

# OVERVIEW

After uncertainty over last fall's labour disputes in the automotive industry, manufacturers have set their sights on increasing production during the first three months of 1997.

Month	Manufacturing (%)	Manufacturing (excluding vehicles and parts) (%)
Nov 1994	101.2	100.5
Dec 1994	102.0	101.2
Jan 1995	102.0	101.2
Feb 1995	101.8	101.0
Mar 1995	101.2	100.5
Apr 1995	99.8	99.8
May 1995	99.8	99.5
Jun 1995	100.5	100.2
Jul 1995	100.5	100.2
Aug 1995	100.8	100.5
Sep 1995	100.5	100.2
Oct 1995	100.5	100.2
Nov 1995	100.5	100.2
Dec 1995	100.5	100.2
Jan 1996	100.5	100.2
Feb 1996	100.5	100.2
Mar 1996	100.5	100.2
Apr 1996	100.5	100.2
May 1996	100.5	100.2
Jun 1996	100.5	100.2
Jul 1996	100.5	100.2
Aug 1996	100.5	100.2
Sep 1996	100.5	100.2
Oct 1996	100.5	100.2
Nov 1996	104.2	103.8

### ... Economic growth continues

new series of declines. Growth in furniture and appliance and department store sales was also strong. Lower supermarket sales restrained growth. Retail sales improved for the fifth time in six months. In October and November, retail trade was on average 1.0% higher than in the third quarter of 1996.

A surge in real estate activity led a 1.0% advance in finance, insurance and real estate services. Housing sales have firmed up rapidly since July, as mortgage rates reached new low levels. Although sales have improved in most provinces, the November gain was concentrated in Ontario and the western provinces. Residential construction and building permits rose, and strong sales of new and existing houses translated into a much higher demand for legal services. This resulted in a 1.9% increase in professional services, accounting for about 60% of the gain in community, business and personal services.

Government services dropped 1.1% in November, as about 6,000 employees were transferred from the federal government to the private sector, with the privatization of Canada's civil air

#### Note to readers

*GDP of an industry is the value added by labour and capital in transforming inputs purchased from other industries into output.*

*Monthly GDP by industry is valued at 1986 prices. The estimates presented here are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.*

navigation system operations. NAV CANADA, a not-for-profit corporation, is now classified in the air transport industry. This reclassification does not affect the level of GDP for the total economy.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 4671-4674.**

*The November 1996 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (15-001-XPB, \$14/\$140) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Michel Girard (613-951-9145), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. (See "Current Trends" on page 7.)*

## Fewer Canadians receive Employment Insurance benefits

**I**n November, 681,000 Canadians received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits, a 2.6% drop from the previous month. Declines were recorded in all provinces and territories except Newfoundland. The number of beneficiaries remained relatively unchanged in the six months from June through November.

Following a drop in October, regular benefit payments jumped 4.8% in November to \$780 million, returning to levels similar to those recorded in August and September. Nine provinces and territories reported increases. Quebec (+6.9%), Ontario (+9.8%) and British Columbia (+6.0%) recorded the largest percentage monthly increases.

The number of individuals who applied for Employment Insurance benefits in November declined 1.1% to 238,000, led by

**EI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, November 1996**  
Seasonally adjusted

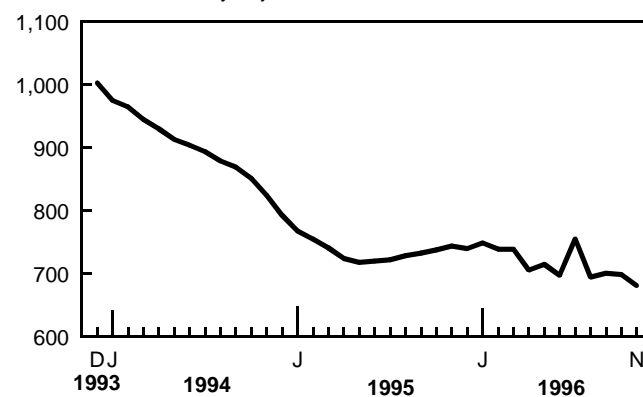
	Total, thousands	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
<b>Canada</b>	<b>681</b>	<b>-2.6</b>	<b>-8.5</b>
Newfoundland	38	2.4	-6.2
Prince Edward Island	10	-1.6	-1.7
Nova Scotia	35	-1.8	-5.7
New Brunswick	41	-1.3	-6.5
Quebec	233	-2.8	-9.7
Ontario	176	-2.0	-2.4
Manitoba	17	-5.0	-13.4
Saskatchewan	13	-9.7	-16.6
Alberta	40	-6.0	-22.7
British Columbia	75	-2.3	-11.4
Yukon	1	-2.9	-8.0
Northwest Territories	1	-3.5	1.8

