# * mome 

Friday, May 29, 1998

## OVERVIEW

## - Exports and imports remain stagnant

Exports fell in March after climbing in February. The slowdown in imports continued, mainly because of further drops in machinery and equipment and energy products.

## - Slowdown in wholesale trade continues

In March, wholesale sales remained essentially unchanged as the slowdown of recent months continued. First-quarter results were down compared with the final quarter of last year.

## - Growth in retail sales slowing

Retail sales advanced slightly in March, and posted the smallest quarterly increase since the first quarter of 1996.

## - Corporate profits weaken

Low crude oil prices and high property insurance claims from January's ice storm curtailed the operating profits of businesses in the first quarter of 1998.

## - Significant investment in Canadian securities

Foreign investors bought a massive amount of Canadian bonds and stocks in March. It was their first significant investment since October 1997.

## - Employment income decreases

The overall average employment income of individuals declined between 1990 and 1995 and it remained below the level recorded in 1980. Earnings for men fluctuated between 1980 and 1995, while earnings for women steadily increased.

- Number of El recipients declines slightly

The number of individuals receiving regular Employment Insurance benefits declined slightly in March. Regular benefit payments changed little.

## Exports and imports remain stagnant

Exports fell $2.1 \%$ to $\$ 25.9$ billion in March, following an increase in February. First-quarter exports remained essentially unchanged from the fourth quarter of 1997 ( $-0.2 \%$ ), as weakness in energy and metals was offset by increased export demand for aircraft and cars. Imports declined $1.2 \%$ to $\$ 24.3$ billion as the slowdown continued. Lower imports of machinery and equipment and energy products were once again behind the decrease. The trade balance was $\$ 1.6$ billion, down $\$ 300$ million from February 1998.

In March, the weakness in energy exports was mainly due to price declines. Exports of energy products dropped $18.9 \%$, mostly due to significantly lower natural gas prices. Crude oil prices also decreased, which was reflected in the value of exports. On the other hand, electricity exports showed renewed strength in March.

After rising sharply the previous month, exports of agricultural and fishing products tumbled $8.3 \%$ in March. Exports of forestry products edged down $(-2.6 \%)$ as newsprint exports declined. The lumber industry remained fragile, since strong exports of wood pulp to Asia and the United States failed to offset the downturn in newsprint and lumber exports.

Exports of industrial goods slipped in March ( $-0.3 \%$ ), with metals and minerals posting the largest decrease. Following a strong gain in February, machinery and equipment exports retreated ( $-0.2 \%$ ). Exports of cars jumped $8.8 \%$, which pulled automotive

## Trade balance


(continued on page 2)

## ... Exports and imports remain stagnant

product exports up ( $+4.1 \%$ ) despite weaker exports of trucks and other motor vehicles and auto parts.

Imports of machinery and equipment fell $4.3 \%$ in March following a slight increase in February. Imports of computers were slowed by declining sales, and fewer aircraft were imported from France. Imports of tractors and metalworking machinery somewhat offset these declines. Energy products dropped $12.9 \%$, with declines in every sector. Crude oil imports remained virtually unchanged, as prices continued to move downward.

Automotive product imports rose $1.9 \%$ in March. Imports of trucks and other motor vehicles climbed $2.9 \%$ to post a total gain of $19.9 \%$ since the beginning of 1998 . Auto parts imports were up for a fourth consecutive month, while industrial goods remained stable. Higher imports of metal ores, concentrates and tailings were counterbalanced by lower imports of herbicides.

## Note to readers <br> Merchandise trade is one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.
The March 1998 issue of Canadian international merchandise trade (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188) is now available. Current account data are available quarterly in Canada's balance of international payments (67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). For further information, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647 or 1800 294-5583), International Trade Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.$)$

## Slowdown in wholesale trade continues

Wholesale sales decreased $0.2 \%$ to $\$ 25.0$ billion between February and March, as the recent slowdown continued. Sales were down in 7 of the 11 trade groups. Wholesalers of metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment ( $-3.5 \%$ ), computers and other electronic equipment ( $-3.2 \%$ ) and motor vehicles and parts ( $-3.1 \%$ ) showed the largest declines. Strong increases were recorded in the "other products" category: chemicals and paper products ( $+3.6 \%$ ) and industrial machinery ( $+2.4 \%$ ), for example.

In March, stagnant sales by wholesalers combined with increasing shipments from manufacturers to push inventories to a new high of $\$ 36.4$ billion, up $1.0 \%$ from $\$ 36.0$ billion in February. Wholesalers' inventories have been increasing for the past 12 months.

