



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, May 16, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ More jobs, higher unemployment

The estimated number of employed rose more moderately in April than it did in March. A large increase in the labour force pushed the unemployment rate up.

◆ Increase in help-wanted ads continues

The upward trend in help-wanted advertisements continued in April, as the Help-wanted Index reached its highest level since November 1994.

◆ The key to surviving in business—know the basics

Successful new businesses focus on high-quality products, customer service and solid business fundamentals.

◆ Vehicle sales hit record-setting pace

A substantial increase in passenger car sales pushed new motor vehicle sales up in March.

◆ Computers valuable farm management tools

In 1996, almost twice as many farms relied on personal computers to manage their operations as in 1991.

◆ New Housing Price Index rises

The New Housing Price Index rose 0.2% in March, up over a year earlier. This was the first time since June 1994 that the annual change has been positive.

◆ Family income stalled in 1995

After adjusting for inflation, family income after tax remained essentially unchanged in 1995 compared with 1994.

More jobs, higher unemployment

In April, employment increased by an estimated 33,000, following a gain of 61,000 in March. A large increase in the labour force (+79,000) pushed the unemployment rate up by 0.3 percentage points to 9.6%. Employment has increased by an estimated 166,000 since last September, when employment growth resumed.

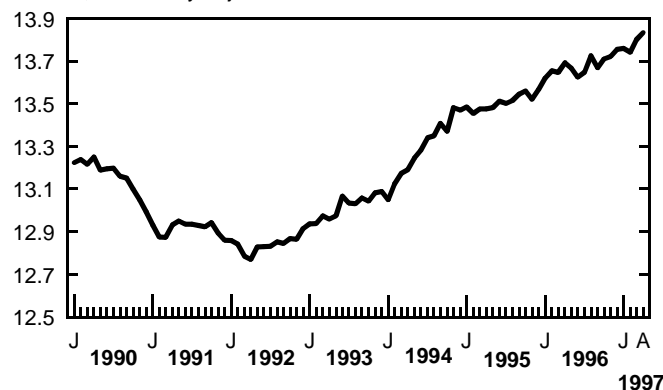
Adults aged 25 and over were the only ones to benefit from April's increase in employment (+40,000). Women accounted for a significant share of the growth (+24,000), nearly all in full-time employment. The trend since September 1996 shows a gain of 1.9% for men and an increase of 1.3% for women. Most of the jobs gained during this period were full-time for men, but part-time for women. Youth employment was little changed in April. The unemployment rate for youth remained high, rising 0.4 percentage points to 17.0%.

April's employment gains were mainly in construction (+17,000), which offset the decline recorded in March. Transportation, storage and communication also grew, by 13,000. Since November, 43,000 jobs have been gained in this area, which reversed the downward trend seen since the end of 1995. Employment was little changed in manufacturing and trade, contrasting with March, when significant gains were recorded in both industries. Between February and April, 41,000 jobs were added in manufacturing and 26,000 in trade.

(continued on page 2)

Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



... More jobs, higher unemployment

Private sector employment grew by 37,000 in April, mostly because of an increase in the number of self-employed (+24,000). The large increase in the number of employees observed in March held firm in April, as growth over the two months totalled 70,000. There was little change in public sector employment; however, it was down 60,000 compared with April 1996.

In the Atlantic provinces, employment rose by 7,000 in New Brunswick in April, more than offsetting the decline in March. The unemployment rate held at 13.6%—the result of an increase in the labour force. In Nova Scotia, employment fell by 6,000 and the unemployment rate rose 0.5 percentage points to 13.3%. There was little overall change in labour market conditions in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

In Quebec, there was no significant employment change in April, although job growth over the last five months offset the declines that occurred last year. In Ontario, employment edged up slightly over March. The unemployment rate rose in both the central provinces, by 11.6% in Quebec and 9.0% in Ontario.

In the Western provinces, the only significant employment change was in Saskatchewan (+8,000). This growth was accompanied by an increase in labour force participation; the unemployment rate was unchanged at 6.2%. Employment remained relatively stable in Manitoba, but the unemployment rate declined by 0.4 percentage points to 6.6%. Alberta and British Columbia also reported little change in employment.

