



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, March 6, 1998

OVERVIEW

◆ Foreigners continue selling Canadian bonds

Foreign investors continued to sell Canadian bonds in December. However, they also continued to buy heavily into Canadian stocks.

◆ Consumer Price Index rebounds

In January, the annual change in the Consumer Price Index rebounded somewhat, but remained lower than any other annual advance reported since January 1995.

◆ Industrial product prices unchanged

Industrial product prices remained unchanged in January, while the 12-month change edged up slightly.

◆ Raw materials cost less

Manufacturers paid less for raw materials in January compared with the previous month. Crude oil prices continued to fall.

◆ EI beneficiaries, applicants decline

In December, both the number of Canadians receiving and applying for Employment Insurance benefits declined.

◆ Composite Index rises

The Composite Index rose again in January, following gains in December and November.

Foreigners continue selling Canadian bonds

Foreign investors sold Canadian bonds for a second month in a row in December. At the same time, however, they continued to buy heavily into Canadian stocks. Canadian investors added further to their holdings of foreign stocks, but sold a small amount of foreign bonds.

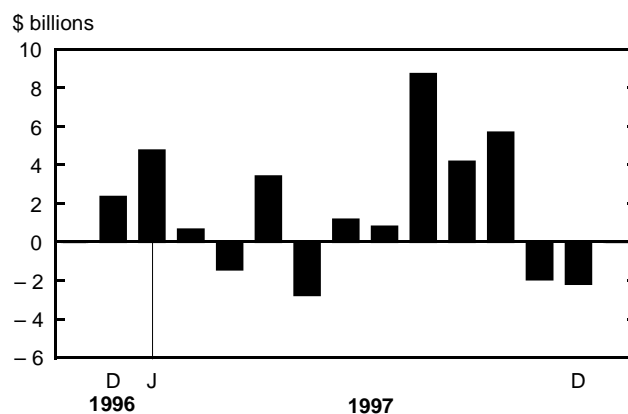
After purchasing almost \$11 billion of Canadian bonds from August through October 1997, foreign investors reduced their holdings in both November and December. During these two months, the selling by American, European and Asian investors was exclusively in outstanding federal bonds.

Foreign investors sold a small amount of short-term paper in December, after significant purchases of \$4.2 billion during the previous two months. In December, foreigners sold federal paper but purchased short-term instruments issued by federal enterprises and corporations.

In December, foreign investors purchased a further \$1.6 billion of Canadian stocks. The buying shifted from entirely new issues in November to mainly outstanding issues. December's investment came from the United States and Europe. Canadian stocks gained

(continued on page 2)

Foreign investment in Canadian securities¹



1. Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.



... Foreigners continue selling Canadian bonds

2.9% in value in December, after losing 7.5% over the previous two months.

Canadian residents added a further \$1.1 billion to their holdings of foreign stocks in December (\$0.6 billion of U.S. stocks and \$0.5 billion of overseas stock). For 1997 as a whole, however, the \$4.4 billion investment in foreign stocks was almost entirely directed to overseas markets, with Canadian mutual funds accounting for most of the investment. After purchasing \$4.6 billion of foreign bonds over the three previous months, Canadian investors sold a small amount in December. The record \$7.0 billion investment in foreign bonds in 1997 was split between U.S. corporate and overseas bonds.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2328–2330, 2378–2380 and 4195.

The December 1997 issue of Canada's international transactions in securities (67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.

Note to readers

Interest rates: Canadian short-term rates rose by some 50 basis points in December while their U.S. counterparts remained unchanged. Although the differential continued to favour investment in the United States, it dropped to 130 basis points, the lowest it has been since August 1996. Canadian long-term rates rose marginally, while U.S. long-term rates dropped marginally. The result was a shift to a small differential that favoured investment in Canada, after four months of favouring U.S. investment.

Stock prices: During December, Canadian stock prices (as measured by the TSE 300 Composite Index) rose 2.9%, closing the year 13% ahead of 1996. U.S. stock prices (as measured by Standard and Poor's 500 Index) climbed 31% for the year (+1.6% in December).

Canadian dollar: In December, the Canadian dollar fell to US 69.91 cents. The Canadian dollar, in terms of the U.S. dollar, lost a full 3 cents against the U.S. dollar in 1997, with most of the decline coming in the second half of the year.

