



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, February 21, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ Shipments drop in December, but year-end level rises

Although December shipments dropped slightly, manufacturers closed 1996 with a higher year-end level of shipments than in 1995.

◆ Yearly trade surplus rises above 1995 level

Although exports and imports declined in December 1996, both posted yearly gains. The trade balance for 1996 rose over the previous year.

◆ Housing and finance behind growth in composite index

Led by the housing and financial sectors, the composite leading indicator rose 0.9% in January.

◆ Year in travel ends with more cross-border plane trips

Canadians and Americans took more cross-border plane trips in 1996, while overseas residents made a record number of overnight trips to Canada.

◆ Retirement savings—a stable formula

Close to two-thirds of individuals who filed tax returns between 1991 and 1995 saved for retirement through a registered pension plan or a registered retirement savings plan.

◆ More households enter computer world

Almost one-third of Canadian households had computers in 1996, triple the proportion recorded 10 years earlier.

Shipments drop in December, but year-end level rises

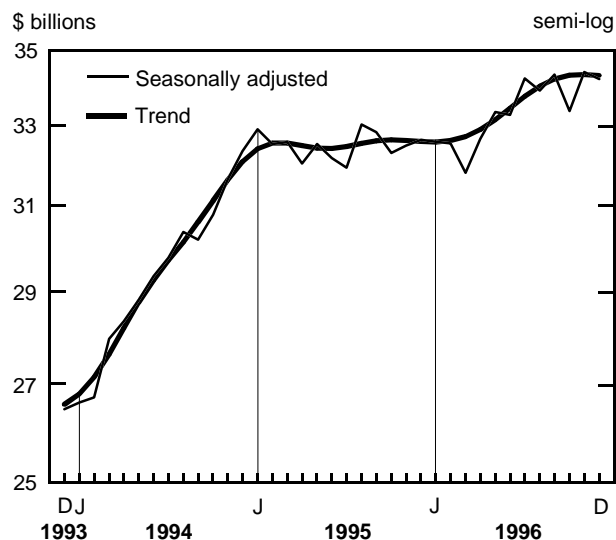
Manufacturers closed 1996 with a 0.5% December decrease in shipments, bringing them back to July's level. Although growth was stalled at the beginning and end of the year, strong growth between April and July resulted in a year-end level of shipments that was 4.8% higher than in the previous year. This marks an improvement over 1995, which saw virtually no growth, but compares less favourably with the sustained growth seen in 1994.

In December 1996, total manufacturing shipments edged down to \$34.2 billion (-0.5%). This followed a strong performance in November, when shipments bounced back 3.1% from a strike-induced low in October. Makers of motor vehicles and parts and primary metals were behind the December decline. Decreases were concentrated in 12 of the 22 major industry groups, which accounted for almost 57% of total shipments. Inventories decreased 0.4%, the seventh decline in 12 months, while unfilled orders were up 1.1%.

December's largest decreases were recorded in primary metals (-4.6%), motor vehicle parts (-4.7%) and aircraft and parts (-9.7%).

(continued on page 2)

Shipments



... Shipments drop in December, but year-end level rises

Increases in the electrical and electronic products and beverage industries partially offset these drops.

After four increasingly substantial rises, manufacturers' inventories edged down 0.4% to \$45.5 billion in December. This latest result characterizes the year, which saw manufacturers contain the rapid growth in inventories that had marked the two previous years. December's largest declines came from the motor vehicle (-9.0%), chemical products (-2.4%) and aircraft and parts (-1.9%) industries; the most significant increases were in wood and primary metals.

Manufacturers' shipments, December 1996

Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	34,220	-0.5
Newfoundland	130	-5.6
Prince Edward Island	55	8.3
Nova Scotia	499	-5.1
New Brunswick	673	-2.4
Quebec	8,424	1.0
Ontario	17,359	-1.0
Manitoba	755	-0.2
Saskatchewan	477	2.0
Alberta	2,740	0.6
British Columbia	2,726	-2.4
Yukon and Northwest Territories	5	1.3

Note to readers

Unfilled orders are a stock of orders that will contribute to future shipments, assuming they are not cancelled.

New orders represent orders received, whether shipped in the current month or not. They are measured as the sum of shipments for the current month (i.e., orders received this month and shipped within the same month) plus the change in unfilled orders.