The inventories-to-sales ratio rose to 1.45 in March, up from 1.44 in February. In 1996 and 1997, sales increased more rapidly than inventories, thus reducing the inventories-to-sales ratio: starting at 1.58 in January 1996, the ratio fell progressively to 1.40 by December 1997. The ratio has started to climb in 1998 due to lower sales and rising inventories.

In the first quarter of 1998, wholesale sales declined $0.7 \%$ compared with the fourth quarter of 1997. This was the first quarterly sales decline since the last quarter of 1995. Sales were especially weak for motor vehicles and parts ( $-8.4 \%$ ) and computers and other electronic equipment ( $-5.0 \%$ ). Wholesale sales of motor vehicles and parts started to weaken in December 1997 following a period of general increases that began in mid-1995. Sales of computers and other electronic equipment fell during the first three months of 1998 after recording strong increases since the second half of 1997.

Wholesalers are part of the distribution chain between manufacturers, international markets and retailers. Most products

## Note to readers

Wholesale trade data are being revised for the period from January 1993 to March 1998. The revisions will be released on June 24 together with the April 1998 preliminary figures.

Wholesale trade, manufacturing and imports

sold come from Canadian manufacturers or from imports (foreign manufacturers). Therefore, all three sectors react to market demand in much the same way. By comparison, manufacturing shipments and total imports were also down in the first quarter of 1998 ( $-0.2 \%$ and $-0.7 \%$, respectively).

## Available on CANSIM: matrices 59, 61, 648 and 649.

The March 1998 issue of Wholesale trade (63-008-XIB, \$14/ $\$ 140)$ is now available on the Internet. For further information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; gratpau@statcan.ca) or Nathalie Bisson (613-951-7378), Distributive Trades Division.

## Growth in retail sales slowing

Between February and March, retail sales advanced $0.2 \%$ to $\$ 20.1$ billion. The furniture sector posted the largest increase, while other sectors posted more marginal changes. Sales for the first quarter of 1998 rose $0.8 \%$ compared with the last quarter of 1997. This was the smallest quarterly increase since the first quarter of 1996.

Sales in the furniture sector were up $1.0 \%$ in March, while clothing stores recorded a $0.5 \%$ increase in sales. Both ended the first quarter on a strong note. The automotive sector posted a marginal increase in March ( $+0.2 \%$ ), which was not enough to offset the declines recorded in January and February. Sales in the automotive sector have been flat since the summer of 1997. Sales in food stores were also up $0.2 \%$ between February and March.

| Retail and wholesale trade, March 1998 Seasonally adjusted |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Retail sales |  | Wholesale sales |  |
|  | \$ millions | \% change, previous month | \$ millions | \% change, previous month |
| Canada | 20,090 | 0.2 | 25,005 | -0.2 |
| Newfoundland | 308 | -0.5 | 206 | 2.7 |
| Prince Edward Island | 88 | -1.8 | 47 | 2.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 605 | -1.5 | 463 | - 2.8 |
| New Brunswick | 489 | 2.4 | 344 | 1.4 |
| Quebec | 4,775 | -0.8 | 5,101 | -0.7 |
| Ontario | 7,491 | 0.5 | 11,309 | 0.3 |
| Manitoba | 719 | 1.4 | 1,059 | 0.7 |
| Saskatchewan | 656 | 2.4 | 963 | 2.1 |
| Alberta | 2,207 | -0.5 | 2,601 | - 1.1 |
| British Columbia | 2,681 | 0.6 | 2,885 | -1.2 |
| Yukon | 26 | 4.3 | 10 | 13.9 |
| Northwest Territories | 46 | 2.1 | 16 | 2.7 |

## Note to readers

Retail trade data are being revised for the period from January 1991 to March 1998. The revisions will be released on June 25 together with the April 1998 preliminary figures.

Drugstores posted the largest decline in sales in March ( $-0.5 \%$ ), but their first-quarter sales were up $2.4 \%$ from the previous quarter. General merchandise stores also recorded lower monthly sales $(-0.3 \%)$. Higher department store sales $(+1.2 \%)$ were not enough to offset the $2.5 \%$ decline in other general merchandise stores.

Although the ice storm dampened January sales in Quebec, Ontario and New Brunswick, the first-quarter sales advances in all three provinces exceeded the national average. In contrast, retailers in Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia recorded declining sales in the first quarter of 1998.

