



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, May 15, 1998

OVERVIEW

◆ Job growth continues

Employment surged in April, adding to the overall gain that began in 1997. The unemployment rate edged down slightly.

◆ Manufacturers less optimistic about production

The latest Business Conditions Survey shows that manufacturers were less optimistic about production prospects in April than they were in January.

◆ New motor vehicle sales move up

Sales of new motor vehicles moved up between February and March, following a sharp decline in January.

◆ New housing prices continue upward

For the 13th consecutive month, the New Housing Price Index registered an annual increase in March.

◆ Help-wanted Index rises again

The Help-wanted Index advanced between March and April, to stand at its highest level since October 1990.

◆ Fewer cases in youth courts

Youth courts heard fewer cases in 1996/97 than they did in the early 1990s. Violent crime rates increased slightly, while property crime rates dropped.

Job growth continues

Employment surged by an estimated 72,000 in April. However, with increased labour force participation, the unemployment rate edged down 0.1 percentage points to 8.4%. Most of April's job growth was in part-time employment (+54,000), which brought the gain over the last two months to 73,000. Despite this recent growth, most of the gain since the beginning of 1997 in employment (543,000) has been in full-time jobs.

In April, employment for men grew by 38,000, mostly in full-time work. This was the first significant employment increase for men this year. Employment for women changed little in April, as gains in part-time jobs partly offset losses in full-time. Employment for young people aged 15 to 24 grew by 26,000, also mostly in part-time work. This job growth was accompanied by a similar increase in the youth labour force, which left their unemployment rate unchanged at 15.7%.

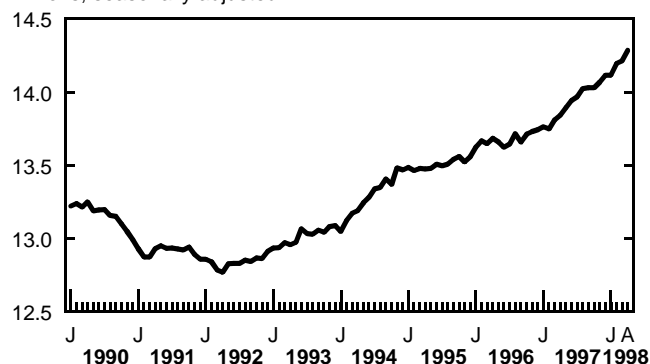
In April, the number of private sector employees increased by 43,000, continuing the strong upward trend that began early last year. Self-employment posted its first increase in eight months (+22,000). In the public sector, the number of employees remained fairly stable in April.

Employment rose by 59,000 in the service sector, led by trade (+30,000). Both the retail and wholesale sectors contributed to April's growth in trade. Business and personal services employment

(continued on page 2)

Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



... Job growth continues

rose slightly in April (+17,000), partly offsetting March's decline. Since the start of 1997, employment in this industry has been particularly strong. In the goods-producing sector, employment increased in agriculture (+15,000). Although manufacturing has been one of the fastest growing industries for more than a year, it changed little in April.

In Alberta, employment increased by 29,000 in April, following slight declines in the previous two months. Alberta's unemployment rate was 5.2%, its lowest since the early 1980s. Employment in Ontario continued on its strong upward trend (+23,000); the unemployment rate was 7.2%. April's employment gain of 4,000

in Newfoundland followed seven months of little change. In New Brunswick, employment rose by 6,000, partly offsetting March's decline. Quebec and British Columbia saw little change in employment in April.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3450-3471, 3483-3502 and table 00799999.

Labour force information (71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103; fax version: 71-001-PFB, \$300/year) for the week ending April 18, 1998 is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Household Surveys Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Labour Force Survey, April 1998

Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	% change, previous month	thousands	rate (%)
Canada	15,590.8	0.4	14,286.2	0.5	1,304.6	8.4
Newfoundland	240.0	1.8	198.5	2.2	41.5	17.3
Prince Edward Island	71.2	2.0	60.8	0.2	10.4	14.6
Nova Scotia	455.3	1.2	406.2	0.3	49.1	10.8
New Brunswick	373.7	2.5	323.3	1.8	50.4	13.5
Quebec	3,700.9	0.4	3,313.4	0.1	387.5	10.5
Ontario	6,028.0	0.2	5,594.2	0.4	433.8	7.2
Manitoba	576.8	0.5	545.3	0.3	31.5	5.5
Saskatchewan	508.6	0.1	479.1	-0.3	29.6	5.8
Alberta	1,601.1	1.3	1,518.6	1.9	82.5	5.2
British Columbia	2,035.3	-0.4	1,846.8	0.3	188.4	9.3

Manufacturers less optimistic about production

According to the most recent quarterly Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers were less optimistic about production prospects in April than they were in January. They did not expect this to decrease employment, however. Overall, manufacturers felt that the current level of finished-product inventory was not a concern. But they were concerned about the current levels of orders.