Consumer Price Index rebounds

Between January 1997 and January 1998, the prices of the goods and services that make up the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket rose by an average 1.1%. Four components—fresh vegetables, clothing, new cars and mortgage interest costs—were primarily responsible for the increase, while the energy component partially offset the rise. Consumers paid significantly more for fresh vegetables, restaurant meals, local telephone service and tuition fees. On the other hand, they benefited from declining charges for mortgage interest, energy and computers.

In January, the CPI rose 0.6% over December—the largest monthly increase since November 1994. A rise in the Quebec sales tax accounted for about one-sixth of the increase. Around

Note to readers

In January 1998, the Consumer Price Index was presented on the time base 1992=100 for the first time. Therefore, some price movements may differ slightly from movements previously published on the time base 1986=100 as the result of rounding.

half of the remaining advance resulted from a jump in prices for fresh vegetables (+26.5%) and fruit (+3.4%). Higher telephone rates were another important factor, as residents in many provinces paid more for local service. Consumers also paid more for clothing (+1.2%) and new vehicles (+0.8%). At the same time, however, they enjoyed lower costs for gasoline, travel tours, footwear and mortgage interest charges.

On a year-over-year basis, increases in the provincial CPIs ranged from a high of 1.9% in Quebec to a low of 0.3% in Prince Edward Island. Quebec consumers saw a larger-than-average price advance due to two factors: the increase in the provincial sales tax and a large increase in vegetable and fruit prices.

Consumers in all provinces except Quebec experienced an average price increase of 0.3% to 0.6% between December and January. In Quebec, with the effects of the sales tax increase and the jump in fresh vegetable and fruit prices, the increase was 1.2%.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9940–9970.

The January 1998 issue of the Consumer Price Index (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For further information, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Consumer Price Index, January 1998
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Energy	Housing	Transportation
Canada	1.1	2.3	- 0.1	- 0.2	- 2.6
Newfoundland	0.8	0.1	0.8	1.2	3.0
Prince Edward Island	0.3	3.1	- 3.9	- 0.3	- 6.8
Nova Scotia	1.5	2.7	0.4	1.4	1.3
New Brunswick	1.1	1.5	2.3	- 0.4	4.3
Quebec	1.9	4.4	0.0	0.4	- 1.8
Ontario	0.9	1.7	0.2	- 0.6	- 3.3
Manitoba	1.0	- 0.1	0.9	0.4	- 1.2
Saskatchewan	0.7	0.4	1.8	0.4	- 1.3
Alberta	1.0	1.6	0.4	- 0.6	- 3.7
British Columbia	0.4	2.6	- 2.5	- 0.2	- 4.6
Whitehorse	1.9	5.7	0.3	2.2	3.8
Yellowknife	- 0.6	0.4	- 2.1	2.3	- 2.7

Industrial product prices unchanged

Industrial product prices remained unchanged in January. Compared with January 1997, prices were up 0.8%. The motor vehicle industry posted the most significant monthly price increase, but this was offset by lower prices for petroleum products and meat.

The devaluation of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar greatly affected both the month-to-month and the year-over-year price changes in January. If the effect of the devaluation in the Canadian dollar were excluded, the monthly change would have shown a decrease of 0.2%, and the 12-month change would have shown a decline of 0.6%.

In January, motor vehicle prices were up 1.1% overall. About three-quarters of the increase resulted from the rise in the value of the U.S. dollar, with most of the remainder due to an increase in domestic prices after incentives and rebates. The overall price level for gasoline and fuel oil dropped 3.4%. The price of crude oil continued to fall in January (–8.1%), due to increasing supply, high world inventories and declining demand. Prices received by Canadian meat product manufacturers fell 1.5%; beef and veal prices were up, but pork prices continued to decline.

Other than transport equipment and petroleum and coal products, the two most significant 12-month changes in industrial prices continued to be pulp and paper (+5.8%) and sawmill products (–6.4%).

In the United States, Canada's major trading partner, industrial production has been slowing slightly but remains at record highs. In January, industrial production was unchanged after increases in December and November. Manufacturing output was up slightly, but by less than in December. Housing starts were down in January, but applications for building permits were up. The unemployment rate remained at 4.7%.