The parallel decreases in inventories and shipments kept the inventory-to-shipments ratio stable at 1.33 in December. Despite the lack of movement in December, the ratio has been trending up slightly in recent months after reaching a near-historical low in July 1996.

Manufacturers' backlog of unfilled orders, a key determinant of future shipments, recorded the second largest increase of the year (+1.1% to \$33.8 billion) in December. After weakening significantly in the latter part of 1995, the level of unfilled orders was essentially flat in 1996. The largest increases were recorded in transportation equipment (+4.1) and primary metals (+6.0%). These increases were partially offset by fewer orders for electrical and electronic products (-4.2%) and machinery (-2.1%).

New orders rose 1.3% to \$34.6 billion in December.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9579 and 9581-9593.

*The December 1996 issue of **Monthly survey of manufacturing** (31-001-XPB, \$19/\$190) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9834), Industry Division. (See also "Current Trends" on p. 8.)*

Yearly trade surplus rises above 1995 level

In 1996, exports moved ahead by 5.3%, compared with 16.5% in 1995. Exports of machinery, energy products and lumber accounted for most of the increase. Falling prices in the pulp and paper industries and moderate growth in the auto sector dampened overall gains. Total exports for the year stood at \$267 billion.

Import growth slowed to 3.4% in 1996, down from 11% in 1995. Energy imports contributed most to the gain, followed by chemicals and plastics, automotive products, and aircraft. Metals and metal ores, and drilling machinery lost the most ground. In 1996, total imports amounted to \$233 billion.

The overall merchandise trade balance for 1996 was \$34.1 billion, well above the \$28.4 billion recorded for 1995.

In December exports lost ground, falling to \$22.3 billion (-1.1%) as automotive shipments declined. Outside the auto sector exports inched forward; increases in natural resources were nearly offset by weaker exports of industrial goods. Sales to Japan and the European Union advanced, while exports to the United States and all other trading partners softened.

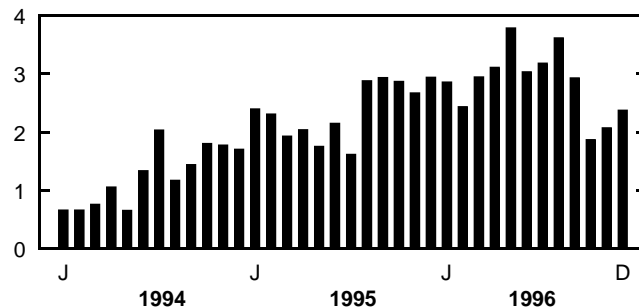
Imports fell to \$19.9 billion in December (-2.7%), down from November's record \$20.5 billion. Although import activity slowed for most commodities, a reduction in auto parts was the largest setback. Shipments from the United States, Japan and Europe all

Note to readers

Merchandise trade is one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services. In the third quarter of 1996, the overall merchandise trade surplus of \$9.7 billion compared with a current account surplus of \$0.6 billion.

Trade balance

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



(continued on page 3)

... Yearly trade surplus rises above 1995 level

waned, but imports from the remaining trading partners increased.

As imports declined more quickly than exports in December, the merchandise trade surplus increased to \$2.4 billion from \$2.1 billion in November. Canada's trade surpluses with the United States and Japan both gained ground; deficits remained with all other trading partners.

Automotive exports fell in December (-6.6%), partially offsetting November's rebound. Industrial goods posted a 3.3% drop. Sales of machinery and equipment declined marginally. Telecommunications companies trimmed exports for a third straight month, while transportation equipment and farm machinery exports recovered from November lows.

The greatest offset to December's export slippage came from the energy sector (+9.6%), with further gains in crude petroleum shipments. An upturn in woodpulp exports and increased lumber sales to Japan helped bolster forestry exports (+2.1%). Newsprint shipments were trimmed as some mill operators extended holiday downtime to build up inventories.

December movements in agricultural and fishing product exports were mixed: all commodities gained ground over November except wheat shipments, which dropped 20.1%, reflecting weather-related transportation delays. After rebounding in November, lower parts purchases caused automotive imports to fall in December (-7.8%). Machinery imports dropped 4.7% after setting a record in November. Imports of energy products slipped 17.8% after a two-month upsurge, driven by a lapse in crude oil imports, which make up 72% of energy product purchases.

In December, imports of industrial goods declined (-1.3%) for the first time in three months. Consumer imports posted a 0.2% drop, still drifting down from September's high.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3611-3616, 3618-3629, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720 and 3887-3913.