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

For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740), or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Household Surveys Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

Increase in help-wanted ads continues

The Help-wanted Index rose 2% to 102 in April—the highest level since November 1994. Eight provinces recorded increases. From November 1994 through December 1995 the index declined, followed by 10 months of little change. Since October 1996 the index has increased 16%.

Help-wanted Index, April 1997
(1991=100), seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	102	17	2
Atlantic provinces	115	8	6
Newfoundland	90	11	2
Prince Edward Island	182	17	15
Nova Scotia	110	12	4
New Brunswick	115	-5	8
Quebec	90	2	2
Ontario	107	19	1
Prairie provinces	120	33	3
Manitoba	126	21	0
Saskatchewan	117	29	4
Alberta	118	42	4
British Columbia	75	14	0

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 indices have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons.

In British Columbia, the index remained at its March level (75). The index for the Prairie provinces rose 3% to reach 120, a level not seen since January 1991. Both Alberta and Saskatchewan recorded increases, while Manitoba remained at its March level. Growth in the Prairies has been heavily influenced by Alberta, where the index has risen 34% since last October.

The index for Ontario moved up 1% to 107 in April, to reach its highest level since January 1995. Quebec's index, which has been in the 84-to-90 range since March 1996, remained there with a 2% increase to 90.

In the Atlantic, the index reached its highest level since January 1991 (115) as all provinces recorded increases. Prince Edward Island led the way for the second consecutive month, posting a 15% gain.

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

For further information on this release, contact David Wallace (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

The key to surviving in business—know the basics

In Canada, four out of five new firms go out of business before they are 10 years old. Those that do survive stress high-quality products, customer service and solid business fundamentals. Among businesses that do survive, those that grow most rapidly focus on innovation and training to improve their products and to expand their skills. They also have a more flexible financial structure.

New firms make a significant contribution to job creation and to the growth of the economy. Among those surveyed, a sufficient number of the successful new firms grew large enough to ultimately provide almost as many new jobs as the entire group (both those that survived and those that went out of business) did when they first started. New businesses bring new goods and services to the market, while stimulating existing firms to do the same.

(continued on page 3)

... The key to surviving in business—know the basics

Managers of successful new businesses reported that high quality products were the single most important strategy for success. Following closely were superior customer service and flexibility in responding to customer needs, as well as marketing strategies that focussed on satisfying existing customers. They also considered a broad range of business and financial management strategies as important to their success. In their opinion, management served as a stable foundation for the firm, along with skilled and motivated employees. Over half of successful firms invested in upgrading their employees' skills. On the other hand, managers deemed strategies related to innovation, technology, research and development, and production less important to success.

Important differences emerged when the entire group of survivors was divided into firms that grew quickly and firms that grew more slowly. Faster-growing successful new businesses were almost twice as likely (30%) to innovate as slower-growing firms (16%). They continually improved their capabilities by enhancing their product lines and improving production. Faster-growing successful entrants were also more concerned about advancing and extending their capabilities on all fronts, but not at the expense of quality and customer service.

Faster-growing successful businesses also placed more emphasis on hiring skilled employees and motivating them than their slower-growing counterparts. They were also significantly more likely to train their staff (60%) than entrants who grew more slowly (44%).

Faster-growing successful entrants felt financial flexibility was more important to success than their slower-growing counterparts. As seen in their financial structure, faster-growing entrants were more likely to draw on multiple financial sources. Relying on more sources lets firms acquire more financing or alter the terms of financing more easily.

In financial matters, however, there were substantial differences in the financing behaviour of the smaller successful entrants,

Note to readers

This article is based on the analytical publication Successful entrants: Creating the capacity for survival and growth. It investigates what competencies successful new firms have developed, and which are most strongly associated with growth.

The data are drawn from the Survey of Operating and Financing Practices, which surveyed approximately 4,000 businesses in the spring of 1996. The response rate was about 80%. Firms were asked about their management, competitive environment, business strategies and financial structure.