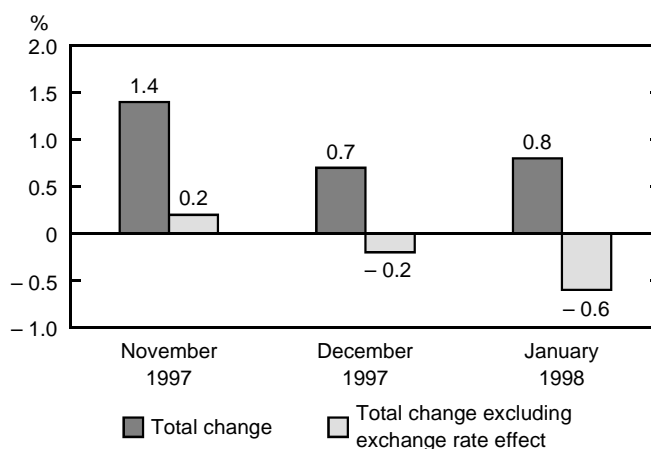
Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870–1878.

Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers receive as the goods leave the plant gate. It does not reflect what the consumer pays. Unlike the Consumer Price Index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all the costs that occur between the time when a good leaves the plant and the time when the final user takes possession of it, including the transportation, wholesale, and retail costs.

An increase in the value of the U.S. dollar raises the worth in Canadian dollars of all prices quoted in U.S. dollars. The impact of changes in the exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollars is most significant for motor vehicles, pulp, paper and wood products because producers frequently quote export prices for these items in U.S. dollars.

Industrial product prices, annual change



*The January 1998 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available shortly. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.*

Raw materials cost less

Manufacturers paid 3.1% less for their raw materials in January than they did in the previous month. Crude oil prices continued to fall, and contributed most to this decrease. Higher prices for cattle, canola and raw tobacco partly offset the overall decline. If the mineral fuels category (90% of which is crude oil) were excluded, raw material prices for January would have declined 1.5%. Compared with January 1997, manufacturers paid 13.7% less for raw materials. Again, if mineral fuels were excluded, the 12-month decline would have been 7.4%.

Crude oil prices were down 8.1% in January, marking the third month of lower prices. Prices for animals and animal products fell 2.4%, as lower hog prices were partly offset by higher cattle

Note to readers

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects the prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in a world market. Unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

prices. Compared with January 1997, animal and animal product prices declined 5.3%. Wood prices decreased 1.9% between December and January, with lower prices for both logs and pulpwood. On a year-over-year basis, log prices decreased 20.6%, and pulpwood prices rose 6.4%.

In January, non-ferrous metal prices declined 1.1%. Lower prices for copper concentrates, nickel concentrates, aluminum

(continued on page 4)

... Raw materials cost less

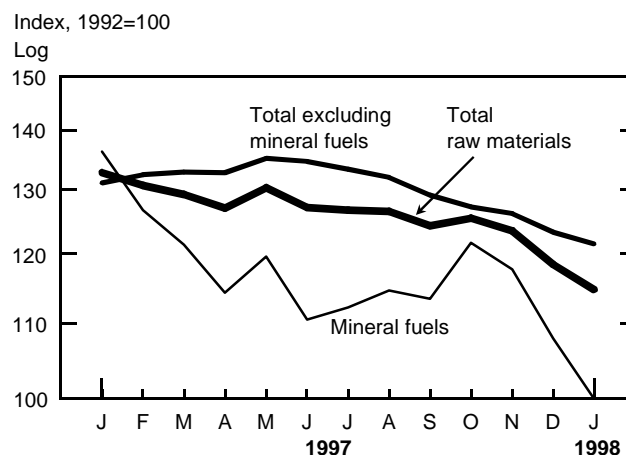
materials and zinc were somewhat offset by higher gold prices. Non-ferrous metal prices were down 11.3% compared with January of the previous year.

Vegetable product prices edged down 0.1% in January. Lower monthly prices for wheat, coffee and unrefined sugar were almost offset by higher prices for canola and raw tobacco. Prices for vegetable products were up 1.9% compared with January 1997, as higher prices for coffee, unrefined sugar, fresh potatoes and corn were somewhat offset by lower prices for raw tobacco, rubber and canola. Metal scrap prices were also down in January.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

The January 1998 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available shortly. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Raw material prices



EI beneficiaries, applicants decline

In December, the estimated number of Canadians who received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits declined 2.5% to 562,390. With the exception of Newfoundland and the Northwest Territories, all provinces and territories posted declines. The number of regular beneficiaries (unadjusted) for 1997 averaged 589,000 a month, a drop of 16.6% from the 1996 average.