Canadian international merchandise trade (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$182) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Suzie Carpentier (613-951-9647; 1 800 294-5583), International Trade Division. (See also "Current Trends" on p. 8.) Current account data, which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, services transactions, investment income and transfers, are available on a quarterly basis in **Canada's balance of international payments** (67-001-XPB, \$36/\$120).

Housing and finance behind growth in composite index

Led by the housing and financial sectors, the composite leading indicator rose 0.9% in January—the same as December's revised rate. Although a strong indicator of economic growth, this is not necessarily a sign of broadly based growth. Excluding the housing and financial components, growth was steady at 0.4%.

Household demand remained mixed, with gains for goods offset by slack demand for services. Outlays for housing and related items posted their strongest increases in over four years, pushing existing house sales to their highest level recorded. Demand for services was flat for the fourth straight month, checked by weak labour market conditions.

Spending on durable goods dropped (-0.2%), despite a boost from the settled auto strike. Export demand for other manufactured

goods remained weak. Manufacturers seemed optimistic: the average work week was up sharply, especially in housing-related industries.

The U.S. composite leading indicator rose 0.2% as manufacturing demand eased. Retail sales moderated at the end of 1996, while the housing market softened. Vigorous financial markets continued to outstrip the growth of output and jobs. The stock market took off again early in the new year (+3.1%); real money supply growth posted its largest monthly increase on record.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

The February 1997 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current Trends" on p. 8.)

Year in travel ends with more cross-border plane trips

In 1996, cross-border plane trips of one or more nights by Canadians rose 17.9% over the previous year, while those by Americans rose 11.5%. The number of such trips has been increasing since the Open Skies bilateral agreement was signed in February 1995. Although the automobile is still the preferred way of travelling, cross-border car trips of one or more nights decreased in both directions.

Note to readers

Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data (data adjusted for variations that repeat annually and for variability caused by the different volumes of travellers associated with different days of the week), while year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data (the actual traffic counts). A tourist is a traveller who spends at least one night in a foreign country. Excursions are same-day trips.

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... Year in travel ends with more cross-border plane trips

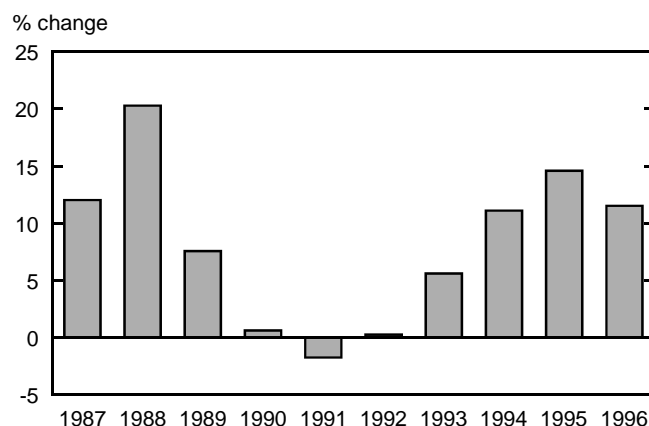
Of Canada's major airports, Vancouver has benefited most from Open Skies. The number of foreign and Canadian travellers entering or re-entering Canada from the United States through this airport rose 37% between 1994 and 1996. Toronto and Montréal airports saw increases of 23% and 11% respectively. Restrictions on the number of carriers and weekly flights serving them, which have affected access to these airports by American airlines, will be removed at the Montréal and Vancouver airports in February 1997 and at Toronto airport in February 1998.

In 1996, residents of countries other than the United States (overseas countries) set a new record for overnight trips to Canada, the fourth consecutive yearly increase—4.4 million trips, up 11.5% from the previous year. Americans are still making the most overnight trips to Canada: 13.0 million in 1996.

Foreigners travelled to Canada and spent at least one night on a record 17.4 million occasions in 1996—up 2.4% over 1995. Residents of overseas countries are now making more than a quarter of all overnight trips to Canada; this proportion was one-fifth only five years ago. Travellers from overseas are good economic news for Canada, because they tend to stay longer and spend more than Americans. In 1995, their average length of stay was 11 nights compared with 4 for Americans. They spent C\$1,030 per overnight trip, versus C\$370 for Americans.