Note to readers

The Business Conditions Survey is conducted in January, April, July and October, and 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 the data on production difficulties, data are seasonally adjusted.

Business Conditions Survey, April 1998

	1997			1998	
	April	July	October	January	April
Balance of opinion on:					
Production	6	14	13	14	4
New orders	27	22	27	14	-7
Unfilled orders	-7	2	0	2	-4
Inventories	-6	0	-5	-9	-11
Employment	5	5	10	8	8

Expectations of production prospects for the coming three months were less positive in April, when the proportion of manufacturers expecting to decrease production moved up to 17% compared with 9% in January. The transportation equipment industries contributed most to the decline, as the balance of opinion moved down from 14 to 4.

Overall, manufacturers remained positive about employment. Although some planned to add employees, this number was offset by those expecting to decrease employment. If the manufacturers' expectations are realized, employment should increase in the primary metal, fabricated metal products, and paper and allied products industries.

(continued on page 3)

... Manufacturers less optimistic about production

Most manufacturers (81%) were still satisfied with the level of finished-product inventory. The refined petroleum and coal products industries, which had fairly substantial inventories after the unusually mild winter, contributed most to the 2-point decline in the balance of opinion. There was less satisfaction with the level of unfilled orders, however. The proportion of manufacturers indicating that the backlog of orders was higher than normal stood at 9%, down from 14% in the previous survey.

Satisfaction with the level of orders received dropped 21 points. In April, 18% of manufacturers stated that orders were rising, down from 27% in January. On the other hand, the number who stated that orders were declining rose from 13% to 25%

between the two surveys. The transportation equipment industries were the major contributors to this drop in satisfaction.

A shortage of skilled labour concerned 7% of manufacturers, while a shortage of unskilled workers worried 1%. Shortages of raw materials (3%) and working capital (2%) were also indicated as impediments to production. Some 85% of manufacturers reported no production impediments in the April survey.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2843–2845.

For further information, contact Craig Kuntz (613-951-7092; kuncrai@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.

New motor vehicle sales move up

In March 1998, new motor vehicle sales rose 5% from February to reach 116,199. This increase marked the second strong sales gain since the sharp decline recorded in January. Both new passenger car sales (+3.1%) and new truck sales (+7.2%) advanced, although truck sales remained below the levels achieved in each of the last six months of 1997.

Compared with March 1997, new vehicle sales slipped 1.8% in March, solely a result of lower passenger car sales. A 15.7% drop in sales of North American built cars was partly offset by a 76.9% rise in sales of new cars manufactured overseas. Over the same period, new cars sold by the Big Three fell 16.6%, whereas year-over-year sales by other automakers jumped 15.2%.

The market share of North American built new passenger cars shifted substantially, moving down from 87.9% in March 1997 to 78.4% in March 1998 (unadjusted). New cars manufactured in North America lost market share mainly to Japanese built passenger cars, which accounted for more than two-thirds of all imported new cars. Quebec residents bought nearly half of the Japanese built new cars sold.

Extraordinarily weak new vehicle sales in January 1998 held down vehicle sales in the first quarter of the year, despite relatively strong sales advances in February and March. Compared with the first three months of 1997, first-quarter new vehicle sales remained roughly the same (–0.4%). But sales in the first quarter of 1998 remained well below sales levels for each of the latter three quarters of 1997.

Comparing the first-quarter unadjusted data of 1997 with 1998, New Brunswick led all provinces with the largest percentage increases in new passenger car sales (+15.8%) and new truck sales (+15.1%). On the other hand, Manitoba (–13.3%) had the largest slide in new motor vehicle sales, followed closely by Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island (both –11.4%).