EI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, December 1997 Seasonally adjusted

	Total	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	562,390	- 2.5	- 13.6
Newfoundland	32,120	0.4	- 14.2
Prince Edward Island	8,870	- 2.0	- 9.2
Nova Scotia	29,720	- 2.2	- 13.4
New Brunswick	36,000	- 1.8	- 10.3
Quebec	201,700	- 1.5	- 9.9
Ontario	136,690	- 4.4	- 18.4
Manitoba	12,470	- 7.7	- 18.5
Saskatchewan	9,500	- 8.5	- 14.6
Alberta	25,390	- 7.1	- 29.9
British Columbia	65,770	- 2.2	- 10.5
Yukon	1,150	- 8.8	0.7
Northwest Territories	1,080	1.6	- 12.8

Note to readers

The discrepancy between the estimated number of regular beneficiaries and regular payments series can be explained in part by differences in the reference period. The number of beneficiaries is a measure of all persons who received Employment Insurance benefits for the week containing the 15th day of the month. The regular benefit payments series measures the total of all monies received by individuals for the entire month.

Regular benefit payments also declined in December, down 1.6% to \$662.4 million. Four provinces recorded decreases, led by Ontario (-5.8%). In 1997, Canadians received \$8.5 billion (unadjusted) in regular EI benefits, down 11.1% compared with 1996.

The number of individuals applying for EI benefits declined 1.5% in December to 222,000. In 1997, 2.8 million (unadjusted) claims were submitted, down 6.9% from 1996.

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

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

Composite Index rises

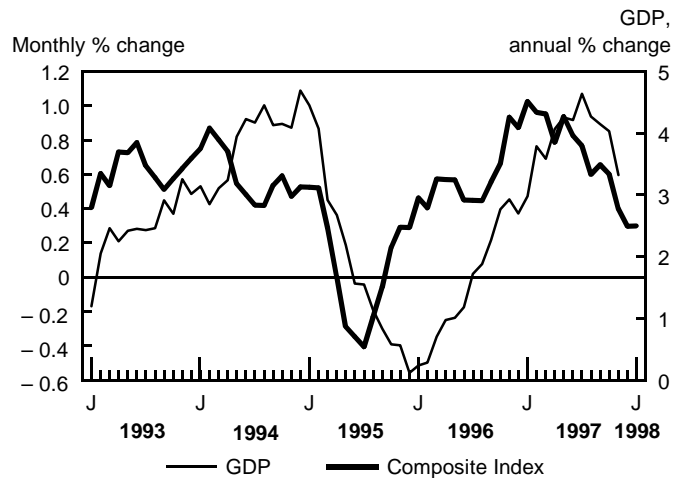
The Composite Index rose by 0.3% in January, following gains in December (+0.3%) and November (+0.4%). Six out of ten components remained positive, led by business spending. Two components declined (the largest drop was for housing), and two were unchanged.

Employment in business and personal services posted another sharp gain in January, bringing the total increase in the past year to almost 200,000 jobs. This acceleration suggests business investment remains strong early in 1998. Investment spending also lay behind much of the recent gain in new orders.

Household spending remained mixed. The housing index posted the largest of nine straight declines (-1.1%). Sales of existing homes fell further, and housing starts were dampened by a rising vacancy rate in British Columbia and the ice storm in Central Canada. The ice storm also resulted in January's drop in the average workweek (from 39.4 hours to 39.3 hours). Sales of durable goods fared better, especially auto sales, which received a substantial boost from manufacturers' rebates.

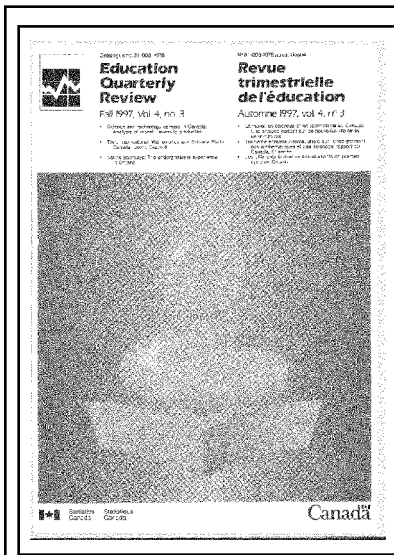
Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

Composite Index



For further information on the economy, see the March 1998 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227), which will be available soon. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

New from Statistics Canada



Education quarterly review Fall 1997

The latest issue of *Education quarterly review* presents three articles on important issues in education: "Science and technology careers in Canada", "Third international math and science study: Canada report", and "Varied pathways: The undergraduate experience in Ontario". Each issue of *Education quarterly review* also includes a series of social, economic and education indicators for Canada, the provinces and territories, and the G-7 countries.