Once again Asia experienced the strongest growth in overnight trips to Canada (+17%), making 1.5 million trips between 1995 and 1996. Asian tourists have made an important contribution to the

Overnight trips to Canada by overseas residents



Canadian economy, accounting for 15% of the \$8.8 billion spent in Canada by all foreign tourists in 1995. Despite Asia's gains, Europe remained the most important overseas market for Canada in 1996, recording 2.3 million overnight trips in 1996, up 8.1% from the year before.

Overseas travel rose 3.6% to 3.7 million trips in 1996, up 3.6% from the previous year. The decline in trips of one or more nights to the United States came to an end, rising 4.1% to 15.3 million. Canadians made 18.9 million trips abroad in 1996, 4.0% more than in 1995. Americans made 23.8 million same-day, cross-border car trips, up 4.7%. The number of cross-border car excursions by Canadians remained relatively unchanged at 36.3 million.

December 1996 saw a new monthly record number of overnight trips to Canada by foreigners (+3.9%, or 1.5 million). Americans took 1.1 million trips of one or more nights, up 5.1% over November. A slight increase (+0.4%) brought the number of overnight stays in Canada by overseas residents to an unprecedented 380,000 trips. Canadians' trips to the United States for at least one night jumped 7.1% to the highest level (1.3 million) since December 1993. Canadians also made 1.5% more trips (321,000) to overseas destinations. These two increases resulted in a 6.0% rise in overnight trips abroad—the strongest monthly growth since September 1994.

Same-day car trips to Canada by Americans rose 2.6% to 2.0 million in December 1996, their highest level in more than 15 years. And Canadians made 2.9 million cross-border car excursions, a 2.3% decrease from the previous month.

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

*The December 1996 issue of **International travel: advance information** (66-001-PPB, \$7/\$70) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Luc Dubois (613-951-1674; fax: 613-951-2909; Internet: duboluc@statcan.ca) or Ruth Martin (613-951-1791; fax: 613-951-2909; Internet: martrut@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.*

Travel between Canada and other countries, December 1996

	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	% change, previous year
	seasonally adjusted		unadjusted	
Canadian trips abroad				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same-day	2,893	-2.3	2,670	-4.6
One or more nights	829	8.6	493	9.9
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,335	7.1	905	10.1
Other countries	321	1.5	252	2.9
Travel to Canada				
Auto trips from the United States				
Same-day	2,043	2.6	1,746	7.7
One or more nights	698	0.8	389	-7.6
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,115	5.1	645	-3.0
Other countries ²	380	0.4	235	11.2

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

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

Retirement savings—a stable formula

Between 1991 and 1995, close to two-thirds of taxfilers aged 25 to 64 saved for retirement through either a registered pension plan (RPP) or a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP). More than half of these savers did so each year.

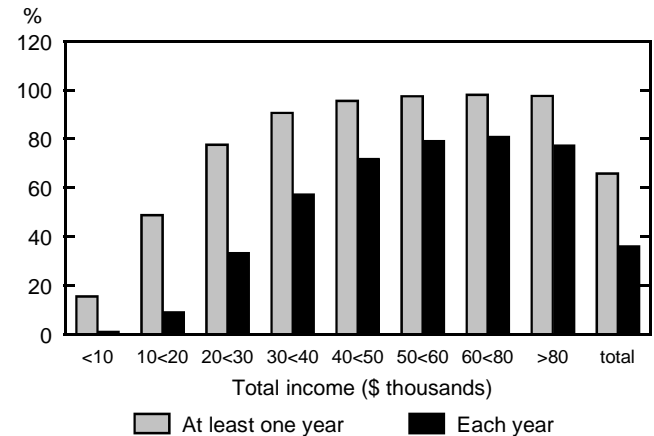
It goes without saying that as income rises, so does the likelihood of having RRSP or RPP savings. Nine out of ten individuals earning \$30,000 to \$39,999 and virtually everyone in higher income groups, saved for retirement at least once in the period studied. The proportion of taxfilers who saved each year also rose with income, peaking at about 80% for those with incomes of \$50,000 or more (about 15% of taxfilers).

Almost half of all taxfilers aged 25 to 64 did not contribute at all to an RRSP between 1991 and 1995. Most of them declared an average income of less than \$30,000. However, the proportion of those who did contribute at least once reached 73% for those aged 45 to 54. The smallest proportion was in the 25-to-34 age group (59%).