Despite the ice storm, Quebec retailers recorded higher sales during the first quarter $(+1.2 \%)$, as declines in the furniture and the automotive sectors failed to offset strong advances in other sectors. Sales in Ontario continued to move up quickly, rising $1.8 \%$ in the first quarter. Retailers in Atlantic Canada posted the strongest first-quarter increase ( $+2.3 \%$ ).

In the Prairies, retailers posted their first quarterly sales decline ( $-0.3 \%$ ) since the fourth quarter of 1995. Weakness in the automotive sector affected an otherwise strong pattern of growth in these provinces. Retailers in British Columbia experienced a broad-based sales decline in the first quarter, down $2.1 \%$ from the fourth quarter of 1997.

## Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299, 2398-2417 and 2420.

The March 1998 issue of Retail trade (63-005-XPB, \$21/\$206) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Chantal McIvor (613-951-3549; logener@statcan.ca); for analytical information, contact Greg Peterson (613-951-3592; petegre@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

## Corporate profits weaken

The operating profits of businesses declined $6.0 \%$ to $\$ 27.3$ billion in the first quarter of 1998 following two years of steady growth. Low crude oil prices and high insurance property claims from January's ice storm in Eastern Canada curtailed profits. If the petroleum and natural gas and the property and casualty insurance industries were excluded, operating profits would have improved $2.0 \%$. Overall, 16 of 30 industry groups posted first-quarter declines in profits and 14 showed gains.

In the non-financial sector, profits decreased $3.6 \%$ in the first quarter. Profits in the petroleum and natural gas industry hit their lowest level in four years, falling $39.6 \%$ to $\$ 2.2$ billion. This was mainly due to slumping crude oil prices, which fell $29.3 \%$ during the five-month period ending in March. Natural gas sales and profits both suffered from lower demand in the first quarter in the wake of warmer-than-average weather throughout North America.

Profits in the electronic equipment and computer industry, which have been volatile over the past few years, declined to $\$ 0.7$ billion, down from $\$ 1.0$ billion in the fourth quarter of 1997. Operating revenue declined $6.1 \%$ in the quarter. Low commodity

## Note to readers

These quarterly financial statistics cover the domestic activities of non-government corporations. Operating profits exclude expense deductions for income taxes, interest on borrowing and asset write-offs. Capital gains and investment income are excluded from the operating profits of non-financial industries, but are included in the operating profits of financial industries.
As part of the revision policy of the Quarterly Survey of Financial Statements, this quarter incorporates revised data for 1996 and 1997.
prices contributed to a $30.0 \%$ drop in operating profits in the nonferrous metals industry. Nickel prices have been moving downward in the past year due to oversupply. Copper prices rebounded late in the quarter, but remained $25 \%$ below the first-quarter prices of last year. And gold producers' profits have been curtailed by weakening prices.

The motor vehicles, parts and accessories industry boosted its operating profits to $\$ 2.8$ billion, up from $\$ 2.1$ billion in the previous quarter. Both the ice storm and the expiration of 1997 incentive packages reduced sales early in 1998, but new vehicle

## ... Corporate profits weaken

sales picked up in February and March. Operating profit margins jumped to $5.7 \%$ in the quarter, more than a full percentage point ahead of those recorded in 1997.

In the wood and paper industry, overall operating profits increased from $\$ 0.7$ billion to $\$ 0.9$ billion. However, they remained well below the $\$ 3.0$ billion peak earned in the third quarter of 1995. Lumber prices were down $14.5 \%$ in March compared with a year earlier, reflecting cutbacks in Canadian production. Newsprint and publishing paper have fared a little better than the wood sector. Canada ships half its newsprint production to the United States, where demand has been strong.

Operating profits in the financial industries tumbled $12.3 \%$ to $\$ 6.9$ billion in the first quarter, as insurance claims from January's ice storm dampened profits. Property and casualty insurers saw their operating profits drop from $\$ 0.9$ billion in the fourth quarter of 1997 to $\$ 0.1$ billion in the first quarter. Insurance claims were up $\$ 0.6$ billion, and the bulk of the increase was likely related to the ice storm.