#### Note to readers

*Some of the discrepancy between the number of regular beneficiaries and regular payments series can be explained by the difference in their time frames. The number of beneficiaries is based on a one-week census (the week containing the 15th of the month), whereas the benefit payments are the total amount of money received by individuals for the entire month.*

### Number of EI beneficiaries paid regular benefits

Thousands, seasonally adjusted



Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia. From May 1994 to April 1996, a slowly but consistently increasing trend in claims was recorded. Since then the number of claims has been on a downward trend.

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

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

## Provincial and territorial deficits to decline for fourth straight year

Provincial and territorial government revenues in the 1996/97 fiscal year are projected to reach \$166.6 billion, while expenditures are estimated to total \$174.9 billion, resulting in a deficit of \$8.3 billion.

The total provincial and territorial government deficit is expected to decline for the fourth year in a row. But contrary to the previous three years, where the decline in deficit was due to revenues rising faster than expenditures, the 1996/97 reduction in deficit of 11.0% is due to expenditures decreasing more rapidly than revenues.

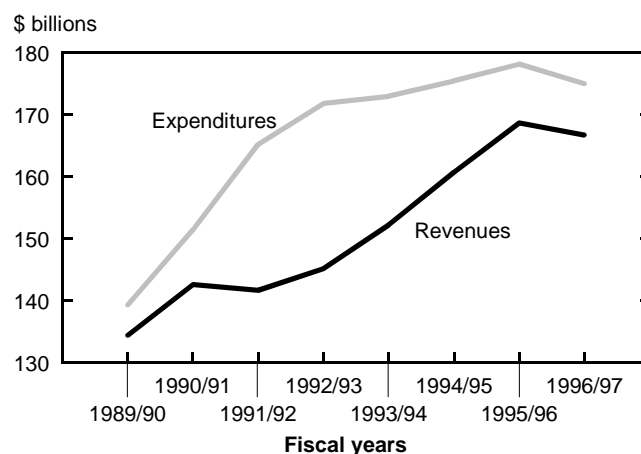
The provincial and territorial deficit reached its peak of \$26.5 billion in 1992/93, before declining significantly over the following three years to \$9.5 billion in 1995/96. It is projected to drop another \$1.2 billion in 1996/97.

Total revenues in 1996/97 are projected to decrease 1.2% from 1995/96, compared with an average annual increase of 3.4% in the previous five years. Revenues raised by the provincial and

### Note to readers

The revised estimates for the years 1993/94 to 1995/96 are based on information contained in the budgets, estimates and public accounts, as well as special compilations obtained from certain provinces. The 1996/97 estimates are based on budgets, estimates and revised estimates released in 1996, as well as additional information obtained from provinces.

### Provincial and territorial governments



territorial governments themselves will rise \$2.7 billion or 2.0% over 1995/96, while transfers from the federal government are projected to decline \$4.7 billion or 15.5%.

Among the revenues raised by the provincial and territorial governments themselves, personal income tax receipts are anticipated to increase 2.8% from 1995/96, while corporation income taxes are projected to decline 2.2%. Consumption taxes will barely surpass their 1995/96 level of \$30.0 billion. Return on investments is anticipated to be up 3.6%, resulting from higher receipts from lottery and casino schemes and higher dividends from provincial crown corporations.