Most Canadians have not maximized their RRSP savings opportunities. In 1995, Canadians aged 25 to 64 contributed only 13% of the total so-called RRSP room. At least 6 out of 10 individuals did not use any of that room; this is not surprising given that 39% of those who could have contributed had incomes of less than \$20,000.

In 1995 alone, taxfilers aged 25 to 64 saved \$36 billion through RPPs and RRSPs. This represented 11.2% of their total income,

Taxfilers aged 25 to 64 who saved through RPPs or RRSPs 1991 to 1995



compared with 9.7% in 1991 and 10.6% in 1993. Over half of the savings made through RPPs and RRSPs by individuals aged 25 to 64 were contributed to RRSPs.

RRSP contributions outstripped those for RPPs for the first time in 1995. This resulted from the sustained growth in RRSP contributions since 1991. Between 1991 and 1995, RRSP contributions in the 25-to-64 age group grew 54%.

Retirement savings through RPPs and RRSPs, 1991 to 1995 (74F0002XPB, \$43) will be available in March. For further information, contact Thomas Dufour (613-951-2088) or Johanne Pineau (613-951-4034), Labour Division (fax: 613-951-4087).

More households enter computer world

Recent data from the Household Facilities and Equipment Survey show that 3.6 million (31.6%) of Canada's 11.4 million households had a computer in 1996—triple the proportion recorded 10 years earlier. About half the households with modems were surfing the Internet from home; however, this represented just 7.4% of all households.

In 1996, the one-fifth of households in the highest income group were four times more likely to have a home computer than the one-fifth in the lowest group (56.6% compared with 13.7%). The gap was somewhat smaller for single-family households: 58.0% of those in the highest income group had a computer, compared with 20.2% for the lowest fifth of households.

Families with children are more likely to have home computers. In 1996, 44.6% of single-family households with children under 18 years of age had a computer, up from 17.7% a decade earlier. The rate was even higher for such households with incomes of \$70,000 or more: 65.0% reported having a computer. Households with children were also more likely to have a modem or to be using the Internet. One in five had a modem, and almost one in ten reported using the Internet. By comparison, 30.4% of households without children had a home computer in 1996; 15.5% had a modem and 7.5% used the Internet. One-person households were least likely to use the Internet (3.6%).

Note to readers

In 1996, Statistics Canada released data from the Household Facilities and Equipment (HFE) Survey showing the rapid growth in the number of Canadian households able to travel the information highway. Now the agency has released data linking 1996 demographic, housing, and facilities information from the HFE survey to 1995 income data from the Survey of Consumer Finances (SCF). Initial 1995 income results were released in December. Both surveys were conducted in the spring of 1996 and used the same sample, representing virtually all private households in Canada, except for those in the Yukon and Northwest Territories and on Indian reserves.

Overall, single-family households with children under 18 years of age owned more leisure and time-saving items than other household types. The trend was most pronounced in households with two parents, because of higher incomes and associated purchasing power and the higher proportion of families with both parents working.

Time-saving appliances were especially popular in two-parent households: 93.8% had a microwave and 61.9% had a dishwasher, compared with 70.6% and 25.1% of one-person households. Leisure items were also popular for such households: 95.6% had a VCR, 67.6% had two or more colour televisions, 67.7% had a compact disc player, and 30.0% had a camcorder. One-person households had fewer entertainment items: 63.8% had a VCR,

(continued on page 6)

... More households enter computer world

Households in the computer world, 1996

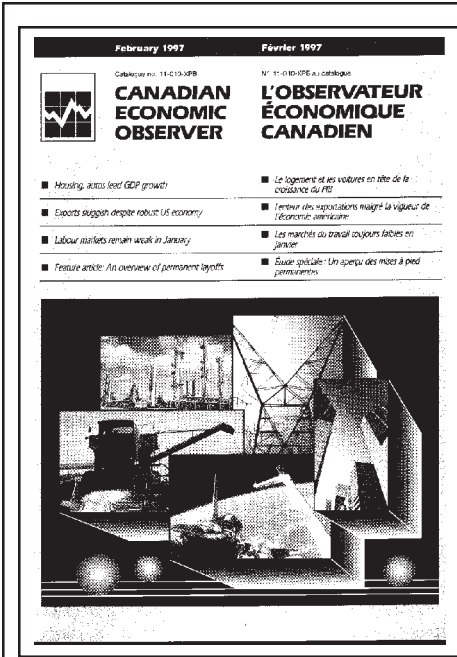
	Total	Have a home computer	Have a modem- equipped computer	Use the Internet from home
	Estimated number of households thousands			
Type of household				
One-person	2,803	416	211	101
Single-family without children under 18	4,271	1,297	662	322
Single-family with children under 18	3,774	1,685	791	355
Multi-family	565	204	107	66

36.5% had a CD player, 23.4% had two or more colour televisions, and only 4.7% had a camcorder.

