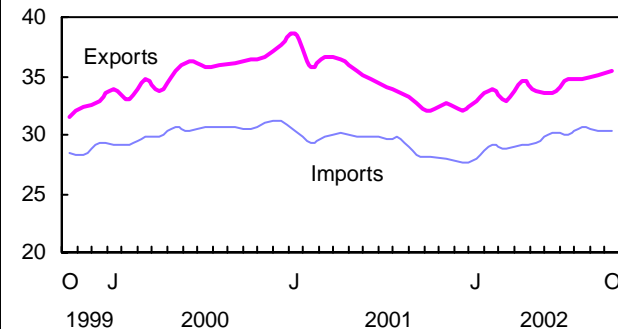
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments edged up 0.1% in October to \$44.2 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders declined 0.5% to \$46.3 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In October, the value of merchandise exports increased 0.9% to \$35.4 billion. Imports rose 0.3% to \$30.4 billion.

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billions, 1997) ¹	October*	984.1	0.3%	3.9%
Composite Index (1992=100)	November	179.4	0.1%	7.6%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q3 2002	40.3	2.6%	12.9%
Capacity utilization rate (%) ²	Q3 2002	83.3	0.8†	2.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	October*	26.0	1.7%	7.4%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	October	148.6	2.0%	10.6%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	October	35.5	0.6%	8.8%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	November	15.6	0.3%	3.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	November	7.5	-0.1†	-0.1†
Participation rate (%)	November	67.3	0.1†	1.2†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	October*	683.53	0.46%	2.10%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	December*	113.5	-4.0%	-10.5%
Regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries (in thousands)	October	556.6	0.6%	1.8%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	October	35.4	0.9%	10.7%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	October	30.4	0.3%	7.7%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	October	5.1	0.2	1.2
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)	October	44.2	0.1%	9.0%
New orders (\$ billions)	October	44.0	0.8%	10.7%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	October	46.3	-0.5%	-3.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	October	1.42	0.01	-0.14
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	November*	120.8	0.2%	4.3%
Industrial Product Price Index (1997=100)	November*	108.6	-0.3%	2.2%
Raw Materials Price Index (1997=100)	November*	113.3	-3.1%	11.3%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	October	111.8	0.5%	4.7%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

¹ 1997 replaces 1992 as the base year used in determining prices for gross domestic product by industry. Also, valuation has been changed from factor cost to basic prices.

² Calculation of the rates of capacity use is now based on the 1997 North American Industry Classification System (NAICS), which has replaced the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Infomat

A weekly review

Published by the Official Release Unit, Communications Division,
Statistics Canada, 10th floor, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Price per issue: paper, \$4; online at www.statcan.ca, \$3. Annual subscription: paper, \$145; online, \$109. All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude applicable sales taxes. Shipping charges will be added for delivery outside Canada.

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Products released from December 19, 2002 to January 8, 2003

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Cereals and oilseeds review	October 2002	22-007-XIB	11/112
Cereals and oilseeds review	October 2002	22-007-XPB	15/149
Definition of "rural"	1996	21-601-MIE	free
Farm product price index	September 2002	21-007-XIB	free
Sheep statistics	2000-2002	23-011-XIE	free
Stocks of frozen and chilled meat products	December 2002	23-009-XIE	free
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS AND FINANCIAL FLOWS			
Canada's balance of international payments	Q3 2002	67-001-XIB	29/93
Canada's balance of international payments	Q3 2002	67-001-XPB	38/124
Canada's international transactions in securities	October 2002	67-002-XIE	14/132
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS			
Canadian crime statistics	2001	85-205-XIE	32
Cyber-crime: Issues, data sources, and feasibility of collecting police-reported statistics		85-558-XIE	free
Juristat, Motor Vehicle Theft in Canada	2001	85-002-XIE	8/70
Juristat, Motor Vehicle Theft in Canada	2001	85-002-XPE	10/93
Police resources in Canada	2002	85-225-XIE	26
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS			
Canadian economic observer	December 2002	11-010-XPB	23/227
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES			
Retail trade	October 2002	63-005-XIB	16/155
Wholesale trade	October 2002	63-008-XIB	14/140
ENVIRONMENT STATISTICS PROGRAM			
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