Transfers from the federal government will total an estimated \$25.7 billion, compared with a peak of \$30.4 billion in 1995/96. The major part of the decline in federal transfers is attributable to lower contributions under the Canada Health and Social Transfer Program (replacing the health, postsecondary education and social assistance programs, effective April 1, 1996), while the rest is attributed to lower transfers for a mix of other programs.

The drop in total expenditures (\$3.2 billion or 1.8% from 1995/96) is the result of provincial and territorial governments' efforts to reduce spending and to restructure public institutions. The areas where expenditures are expected to be cut the most are education (-3.3%), social services (-1.8%) and health (-0.6%). 1996/97's decline of 1.8% in total expenditures compares with a 3.3% average annual increase for the previous five years.

Total debt charges will continue to climb in 1996/97, but at a much slower rate: 2.2% over 1995/96, compared with the 8.2% average annual increase for the previous five years.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 2781-2793.**

Data are also available through custom and special tabulations. For further information, contact Paul Blouin (613-951-8563) or James Temple (613-951-1832), Public Institutions Division.

### Provincial and territorial government revenue and expenditure

	1995/96	1996/97	1990/91 to 1995/96	1995/96 to 1996/97
	\$ millions		Average annual % change	
<b>Revenue source</b>				
Personal income taxes	43,401	44,605	1.9	2.8
Corporation income taxes	9,021	8,824	10.6	-2.2
Consumption taxes	30,033	30,270	2.8	0.8
Health and social insurance levies	11,656	11,859	5.2	1.7
Miscellaneous taxes	11,442	11,619	6.1	1.5
Return on investments	16,342	16,926	2.4	3.6
Other revenues from own sources	16,302	16,843	4.7	3.3
Transfers	30,390	25,677	2.7	-15.5
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>168,587</b>	<b>166,623</b>	<b>3.4</b>	<b>-1.2</b>
	1995/96	1996/97	1990/91 to 1995/96	1995/96 to 1996/97
	\$ millions		Average annual % change	
<b>Expenditure function</b>				
General services	7,928	7,589	1.4	-4.3
Protection of persons and property	5,111	4,908	0.7	-4.0
Transportation and communications	7,304	6,704	--	-8.2
Health	45,606	45,336	2.7	-0.6
Social services	34,198	33,587	6.0	-1.8
Education	32,524	31,443	2.4	-3.3
Debt charges	27,353	27,948	8.2	2.2
Other expenditures	18,042	17,348	-1.1	-3.8
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>178,066</b>	<b>174,863</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>-1.8</b>
<b>Surplus/deficit</b>	<b>-9,479</b>	<b>-8,241</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>-11.0</b>

-- Amount too small to be expressed.

## Department store sales strong in 1996

**A**lthough sales dropped for the month of December, consumers spent a total of \$14.5 billion in department stores throughout 1996, up 4.4% over 1995.

December 1996 department store sales declined 1.0% following a strong November: sales were \$1.2 billion (seasonally adjusted), still well above October's level. Sales for the 1996 Christmas

### Department store sales including concessions

Unadjusted

	Dec. 1996	Dec. 1995 to Dec. 1996	1996	1995 to 1996
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>2,267.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>14,446.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island	43.8	5.0	272.8	2.7
Nova Scotia	79.9	3.2	469.7	2.9
New Brunswick	58.2	3.8	352.8	2.5
Quebec	378.5	3.4	2,649.7	4.7
Ontario	982.6	5.5	6,032.6	4.4
Manitoba	93.3	2.1	613.8	4.1
Saskatchewan	72.8	3.2	463.7	6.4
Alberta	254.3	5.3	1,589.4	5.2
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories	304.5	0.3	2,002.3	3.9

### Note to readers

The major department stores are The Bay, Eaton and Sears. The discount stores are K-Mart, Wal-Mart and Zeller's.

shopping season (November and December) were up from the previous year (+7.8%, seasonally adjusted). These two months account for about 27% of total department store sales each year.