Two-parent households with children under 18 years of age had an average income of \$61,755 in 1995, considerably higher than the overall household average of \$48,085. According to the Survey of Consumer Finances, both spouses worked in 6 out of 10 husband-wife families.

*Data on households by income, province, household type, age of head and other characteristics are presented in **Household facilities by income and other characteristics, 1996** (13-218-XPB, \$35), which is now available. For further information, contact Réjean Lasnier (613-951-5266) or Donald Dubreuil (613-951-4633), Household Surveys Division (Internet: income@statcan.ca).*

New from Statistics Canada



Canadian economic observer

February 1997

The February issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, analyses the current economic conditions and summarizes the major economic events in January. One feature article, "An overview of permanent layoffs," is presented. A 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 February 1997 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) is now available. For further information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634), Current Economic Analysis Group (Internet: ceo@statcan.ca).

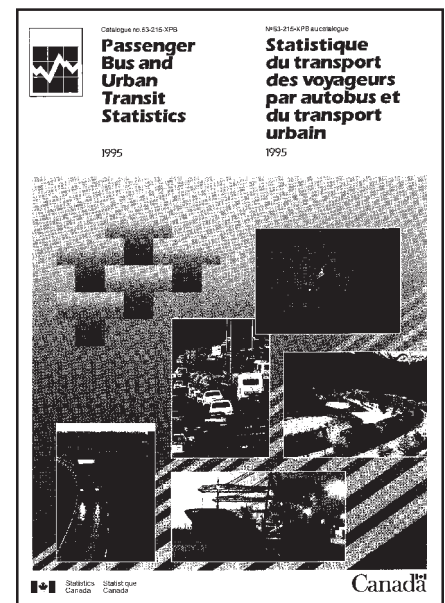
Passenger bus and urban transit statistics

1995

Passenger bus and urban transit statistics, 1995 takes a comprehensive look at the many aspects of passenger bus and urban transit activity. A redesign of the survey has resulted in more information and expanded coverage of Canada's bus industry.

Text, data tables and charts describe the financial and operating performance of the passenger bus and urban transit industry. In particular, such principal statistics as employment and equipment are examined along with more detailed statistics on types of service (intercity, urban transit, school and charter).

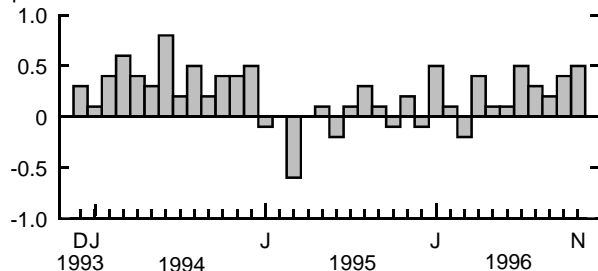
Passenger bus and urban transit statistics, 1995 (53-215-XPB, \$38) is now available. For further information, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0579; Internet: larocque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.



Current trends

Gross domestic product

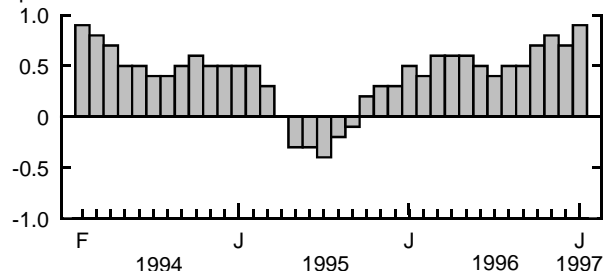
% change,
previous month



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

Composite index

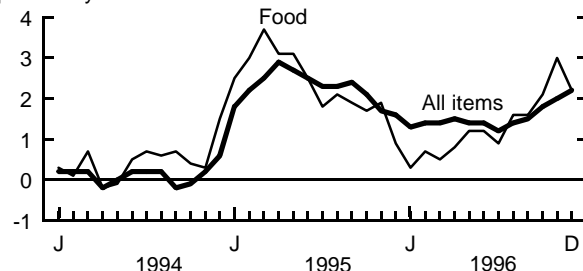
% change,
previous month



The composite index grew by 0.9% in January.