The term "successful entrants" refers to survey respondents who began operating a business between 1983 and 1986, and were still active at the time of the survey. They were successful because they managed to survive at least a decade of operation. They are found in all industries, and are typically small (generally nine employees).

compared with larger ones. Nearly three-quarters of larger firms had multiple types of financing (a combination of equity, short-term debt, and/or long-term debt), compared with less than half of smaller firms. Smaller firms were more likely to depend solely on one type of capital. Nearly two-thirds of larger firms drew on multiple sources of financing (for example, owners, suppliers, and/or banks), compared with less than half of smaller firms. Smaller firms seemed to have less flexibility than larger firms, but the tendency to have strong backing by equity and internal and external financing was evident among both smaller and larger firms.

Successful entrants: Creating the capacity for survival and growth (61-524-XPE, \$35) is now available. For further information, contact Joanne Johnson (613-951-3547; Internet: johnjoa@statcan.ca) or John Baldwin (613-951-8588; Internet: baldjoh@statcan.ca), Analytical Studies Branch.

Vehicle sales hit record-setting pace

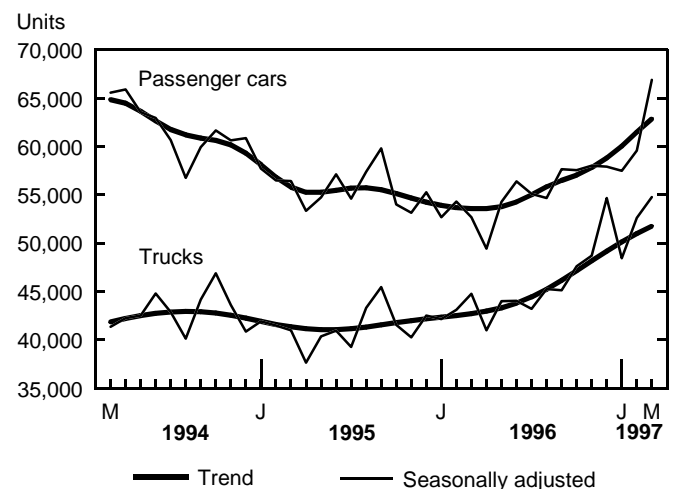
In March, new motor vehicle sales rose 8.5%. A substantial 12.3% rise in passenger car sales was behind the increase. Car sales have not posted such a high monthly gain since March 1993.

Truck sales continued to increase in March (+4.1%), and hit a record number for vehicles sold in one month: 54,795.

Compared with March 1996, sales of new motor vehicles increased 17.0% (not seasonally adjusted) in March 1997. Vehicles built in North America and sold in Ontario were the major contributors to the increase in this year-over-year gain.

In the first quarter of 1997, close to 156,000 trucks were sold—the highest number ever registered in a quarter. Canadian consumers bought a total of 339,894 vehicles in the January-to-March period, up just under 5% over the previous quarter. The Big Three automakers contributed most to the quarterly increase, as they posted a rise in sales of close to 9%.

New motor vehicle sales



(continued on page 4)

... Vehicle sales hit record-setting pace

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

The March 1997 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XPB, \$16/\$160) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Serge Dumouchel (613-951-2210), 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.

Monthly data have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Provincial distributions of sales are based on unadjusted data.

Computers valuable farm management tools

In 1996, 21.2% of all Canadian farms had a personal computer used for farm management, up from 11.0% in 1991 and 2.7% in 1986. Close to one-quarter of farms in British Columbia had a computer—the highest of any province. Alberta and Quebec were the only other provinces to report figures above the national average.

Operators of larger farms were more likely to use a computer for farm management. In 1996, 58.2% of farms reporting \$500,000 or more (constant 1995 dollars) in gross farm receipts had a computer, up from 42.1% in 1991 and 18.3% in 1986.

Computer use varied considerably by farm type. Poultry and egg farms were the highest users in 1996 (33.7%), followed by hog, and then dairy farms. These three types of farms tend to have relatively high gross farm receipts compared with other farms. As well, these sectors have adopted high-tech extensively in other aspects of their business, including computerized feeding systems and building monitoring systems. This may reflect more acceptance of technology in general among such farm operators. In all other farm categories, less than 25% used a personal computer for farm management.