The Fall 1997 issue of *Education quarterly review*, Vol. 4, no. 3 (81-003-XPB, \$21/\$68), is now available. For further information, contact Jim Seidle (613-951-1500; fax: 613-951-9040; Internet: seidjim@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

New from Statistics Canada – concluded

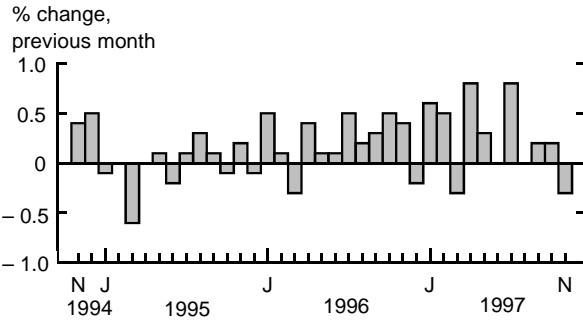
1997 Labour force historical review on CD-ROM

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The 1997 Labour force historical review on CD-ROM (71F0004XCB, \$195) is now available. LAN and bulk prices are available upon request. To order this new edition, contact the Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre nearest you or, if you have Internet access, contact our order desk (order@statcan.ca). For more information about the product, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325) or refer to our Internet site (www.statcan.ca/english/ads/71F0004XCB/index.htm).

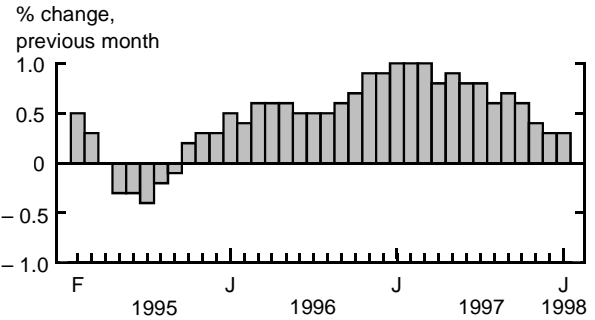
Current trends

Gross domestic product



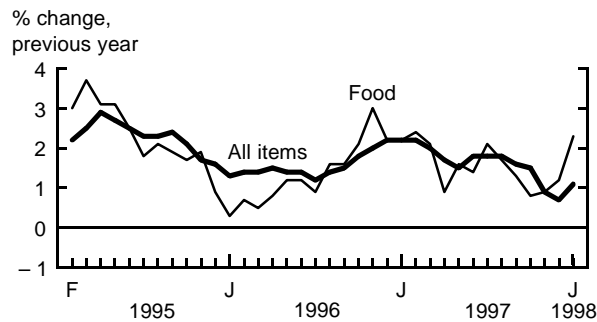
Real gross domestic product at factor cost declined 0.3% in November.

Composite Index



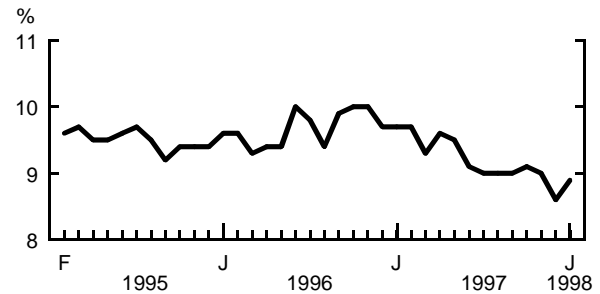
The Composite Index grew by 0.3% in January.

Consumer Price Index



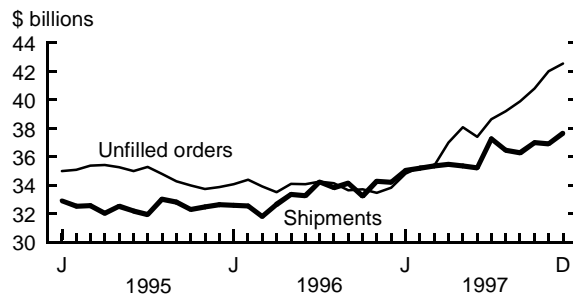
Consumers paid 1.1% more for goods and services in January 1998 than the year before. Food prices rose by 2.3%.