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel (613-951-2210; searj@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Note to readers

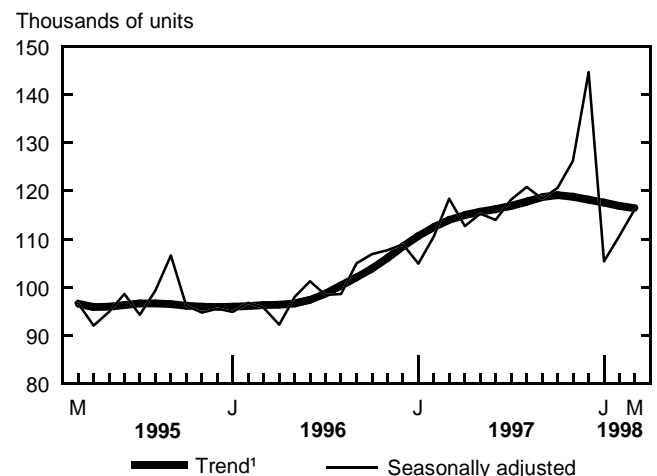
Passenger cars include those used for personal and commercial purposes (such as taxis or rental cars). Trucks include minivans, sport utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

North American built new motor vehicles include those vehicles manufactured or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico. All other new vehicles are considered imports (manufactured overseas).

The Big Three (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler), Honda, Toyota and the other automakers may sell new vehicles manufactured in North America as well as those built overseas (imported).

All numbers have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

New motor vehicle sales



1. The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

New housing prices continue upward

In March 1998, the New Housing Price Index (1992=100) rose 1.0% compared with March 1997. This was the 13th consecutive month in which the index registered an annual increase. The advance in March was largely due to a 3.6% rise recorded in Toronto. Calgary (+7.4%) posted the largest annual increase, while the largest annual decreases were noted in Saint John–Moncton–Fredericton (–4.6%) and Vancouver (–4.4%), where market conditions continue to be very competitive.

Between February and March 1998, the index increased 0.1%, continuing the generally upward movement that began in November 1996. March's increase was the 13th monthly advance in the last 17 months.

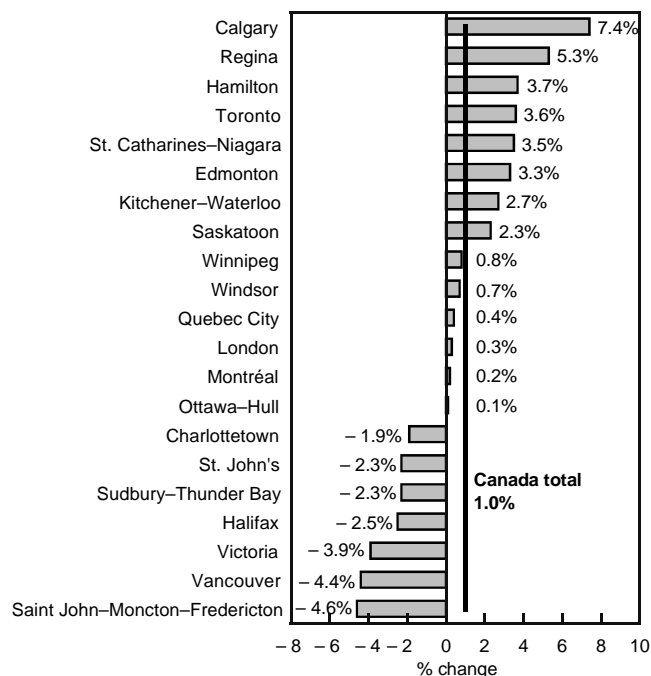
The general improvement in new housing markets can be attributed to higher consumer confidence in Ontario and the Prairies, favourable mortgage interest rates, and strong activity in the resale market. However, the competitive nature of housing markets has moderated the increases or has contributed to decreases in housing prices, especially in surveyed cities on both the West and East Coasts.

The outlook for future housing construction continues to be encouraging. Annual housing construction intentions were up 17.9% in 1997 compared with 1996. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has predicted that the total number of housing starts will rise 7.4% in 1998 compared with 1997.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 9921.

The first quarter 1998 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in June. For further information, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

New Housing Price Indexes,
March 1997 to March 1998



Help-wanted index rises again

The upward movement in the Help-wanted Index continued in April, as it advanced 2.9% from March. The index reached its highest level since October 1990.

Help-wanted Index, April 1998
(1996=100), seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	142	19.3	2.9
Newfoundland	141	20.5	– 0.7
Prince Edward Island	141	11.9	0.7
Nova Scotia	133	14.7	– 0.7
New Brunswick	142	17.4	– 2.1
Quebec	137	26.9	4.6
Ontario	147	21.5	2.8
Manitoba	157	23.6	3.3
Saskatchewan	139	12.1	0.7
Alberta	156	11.4	– 0.6
British Columbia	117	1.7	2.6

Note to readers

The Help-wanted Index is compiled from the number of help-wanted ads published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas. The index is a measure of companies' intentions to hire new workers. These indexes have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons.