Consumer price index

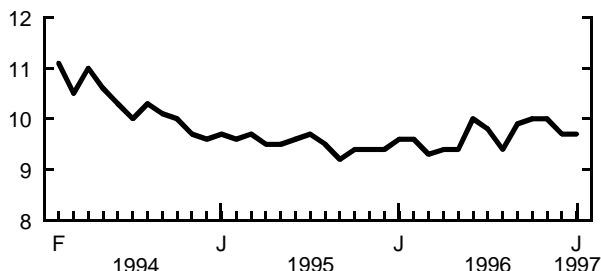
% change,
previous year



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

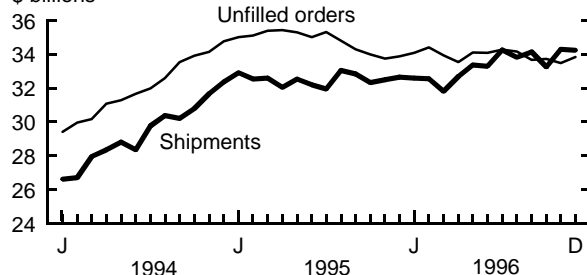
%



In January, the unemployment rate held at 9.7%.

Manufacturing

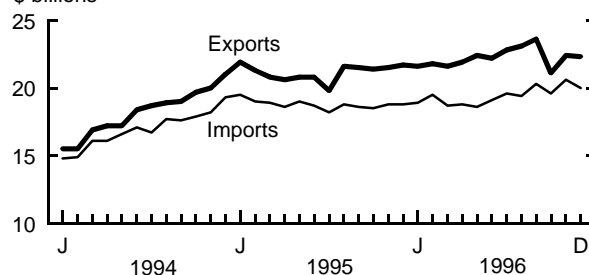
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments dropped 0.5% in December to \$34.2 billion. The level of unfilled orders rose 1.1% to \$33.8 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In December, the value of merchandise exports dropped 1.1% from November to \$22.3 billion. Imports decreased 2.7% to \$20.0 billion.

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)	November	559.3	0.5%	2.9%
Composite index (1981=100)	January*	186.9	0.9%	7.7%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1996	24.4	7.5%	3.8%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1996	83.8	1.3†	0.8†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	November	18.4	0.9%	4.5%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	December	112.5	5.1%	15.3%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	January	13.8	0.0%	1.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	January	9.7	0.0†	0.1†
Participation rate (%)	January	64.7	-0.1†	-0.2†
Labour income (\$ billion)	November	36.5	0.8%	3.6%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	November	594.61	0.1%	3.1%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	December*	22.3	-1.1%	2.7%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	December*	20.0	-2.7%	6.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	December*	2.4	0.3	-0.6
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	December*	34.2	-0.5%	4.8%
New orders (\$ billion)	December*	34.6	1.3%	5.5%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	December*	33.8	1.1%	-0.1%
Inventory/shipments ratio	December*	1.33	0.00	-0.06
PRICES				
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)	December	131.9	0.1%	-0.9%

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 February 14 to 20, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (C\$)	United States	Other countries
					(US\$)
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS					
Juristat: Justice spending in Canada	Vol. 17, no. 3	85-002-XPE	10/90	12/108	14/126
Police personnel and expenditures in Canada	1995 and 1996	85F0019XPE	30	36	42
Selected police administration characteristics of municipal police departments	1995	85F0016XPB	30	36	42
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS					
Canadian economic observer	February 1997	11-010-XPB	22/220	27/264	31/308
INDUSTRY					
Gross domestic product by industry	November 1996	15-001-XPB	14/140	17/168	20/196
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	December 1996	46-002-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	December 1996	31-001-XPB	19/190	23/228	27/266
Oil pipeline transport	November 1996	55-001-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Oils and fats	December 1996	32-006-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Quarterly report on energy supply-demand in Canada	Q2 1996	57-003-XPB	41/136	50/164	58/191
Railway carloadings	December 1996	52-001-XPB	10/100	12/120	14/140
Refined petroleum products	November 1996	45-004-XPB	20/200	24/240	28/280
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Employment, earnings and hours	November 1996	72-002-XPB	31/310	38/372	44/434
TRANSPORTATION					
Passenger bus and urban transit statistics	1995	53-215-XPB	38	46	54

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