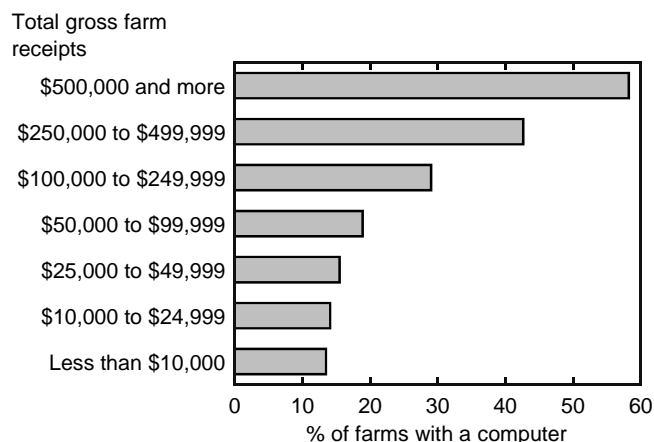
Although many more farms used personal computers in 1996, some farmers find it difficult to access computer technology, partly because of inadequate telephone lines. But improvements are being made. In November 1996, the last party line in Manitoba was converted to a private line. Party lines have also been

Note to readers

The term "farm" means farm as defined by the Census of Agriculture. Farms counted in the census include all agricultural operations producing at least one of the following products for sale: crops (field crops, tree fruits or nuts, berries or grapes, vegetables, seed); livestock (cattle, pigs, sheep, horses, exotic animals); poultry (hens, chickens, turkeys, exotic birds); animal products (milk or cream, eggs, wool, furs, meat); or other agricultural products (greenhouse or nursery products, Christmas trees, mushrooms, sod, honey, maple syrup products).

Computers in farm households that were not used for farm management applications are not included in the Census of Agriculture figures.

Proportion of farms using computers, 1996



Computer use in farm management

	1986 Census	1991 Census	1996 Census
	% of farms with a computer		
Canada	2.7	11.0	21.2
Newfoundland	2.6	9.8	15.1
Prince Edward Island	1.5	8.1	20.3
Nova Scotia	2.7	10.3	19.9
New Brunswick	2.2	9.5	17.6
Quebec	2.0	9.1	22.1
Ontario	3.0	11.3	20.9
Manitoba	2.1	8.6	18.9
Saskatchewan	2.4	11.1	19.9
Alberta	3.0	12.2	22.9
British Columbia	3.5	14.3	23.6

eliminated in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Other provinces are replacing shared telephone lines and converting to touch-tone service. Computer use may also expand as alternatives to urban-based Internet providers are found, and the associated long-distance charges are reduced.

For more information, contact Lynda Kemp (613-951-3841), Census of Agriculture.

New Housing Price Index rises

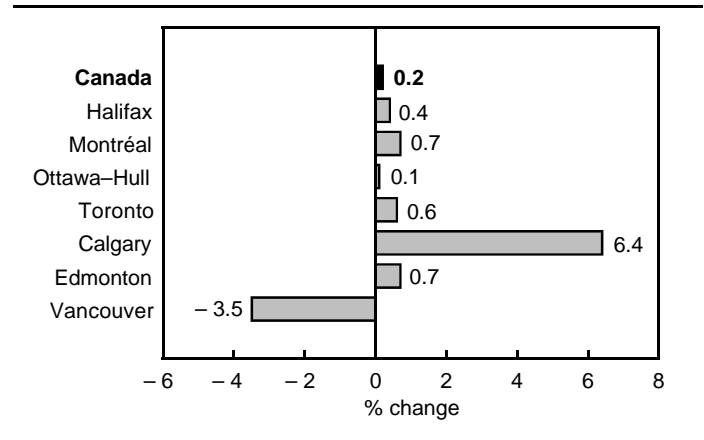
In March, the New Housing Price Index (1986=100) rose 0.2% compared with March 1996. This was the first time since June 1994 that the annual change has been positive. On a monthly basis, the index increased 0.1% between February and March—the fifth consecutive monthly gain.

Higher consumer confidence and favourable interest rates have contributed to the improvement in housing markets. Although builders reported higher construction costs in March, the competitive nature of housing markets continued to moderate price increases in several cities.