## Income statement <br> Seasonally adjusted

|  | Q1 1997 | Q4 1997 | Q1 1998 | Q4 1997 <br> to |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
|  |  |  |  | Q1 1998 |
|  |  | \$ billions |  | \% change |

All industries

| Operating revenue | 366.5 | 382.5 | 377.1 | -1.4 |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Operating expenses | 339.9 | 353.5 | 349.8 | -1.0 |
| Operating profit | 26.6 | 29.0 | 27.3 | -6.0 |
| Net profit | 13.0 | 11.3 | 12.7 | 12.6 |

## Operating profits of businesses



Profits for the chartered banks declined $10.2 \%$ to $\$ 3.9$ billion in the first quarter. The annualized return on shareholder equity (all industries) recovered to $8.4 \%$ in the first quarter, after slumping in the fourth quarter of last year. After-tax profits increased $13.0 \%$, strengthening the return on shareholder equity. The operating profit margin fell back to $7.2 \%$ in the first quarter of 1998, comparable to the margins recorded a year earlier. For the first time in eight quarters, operating revenue declined, falling $1.4 \%$ to $\$ 377.1$ billion; operating profits retreated $6.0 \%$.
Available on CANSIM: matrices 3914-3971 and 3974-3981.
The first quarter 1998 issue of Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises (61-008-XPB, \$35/\$114) will be available in June. For further information, contact Bill Potter for non-financial industries data (613-951-2662) and Robert Moreau for financial industries data (613-951-2512), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.

## Significant investment in Canadian securities

Foreign investors bought a massive $\$ 6.3$ billion of Canadian securities in March-their first significant investment since October 1997. The purchase was made up of $\$ 3.6$ billion worth of bonds, $\$ 2.2$ billion in stocks, and only $0.5 \%$ of money market paper.

After reducing their Canadian holdings between November and February, foreign investors (mostly British and American) focussed their buying on outstanding federal government bonds. For a second consecutive month, strong new issues in foreign markets ( $\$ 4.3$ billion) were more than offset by retirements of foreign-held issues ( $\$ 4.8$ billion). Three-quarters of those new issues were denominated in currencies other than Canadian and U.S. dollars, representing a record amount of $\$ 3.3$ billion.

Purchases of Canadian stocks by foreigners reached their highest level since July 1997. This investment coincided with the second consecutive month of strong gains in Canadian stock prices. March's buying came almost exclusively from the United States, continuing the usual pattern.

## Note to readers

Interest rates: A rise in U.S. long-term bond rates increased the differential favouring investment in the United States over Canada by 20 basis points in March. The differential on shortterm rates (90-day treasury bills) continued to shrink, but it still favoured investment in the United States by 55 to 60 basis points.
Stock prices: Canadian stock prices as measured by the TSE 300 composite index recorded strong gains for a second consecutive month $(+6.6 \%$ in March and $+5.9 \%$ in February). Meanwhile, U.S. stock prices as measured by Standard and Poor's 500 index were just as robust, gaining $5.0 \%$ in March on top of the $7.0 \%$ gain in February.
Canadian dollar: For a second month in a row in March, the Canadian dollar closed higher against the U.S. dollar. The Canadian dollar was valued at US 70.43 cents at the end of March, its highest close since October 1997.

## ... Significant investment in Canadian securities

As far as money market paper is concerned, foreigners bought over $\$ 1$ billion of provincial and corporate paper. However, they sold $\$ 0.5$ billion in federal treasury bills, as short-term rates continued to favour investment in the United States over Canada.

Canadian residents purchased $\$ 2.7$ billion of foreign securities in March, mostly stocks. They bought $\$ 2.1$ billion worth of foreign stocks, following the trend of the previous four months. Investors preferred U.S. stocks, after favouring overseas stocks in February. Canadian investors also purchased $\$ 0.6$ billion of U.S. bonds in March, mainly U.S. treasury bonds.
Available on CANSIM: matrices 2328-2330, 2378-2380 and 4195.

The March 1998 issue of Canada's international transactions in securities (67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176) will be available in June. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments and Financial Flows Division.

Foreign investment in Canadian securities ${ }^{1}$


1. Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

## Employment income decreases

According to the 1996 Census, just under 15 million Canadians reported employment income (earnings) in 1995, up slightly from 1990. Employment income is the main source of income for most individuals and families. As a result of the downturn in the business cycle early in the decade, the overall average employment income of individuals declined $2.6 \%$ between 1990 and 1995, to reach $\$ 26,474$. Although average employment income was slightly higher in 1995 than in 1985, it remained $1.2 \%$ below the level recorded in 1980 .