Discount stores were behind the third consecutive annual increase for department store sales, with a rise in sales to \$8.1 billion (+8.6%) from 1995. Their sales have increased every year since 1992, and discount stores recorded a year-over-year increase in every month of 1996. Major department stores, however, saw spending drop to \$6.4 billion (-0.4%) over 1995—the fourth annual decline in as many years.

Department store sales rose in all regions in 1996. For the third year in row, Saskatchewan recorded the largest annual increase (+6.4%). Alberta followed with a gain of 5.2%. The weakest growth (less than 3%) was recorded in the Atlantic provinces.

Furniture and major appliances continue to be important for the major department stores, which have faced declines in sales of women's and misses' clothing; lingerie, intimate apparel, hosiery and women's accessories; stationery, books and office equipment; and floor coverings.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 111–113.**

The December 1996 issue of *Department store sales and stocks* (63-002-XPB, \$16/\$160) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Louise G  n  reux (613-951-3549), Industry Division.

## Rebound in residential construction behind rise in building permits

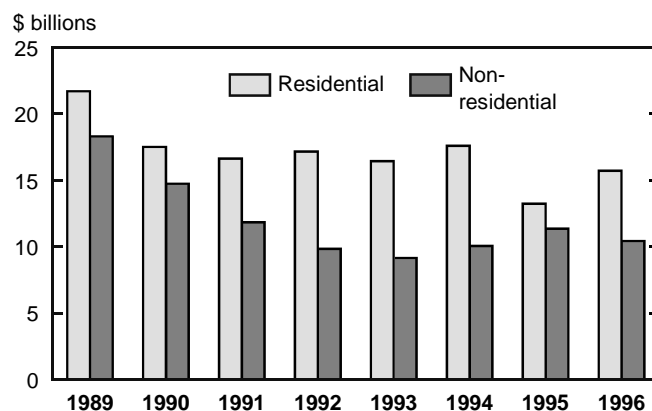
**H**istorically low mortgage rates and stronger demand for new and existing homes fuelled the 5.3% jump in the value of building permits issued by municipalities in 1996. As residential construction intentions rebounded, the value of building permits for the housing sector jumped 18.0% to \$15.6 billion, partially offsetting 1995's slide of 24.7%. Non-residential applications fell 9.5% in 1996. The industrial and institutional components were behind this downturn.

In 1996, the single-family component—the key portion of the housing sector—led the residential advance. Single-family permits rose 18.2%, followed closely by the multi-family component at 17.5%. Sales of new and existing homes were the highest in four years, reducing the backlog of unsold units and stimulating new housing construction. The higher level of permits issued in 1996 was partially reflected in a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation survey that reported a 12.4% jump in housing starts.

Ontario led the regions in housing intentions, up 20.3% in 1996. Alberta, British Columbia and Quebec also reported increases. Only the Northwest Territories recorded a loss in the housing sector.

After two straight annual increases, non-residential intentions fell 9.5% in 1996, a setback caused mainly by a sharp drop in the

### Residential building permits rebound in 1996



institutional component (-27.9%). This was consistent with spending cutbacks announced by all levels of governments.

The industrial component recorded an 11.4% decrease in 1996, more than offsetting the 1.8% increase in the commercial component. Ontario's 13.5% dip in the non-residential sector contributed most to the drop.

For the month of December 1996, both residential and non-residential construction contributed to an overall decline in the value of permits as they fell 4.6% to \$2.1 billion, down from

(continued on page 5)



### ... Rebound in residential construction behind rise in building permits

November. Housing construction intentions fell 1.8% to \$1.4 billion. Non-residential construction dropped 9.7% to \$0.7 billion in December, the fifth straight decline.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3–7, 16–22, 24–32), 129, 137, 443, 989–992, 994, 995 and 4073.**

The December 1996 issue of **Building permits** (64-001-XPB, \$24/\$240) and the microfiche version (64-001-XMB, \$25/\$135) will be released shortly. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; Internet: [burejoa@statcan.ca](mailto:burejoa@statcan.ca)), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

#### Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations. The annual rate is a monthly figure that has been seasonally adjusted and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

The Buildings and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,400 municipalities, representing 93% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 7% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total. The value of planned construction activities excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers, culverts) and land.