The outlook for future housing construction seems encouraging, as annual housing construction intentions were up 23.2% in the first quarter of 1997 compared with 1996. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation has reported that the annual pace of housing starts was up 37.6% for the first quarter of 1997 compared with the same period a year earlier. And according to the Canadian Real Estate Association, the resale market increased 25.7% from the same period last year.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2032.

New housing price indexes, March 1996 to March 1997



The first quarter 1997 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in June. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Family income stalled in 1995

Family after-tax income was essentially unchanged in 1995 from 1994, after adjusting for inflation (as measured by changes in the Consumer Price Index). Average after-tax family income in 1995 was \$44,286, about 5% less than 1989's peak.

Income, excluding government transfer payments, was up marginally from 1994, while transfer payments were down. Since income taxes were basically the same, the net result was that average family income after tax was virtually unchanged.

The combination of personal income taxes and government transfer payments narrows the after-tax income gap between those at the top and those at the bottom of the income scale. Before taxes and transfers, the families in the highest quintile (the 20% of families with highest incomes) had \$21 for every \$1 received by those in the bottom quintile. After taxes and transfers, the gap was \$5 for every \$1.

In 1995, declines in earnings largely offset gains in investment and retirement pensions. Average family earnings decreased \$366 and investment and retirement income rose \$530; therefore, average income before transfers grew only \$164 in 1995 to \$48,584. In contrast, pre-transfer income gained \$1,088 in 1994, mainly due to earnings growth from a labour market that had shown renewed strength.

Average transfer payments were \$6,663 in 1995 (-3.8%), as families felt the effects of government program restructuring. Social assistance payments declined and Employment Insurance payments decreased again. Transfer payments represented 12.1% of family total income, down from the 1993 peak of 12.9%. These reductions followed five years of increases.

Note to readers

After-tax income is calculated by adding government transfer payments (such as Old Age Security, Canada/Quebec Pension Plan benefits, Child Tax Benefits, Social Assistance and Employment Insurance benefits) to income before transfers (mainly from work and investment) and then by subtracting income taxes paid. The "clawback" of Employment Insurance and Old Age Security benefits is treated as an increase in taxes rather than a reduction in transfers.

Transfer payments and personal taxes are two important mechanisms by which income redistribution occurs, but the income redistribution effects do not reflect the entire government expenditure/revenue process. For example, health and education expenditures, and sales tax revenues are excluded. Transfers are 24% of total expenditures and personal income taxes 34% of total revenues of governments. Because the survey data refer only to family income, users are cautioned against drawing conclusions about "net benefits" of taxes and transfers based on the data presented in this report.

Dollar amounts and percentages are calculated by using averages and constant (1995) dollars. Other measures, such as medians, are also available for analysis.

These estimates were prepared from data collected by the Survey of Consumer Finances, a supplement to the April 1996 Labour Force Survey (approximately 38,000 households). The sample excludes the institutional population and households in the Yukon and Northwest Territories and on Indian reserves.

(continued on page 6)

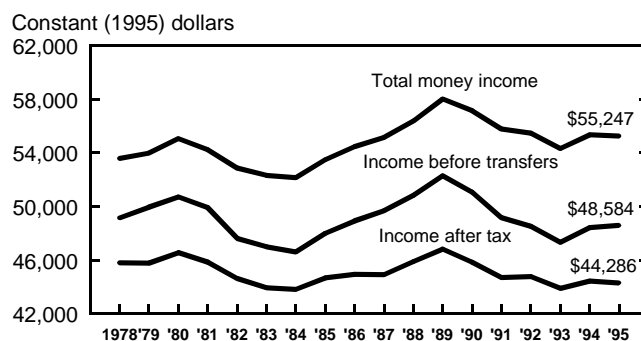
... Family income stalled in 1995

Average family income tax was \$10,961, essentially unchanged from 1994, but still \$339 lower than in 1990, the peak year for income tax. This represented 19.8% of family total income.

When the losses and gains of economic swings during the 1980s and 1990s are taken into consideration, real average income after tax for families in 1995 was nearly 5% lower than in 1980. On a per capita basis, however, it increased by over 2% since the size of the average family declined over the same period.

Income after tax, distribution by size in Canada, 1995 (13-210-XPB, \$31) 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).