Unemployment rate



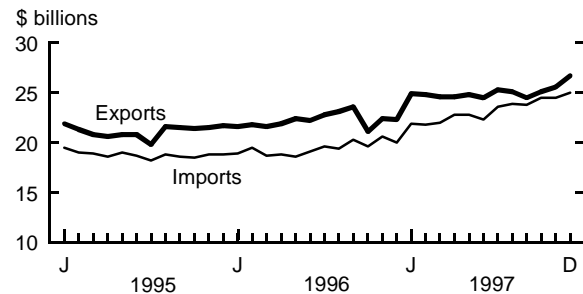
In January, the unemployment rate rose 0.3 percentage points to 8.9%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments increased 2.0% in December to \$37.6 billion. The level of unfilled orders declined 0.4% to \$42.5 billion.

Merchandise trade



In December, the value of merchandise exports jumped 3.9% from November to \$26.7 billion. Imports rose 2.2% to \$25.0 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, 1992)	November	697.6	- 0.3%	3.3%
Composite Index (1981=100)	January*	202.8	0.3%	8.4%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1997*	29.2	3.1%	16.0%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1997	86.2	1.2†	2.9†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	December	20.1	2.7%	8.2%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	December	144.6	14.6%	32.8%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	January	14.1	0.0%	2.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	January	8.9	0.3†	- 0.8†
Participation rate (%)	January	64.9	0.1†	0.2†
Labour income (\$ billion)	October	37.48	0.2%	3.8%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	November	601.64	0.9%	1.5%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	December	26.7	3.9%	12.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	December	25.0	2.2%	20.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	December	1.7	0.5	- 1.2
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	December	37.6	2.0%	8.1%
New orders (\$ billion)	December	37.5	- 1.7%	6.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	December	42.5	- 0.4%	24.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	December	1.27	- 0.03	- 0.04
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	January*	107.0	0.6%	1.1%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	January*	119.8	0.0%	0.8%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	January*	114.7	- 3.1%	- 13.7%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	December	133.6	0.1%	1.3%

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 27 to March 5, 1998

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
AGRICULTURE				
Cereals and oilseeds review	December 1997	22-007-XPB	15/149	15/149
Fruit and vegetable production	February 1998	22-003SXPB	31/62	31/62
Livestock statistics update	1998	23-603-UPE	45/149	45/149
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Education quarterly review	Autumn 1997	81-003-XPB	21/68	21/68
DEMOGRAPHY				
Annual demographic statistics	1997	91-213-XPB	67	67
Quarterly demographic statistics	Q3 1997	91-002-XPB	10/33	10/33
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Imports by commodity	December 1997	65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
Imports by country:				
microfiche	Jan.-Dec. 1997	65-006-XMB	62/206	62/206
paper	Jan.-Dec. 1997	65-006-XPB	124/412	124/412
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Coal mines	1996	26-206-XPB	25	25
Energy statistics handbook:				
diskette	February 1998	57-601-XDE	284	284
paper	February 1998	57-601-UPB	387	387
Printing, publishing and allied industries	1995	36-251-XPB	40	40
Shipments of plastic film and bags manufactured from resin	Q4 1997	47-007-XPB	10/33	10/33
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index	January 1998	62-001-XPB	11/103	11/103
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REDESIGN PROJECT				
Telephone statistics	December 1997	56-002-XPB	10/93	10/93
TRANSPORTATION				
Aviation service bulletin, Vol. 30, no. 2		51-004-XPB	11/109	11/109
Trucking in Canada	1996	53-222-XPB	52	52

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Fax: (403) 292-4958
Internet: degagnej@cadvision.com

Northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
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10001 Bellamy Hill
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Local calls: (403) 495-3027
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
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British Columbia and the Yukon

Advisory Services
Statistics Canada
Library Square Tower, Suite 600
300 West Georgia Street
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Local calls: (604) 666-3691
Toll free: 1 800 263-1136
Fax: (604) 666-4863
Internet: stcvan@statcan.ca

Telecommunications Device for the Hearing Impaired

Toll free: 1 800 363-7629