### Building permits, December 1996 Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month
<b>Canada</b>	<b>2,135</b>	<b>-4.6</b>	<b>1,402</b>	<b>-1.8</b>	<b>733</b>	<b>-9.7</b>
Newfoundland	20	-5.1	15	-10.0	5	13.8
Prince Edward Island	5	-71.8	4	-60.2	1	-89.2
Nova Scotia	91	39.2	68	38.1	23	42.7
New Brunswick	35	-12.8	22	-21.6	13	6.7
Quebec	396	-2.6	217	10.3	179	-14.6
Ontario	790	-6.6	537	-9.1	254	-0.8
Manitoba	54	29.7	27	12.5	28	52.1
Saskatchewan	39	26.8	18	16.7	20	37.5
Alberta	248	-18.7	174	12.0	73	-50.8
British Columbia	450	-1.6	316	-6.0	134	10.6
Yukon	3	-44.5	2	-33.6	1	-58.1
Northwest Territories	4	31.7	2	-7.1	2	97.8

### Increased production expected in first quarter

After uncertainty over last fall's labour disputes in the automotive industry, manufacturers have set their sights on increasing production during the first three months of 1997. In the January 1997 Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers indicated more satisfaction with current levels of new orders and less concern about the level of finished-product inventories. They did not foresee increasing their work force in the coming quarter.

The balance of opinion regarding production prospects increased 36 points to +27 in January, with the transportation equipment industries the major contributors. The low October balance (-9) was mostly a result of labour unrest. (The balance of opinion of +27 in January was reached by subtracting the 10% of manufacturers who stated that production prospects for the next quarter are lower from the 37% who said production prospects were higher.)

The proportion of manufacturers who felt that their current inventory of finished products was too high dropped from 17% in

#### Note to readers

The Business Conditions Survey is conducted in January, April, July and October; the majority of responses are recorded in the first two weeks of these months. Results are based on replies from about 5,000 manufacturers and are weighted by a manufacturer's shipments or employment. Consequently, larger manufacturers have a correspondingly larger impact on the results than smaller manufacturers.

Except for those on production difficulties, data are seasonally adjusted. Data have been revised back to January 1994. Revisions are due to updating of the sample and weights. Generally these revisions have a minor effect on previously released data.

October to 13% in January 1997: a major improvement when compared with the recent peak of 31% posted in April 1996. The number who said their inventory of finished products was about right increased 3 points to 82%.

The January survey showed that 72% of manufacturers expect little change in their work force in the coming three months. Those who anticipate increased employment balanced out those who

(continued on page 6)

### ... Increased production expected in first quarter

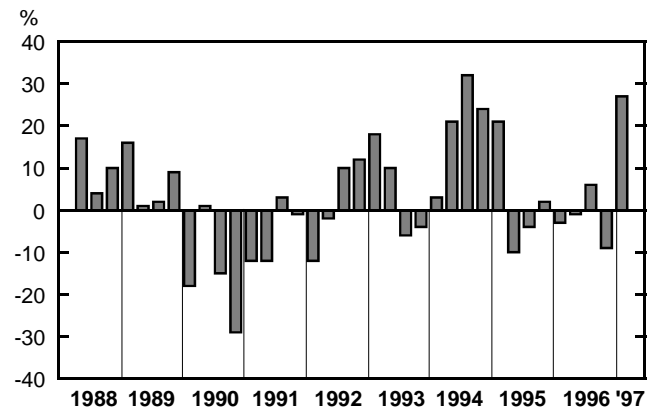
expect a drop in employment, both at 14%. The zero balance represents a 3-point decrease from the +3 balance posted in October 1996.

A shortage of skilled labour concerned only 3% of manufacturers in January 1997, down from 4% in the October survey. Concern about working capital shortages remained at 2%, while that over raw materials shortages remained at 3%. A full 88% of manufacturers recorded no production difficulties, compared with 86% one year earlier.