In April, six of the provincial indexes rose. Quebec and Ontario posted the highest increases: 4.6% and 2.8%, respectively. So far this year, Quebec's index has risen by more than 15%, just short of the growth recorded for all of 1997. Manitoba and British Columbia also posted notable gains.

New Brunswick recorded the largest decrease (–2.7%). Indexes in the remaining provinces remained fairly stable.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 105 (levels 8–10).

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

Fewer cases in youth courts

In 1996/97, Canadian youth courts processed 110,065 cases. This represents a slight decrease from the previous year, and a 4.4% decline from 1992/93. At 455 cases per 10,000 youths, the overall caseload rate was 8.5% lower than in 1992/93. The property crime rate dropped 20.6% between 1992/93 and 1996/97. During this same period, the violent crime caseload was up 1.9%. Since 1992/93, about one-half of the violent crime cases were minor assaults.

Property offences are the most common crimes; in particular, theft of goods valued at \$5,000 and under, and breaking and entering. The next most common case falls under the Young Offenders Act: failure to comply with a court disposition. Drug cases accounted for 5% of the caseload.

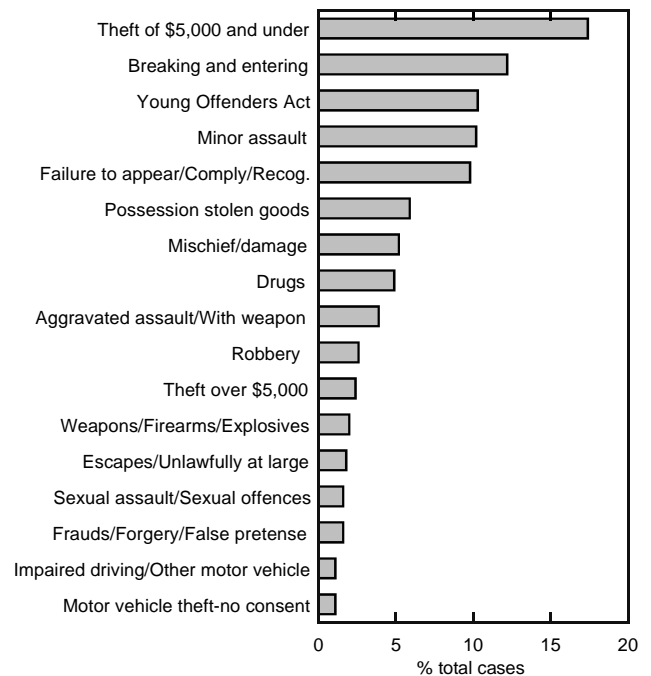
Among the provinces, the lowest case rates were in Quebec, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The highest were in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Ontario accounted for 42% of the nation's youth court caseload in 1996/97.

Since 1992/93, youths aged 16 and 17 have appeared in court more often than other age groups. In 1996/97, 16- and 17-year-olds accounted for 49% of cases; 12- and 13-year-olds for 12%. Males were charged in 8 out of 10 cases, and they dominated all age groups. The number of females appearing in court has risen slowly, from 18% of cases in 1992/93 to 20% in 1996/97.

The revisions to the Young Offenders Act in 1995 made a transfer to adult court the standard for the most serious violent crime cases involving 16- and 17-year-olds, unless otherwise ruled by the court. However, a transfer to adult court continued to be seldom ordered, as transfers accounted for less than 0.1% of the caseload in 1996/97. Of the 92 cases transferred to adult court, 6 in 10 were for violent crimes; about 3 in 10 for property crimes.

In 1996/97, 4 in 10 convictions involved repeat offenders. Persistent offenders, meaning those with at least three prior

Youth court cases, 1996/97



convictions, accounted for 11% of convictions. Males were more likely to be persistent offenders than females (12% compared with 6%).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 8900–8921.

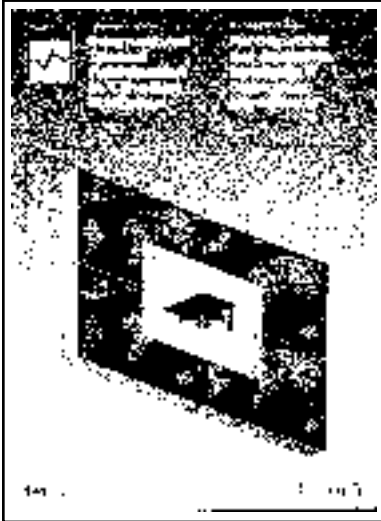
Youth court statistics, 1996/97 (85-522-XPB, \$37; 85-522-XMB, \$27) is now available. For further information, contact the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics (613-951-9023; 1 800 387-2231).