Average total money income, income before transfers and income after tax for families



Average income and tax paid by family type, 1995

	Average income before transfers	Plus average transfer payments	Minus average income tax	Equals average income after tax
Total families	48,584	6,663	\$ 10,961	44,286
Elderly couples	21,337	17,524	5,317	33,544
Non-elderly couples	52,328	3,318	12,001	43,645
Two-parent families	57,541	4,542	13,209	48,874
One earner	37,963	6,285	8,674	35,574
Two earners	60,874	3,671	14,250	50,296
Female lone-parent families	17,346	7,740	2,798	22,288
Total unattached	19,275	4,891	4,401	19,765
Elderly unattached	8,583	11,422	2,295	17,711
Non-elderly unattached	23,228	2,476	5,179	20,525

New from Statistics Canada

1996 Census of Agriculture

The first release from the *1996 Census of Agriculture* is now available. The data show in detail what was happening on Canadian farms on May 14, 1996. Data on the number of farms, crops, land use, livestock and poultry, operating expenses and gross farm receipts are now available at national, provincial and sub-provincial levels.

For more information, or to order summary tabulations or standard and custom data, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre, or User Services, Census of Agriculture (1 800 465-1991; Internet: villros@statcan.ca).



Catalogue no. 67-202-XPB

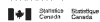
**Canada's
international
investment
position**

1926 to 1996

N° 67-202-XPB au catalogue

**Bilan des
investissements
internationaux
du Canada**

1926 à 1996



Canada

Canada's international investment position 1926 to 1996

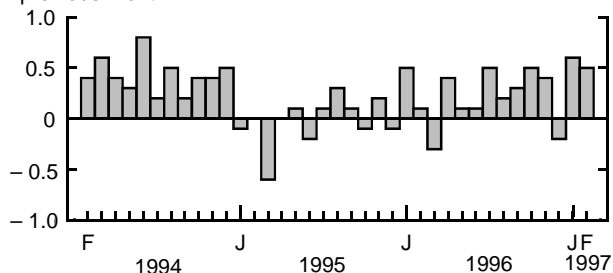
International investment, both in Canada and abroad, forms one of the cornerstones of Canada's economy. *Canada's international investment position* gives a detailed account of Canada's assets and liabilities abroad. This publication will help you understand today's economy and how it has evolved since 1926. Useful geographical comparisons, such as Canada's position in relation to European Union countries, are also featured.

Canada's international investment position, 1926 to 1996 (67-202-XPB, \$52) is now available. For further information, contact Christian Lajule (613-951-2062), Balance of Payments Division.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

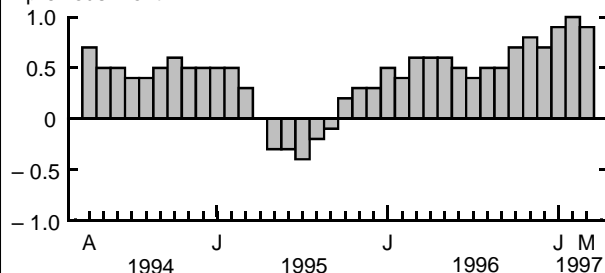
% change,
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost increased 0.5% between January and February.

Composite Index

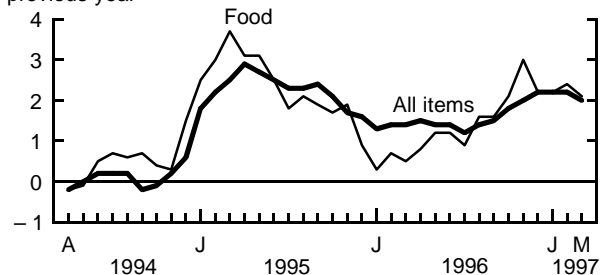
% change,
previous month



The Composite Index grew by 0.9% in March.