#### Business Conditions Survey

	1996				1997
	Jan.	April	July	Oct.	Jan.
<b>Balance of opinion on:</b>					
Production	-3	-1	6	-9	27
New orders	-19	-4	8	7	21
Unfilled orders	-14	-2	-5	-4	2
Inventories	-25	-28	-13	-13	-8
Employment	-7	-4	0	3	0

### Balance of opinion for expected volume of production



Available on CANSIM: matrices 2843-2845.

For further information, contact Claude Robillard (613-951-3507; Internet: robilcg@statcan.ca), Industry Division.

## New from Statistics Canada

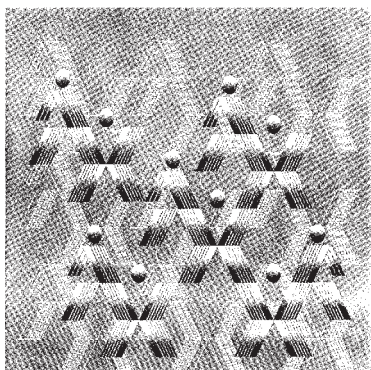


Catalogue no. 95-010-X

### A Portrait of Seniors in Canada

Second Edition

Target groups project



Statistics Canada  
Statistique Canada

Canada

### A portrait of seniors in Canada

Seniors currently make up one of the fastest growing population groups in Canada. As well, the senior population is expected to grow even more rapidly over the next few decades, particularly when people born during the baby boom begin turning age 65 early in the next century.

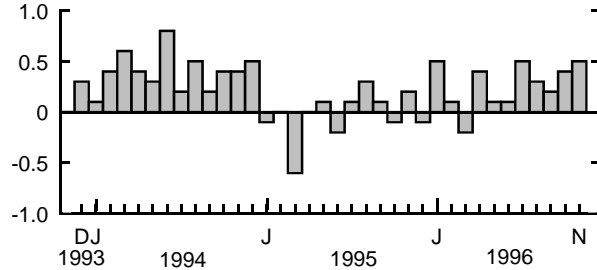
This report, drawn from a wide range of Statistics Canada sources, provides a comprehensive description of the senior population in Canada, including their family status and living arrangements, housing, health, education, work and leisure patterns and other lifestyle characteristics. In addition, many indicators in this report have been disaggregated by age to provide some measurement of the diversity within the senior population, particularly between those aged 85 and over and those in younger age groups.

*A portrait of seniors in Canada, Second Edition (89-519-XPE, \$40) is now available. For more information, contact Colin Lindsay (613-951-2603; fax: 613-951-0387; Internet: lindcol@statcan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.*

## Current trends

### Gross domestic product

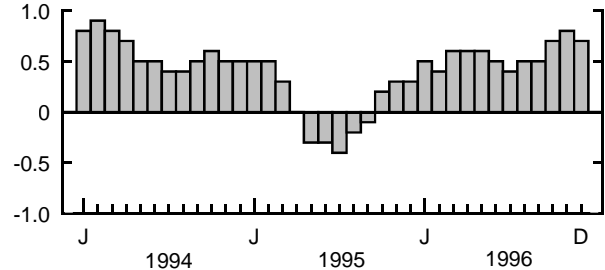
% change,  
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost increased 0.5% between October and November.

### Composite index

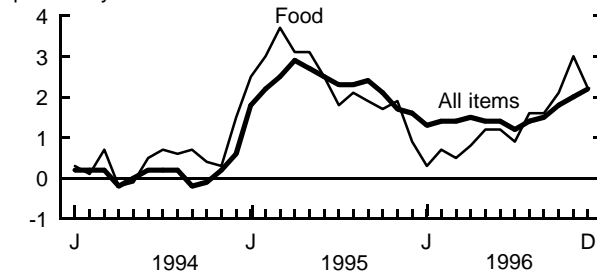
% change,  
previous month



The composite index grew by 0.7% in December.