New from Statistics Canada

Household spending 1996

The microdata file for the 1996 Survey of Family Expenditures (FAMEX) is now available. It contains 1996 household spending data for Canada (10 provinces), as well as data on household characteristics, income, and selected expenditure items from over 10,000 households. All records have been thoroughly screened to ensure the anonymity of respondents. This is the latest in a series of files produced for the 1969, 1978, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1990 and 1992 Family Expenditure Surveys.

For more information, or to order (62-M0001-XCB, \$3,000), contact the Dissemination Unit (1 888 297-7355; 613-951-7355; expenditure@statcan.ca), Income Statistics Division.



International student participation in Canadian education 1993 to 1995

This new report presents a comprehensive picture of the international students who are attending Canadian educational institutions at all levels. The profiles include data on their country and region of origin, program of study, location in Canada, and the number receiving Official Development Assistance from Canada.

Characteristics of international university students in Canada are compared with their Canadian counterparts. As well, the report provides information on the numbers and destinations of Canadians attending postsecondary institutions abroad.

***International student participation in Canadian Education, 1993 to 1995** (81-261-XPB, \$23) is now available. For further information, contact Mongi Mouelhi (613-951-1537), Centre for Education Statistics.*

Sources of income, earnings and total income, family income 1996 Census

The following 1996 Census products are now available:

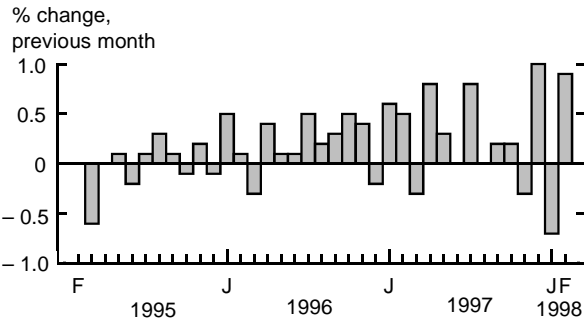
From *The Nation* series: 10 tables, providing data for Canada, the provinces and territories, and census metropolitan areas (package no. 9, catalogue no. 93F0029XDB96000). The price for the set or any subset of tables is \$60. Extracts from some of these tables will be available free of charge on the Statistics Canada Internet site (www.statcan.ca) under "1996 Census".

From the *Area Profile* series: electronic area profiles for census divisions and census subdivisions. Profiles for the remaining geographic levels—CMA/tracted CA/CT, CMA/CA, FED (1996 Representation Order), FED (1987 Representation Order/EA), and FSA will be available on June 12, 1998. Prices for area profiles vary depending on the format and geographic level required.

For further information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.

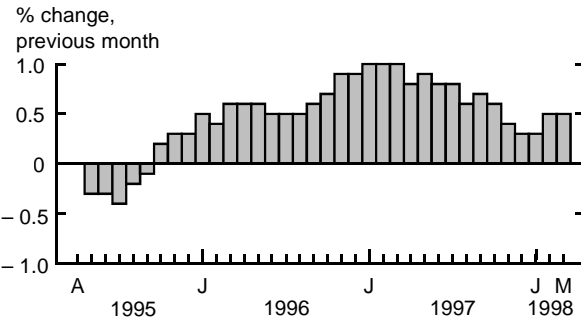
Current trends

Gross domestic product



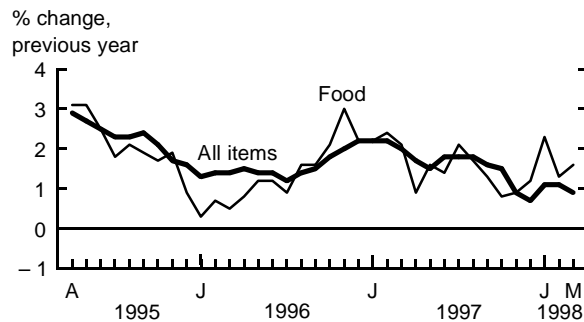
Real gross domestic product at factor cost rebounded 0.9% in February.