Consumer Price Index

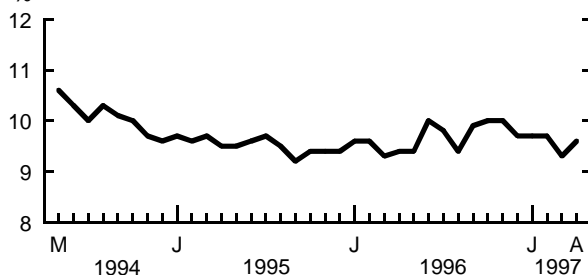
% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 2.0% more for goods and services in March 1997 than the year before. Food prices rose by 2.1%.

Unemployment rate

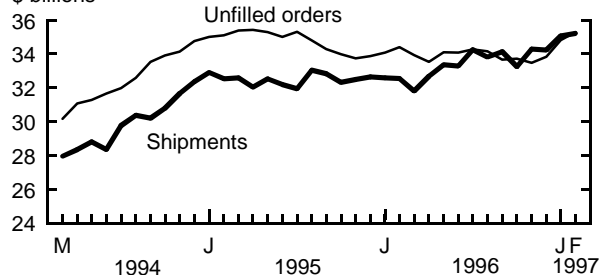
%



In April, the unemployment rate rose to 9.6%.

Manufacturing

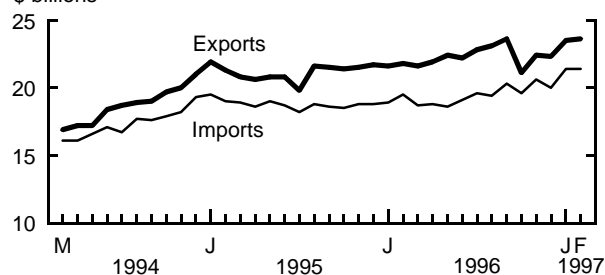
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 0.6% in February to \$35.2 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 0.8% to \$35.3 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In February, the value of merchandise exports increased 0.6% from January to \$23.6 billion. Imports held steady at \$21.4 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)	February	564.8	0.5%	3.5%
Composite Index (1981=100)	March	190.6	0.9%	8.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1996	25.7	5.7%	10.4%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 1996	84.8	0.7†	2.4†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	February	19.1	1.1%	7.7%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	March*	121.7	8.5%	24.9%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	April*	13.8	0.2%	1.0%
Unemployment rate (%)	April*	9.6	0.3†	0.1†
Participation rate (%)	April*	64.8	0.3†	- 0.2†
Labour income (\$ billion)	January	36.8	0.1%	3.9%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	February	598.72	0.3%	3.6%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	February	23.6	0.6%	7.8%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	February	21.4	- 0.3%	10.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	February	2.2	0.2	- 0.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	February	35.2	0.6%	8.2%
New orders (\$ billion)	February	35.5	- 2.0%	7.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	February	35.3	0.8%	2.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	February	1.29	0.00	- 0.11
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1986=100)	March	137.6	0.2%	2.0%
Industrial Product Price Index (1986=100)	March	130.2	0.2%	0.9%
Raw Materials Price Index (1986=100)	March	135.8	- 1.0%	1.4%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	March*	132.5	0.1%	0.2%

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 9 to 15, 1997

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	March 31, 1997	22-002-XPB	15/88	15/88
Livestock statistics	May 1997	23-603-XPE	93	93
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS				
Canada's international investment position	1926 to 1996	67-202-XPB	52	52
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Focus on culture	Spring 1997	87-004-XPB	9/27	9/27
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES				
Department store sales and stocks	March 1997	63-002-XPB	17/165	17/165
HEALTH STATISTICS				
Births and deaths				
Microfiche version	1995	84-210-XMB	25	25
Paper version	1995	84-210-XPB	35	35
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS				
Income after tax, distributions by size in Canada	1995	13-210-XPB	31	31
Labour force information	week ended April 19, 1997	71-001-PPB	11/103	11/103
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS				
Gross domestic product by industry	February 1997	15-001-XPB	15/145	15/145
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Exports by commodity				
Microfiche version	February 1997	65-004-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper version	February 1997	65-004-XPB	78/773	78/773
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK				
Building permits				
Microfiche version	March 1997	64-001-XMB	25/140	25/140
Paper version	March 1997	64-001-XPB	25/248	25/248
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Oils and fats	March 1997	32-006-XPB	7/62	7/62
Oil pipeline transport	February 1997	55-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
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