### Consumer price index

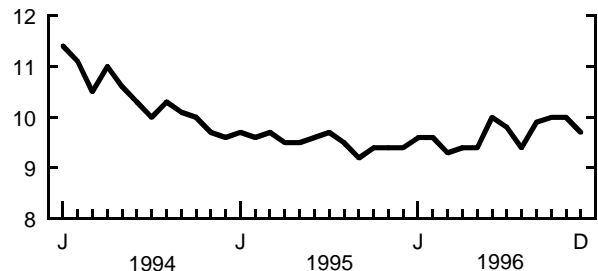
% change,  
previous year



Consumers paid 2.2% more for goods and services in December 1996 than the year before. Food prices also rose by 2.2%.

### Unemployment rate

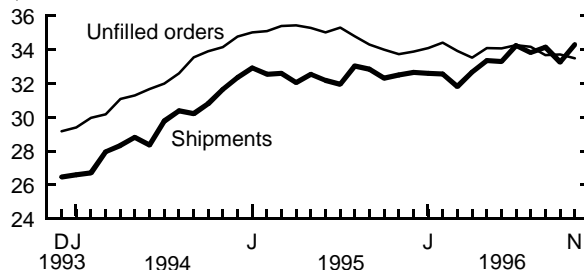
%



In December, the unemployment rate declined 0.3 percentage points to 9.7%.

### Manufacturing

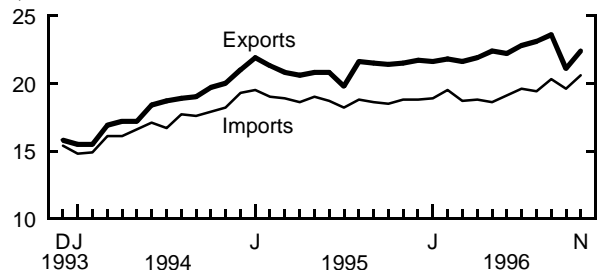
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments increased 3.0% in November to \$34.3 billion. The level of unfilled orders fell 0.9% to \$33.5 billion.

### Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In November, the value of merchandise exports rose 5.7% from October to \$22.4 billion. Imports increased 4.7% to \$20.6 billion.

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

## Latest monthly statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1986)	November*	559.3	0.5%	2.9%
Composite index (1981=100)	December	184.4	0.7%	6.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1996	24.4	7.5%	3.8%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1996	83.8	1.3†	0.8†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	November	18.4	0.9%	4.5%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	November	105.2	0.5%	10.3%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	December	13.8	0.2%	1.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	December	9.7	-0.3†	0.3†
Participation rate (%)	December	64.8	-0.2†	0.1†
Labour income (\$ billion)	November*	36.5	0.8%	3.6%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	November	594.61	0.1%	3.1%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	November	22.4	5.7%	4.1%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	November	20.6	4.7%	9.2%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	November	1.8	0.3	-0.8
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	November	34.3	3.0%	5.5%
New orders (\$ billion)	November	34.0	1.9%	5.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	November	33.5	-0.9%	-0.7%
Inventory/shipments ratio	November	1.33	-0.03	-0.08
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	December	136.8	0.0%	2.2%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	December	129.6	0.4%	-0.5%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	December	139.1	1.3%	7.5%
New housing price index (1986=100)	November	131.8	0.3%	-1.0%

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

\* new this week

† percentage point

## Infomat

### A weekly review

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## Publications released from January 31 to February 6, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (C\$)	United States	Other countries
			(US\$)		
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>					
Field crop reporting series no. 1:					
Stocks of Canadian grain	December 31, 1996	22-002-XPB	15/85	18/102	21/119
Cereals and oilseeds review	November 1996	22-007-XPB	15/144	18/173	21/202
<b>HOUSING, FAMILY AND SOCIAL STATISTICS</b>					
A portrait of seniors in Canada	February 1997	89-519-XPE	40	48	56
<b>INDUSTRY</b>					
Clothing industries	1994	34-252-XPB	38	46	54
Coal and coke statistics	November 1996	45-002-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Crude petroleum and natural gas production	October 1996	26-006-XPB	18/180	22/216	26/252
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