Composite Index



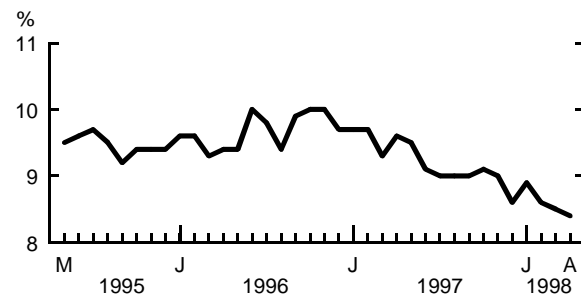
The Composite Index grew by 0.5% in March.

Consumer Price Index



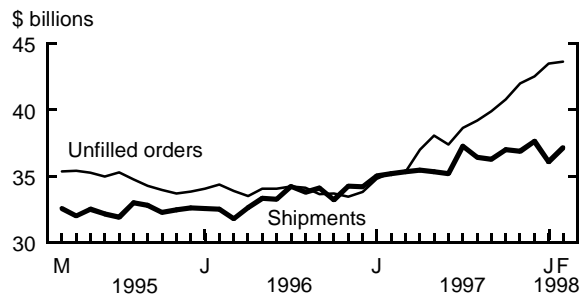
Consumers paid 0.9% more for goods and services in March 1998 than the year before. Food prices rose by 1.6%.

Unemployment rate



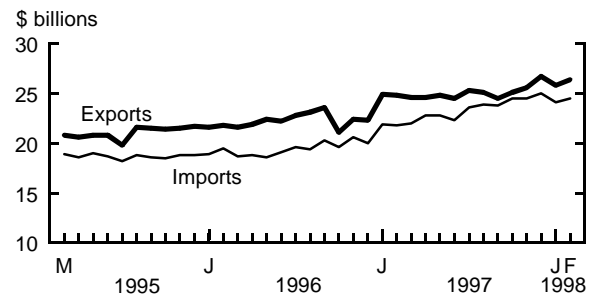
In April, the unemployment rate edged down 0.1 percentage points to 8.4%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments rose 2.9% in February to \$37.1 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 0.5% to \$43.6 billion.

Merchandise trade



In February, the value of merchandise exports rose 2.2% from January to \$26.4 billion. Imports increased 0.9% to \$24.5 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)	February	706.6	0.9%	3.4%
Composite Index (1981=100)	March	204.6	0.5%	7.3%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1997	29.2	3.1%	16.0%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 1997	85.6	0.3†	2.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	February	19.9	0.1%	4.3%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	March*	116.2	5.0%	- 1.8
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	April*	14.3	0.5%	3.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	April*	8.4	- 0.1†	- 1.1†
Participation rate (%)	April*	65.1	0.2†	0.3†
Labour income (\$ billion)	January	37.7	- 0.0%	3.2%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	February	609.70	0.5%	2.2%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	February	26.4	2.2%	6.9%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	February	24.5	0.9%	12.5%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	February	1.8	0.3	- 1.0
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	February	37.2	2.9%	4.5%
New orders (\$ billion)	February	37.4	0.8%	4.0%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	February	43.6	0.5%	22.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	February	1.30	-0.03	0.02
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	March	108.4	0.1%	0.9%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	March	118.4	- 1.0%	- 0.6%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	March	110.1	- 2.7%	- 14.8%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	March*	99.9	0.1	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 May 8 to 14, 1998

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
AGRICULTURE				
Field crop reporting series no. 3: Stocks of Canadian grain at March 31, 1998	May 1998	22-002-XPB	15/88	15/88
Greenhouse, sod and nursery industries	1997	22-202-XPB	34	34
Livestock statistics updates	May 1998	23-603-UPE	45/149	45/149
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
International student participation in Canadian education	1993 to 1995	81-261-XPB	23	23
DEMOGRAPHY				
Quarterly demographic statistics:	Oct. to Dec. 1997			
Internet version		91-002-XIE	8/25	8/25
Paper version		91-002-XPB	10/33	10/33
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS				
Labour force information	week ending April 18, 1998	71-001-PPB	11/103	11/103
LABOUR				
Help-wanted Index	1981 to 1997	71-540-XIE	free	free
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Cement	March 1998	44-001-XPB	7/62	7/62
PRICES				
The Consumer Price Index	April 1998	62-001-XPB	11/103	11/103
Industry price indexes	February 1998	62-011-XPB	22/217	22/217
TRANSPORTATION				
Road motor vehicles, registrations:	1996			
Internet version		53-219-XIB	21	21
Paper version		53-219-XPB	28	28

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Telecommunications Device for the Hearing Impaired

Toll free: 1 800 363-7629