The number of men who reported earnings declined by 53,000 to about 8.0 million, while the number of women increased by about 144,000 to 6.9 million. From 1980 to 1995, average earnings for men fluctuated with the economic cycles, while those for women increased steadily. Men reported average earnings of $\$ 31,917$ in 1995, a $5 \%$ decrease compared with 1980; women declared earnings of $\$ 20,162$, up $16 \%$ from 1980.

Overall, more than 7.5 million Canadians worked full year, full time in 1995. Among men, the proportion of full-year, full-time workers declined from $58 \%$ in 1990 to $56 \%$ in 1995. Among women, this proportion also decreased, moving down from $44 \%$ to $43 \%$.

Individuals who worked for the full year on a full-time basis in 1995 had an average employment income of $\$ 37,556$, an amount 2.5 times higher than all other earners. Men who worked full year, full time or part year, part time saw their earnings decline. In contrast, average earnings for women who worked full year, full time or part year, part time increased.

In 1995, among Canadians who worked full time, full year, 368,325 , or $5 \%$, worked in the 25 highest paying occupations.

## Note to readers <br> The income data are from the 1996 Census, which collected information on income obtained in 1995. Income from previous censuses have been adjusted for changes in the price of goods and services using the Consumer Price Index. All income data are presented in 1995 constant dollars. <br> Employment income (or earnings) includes wages and salaries and net income from farm and non-farm selfemployment. <br> A full year is defined as 49 weeks or more, and full time is defined as 30 hours or more per week.

They had an average employment income of $\$ 80,206$, compared with the overall average of $\$ 26,474$. Women represented $22 \%$ of all earners in these occupations in 1995, compared with $17 \%$ in 1990. Over this period, the number of men in these occupations declined by almost $5 \%$, while the number of women increased $26 \%$.

However, women still accounted for the majority of individuals in the 25 lowest paying occupations. As in 1990, about three out of every five earners belonged to one of these occupational groups. Overall, about 568,000 individuals worked full year, full time in these occupations, and this number declined by 10,000 between 1990 and 1995. The overall average employment income was $\$ 17,729$; earnings of men and women both declined over this period.
For further information, contact Abdul Rashid (613-951-6897), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.
(continued on page 6)

Number and average earnings of individuals 15 years and over, by sex and work activity

|  | Number |  |  | Average earnings (in 1995 constant dollars) |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: | ---: |
|  |  | 1990 | 1995 |  |

1. Worked 49 to 52 weeks in the reference year, mostly full time.

## Number of El recipients declines slightly

Between February and March, the estimated number of Canadians who received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits declined slightly ( $-0.3 \%$ ) to 546,950. Declines in Ontario ( $-4.8 \%$ ) and the Northwest Territories ( $-1.5 \%$ ) were largely offset by increases in all other provinces and the Yukon.

## El beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, March 1998 Seasonally adjusted

|  | Total | \% change, <br> previous month | \% change, <br> previous year |
| :--- | ---: | ---: | ---: |
| Canada | 546,950 | -0.3 | $-\mathbf{7 . 5}$ |
| Newfoundland |  |  |  |
| Prince Edward Island | 33,580 | 0.8 | -3.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 8,930 | 3.2 | -4.1 |
| New Brunswick | 28,620 | 0.0 | -10.4 |
| Quebec | 37,320 | 3.4 | 3.7 |
| Ontario | 195,720 | 0.2 | -5.2 |
| Manitoba | 124,530 | -4.8 | -16.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 12,920 | 2.0 | -8.5 |
| Alberta | 9,470 | 2.6 | -1.2 |
| British Columbia | 27,080 | 4.7 | -11.3 |
| Yukon | 67,880 | 1.8 | -0.2 |
| Northwest Territories | 1,280 | 10.9 | 4.9 |

## Note to readers <br> The discrepancy between the estimated number of regular beneficiaries and regular payments data can be explained in part by differences in their reference periods. The number of beneficiaries is a measure of all persons who were in receipt of Employment Insurance benefits for the week containing the 15th day of the month. Regular benefit payments is the total of all monies received by individuals for the entire month.

Compared with March 1997, the number of regular beneficiaries was down 7.5\%.

Regular benefit payments remained relatively stable in March, declining $0.1 \%$ to $\$ 725.2$ million compared with February. With the exception of Quebec ( $-1.6 \%$ ), all provinces and territories recorded increases. Regular benefit payments declined $2.3 \%$ compared with March 1997.

The number of individuals who applied for EI benefits declined $3.6 \%$ to 227,000 in March. Despite some irregular movements, the number of monthly claims received has remained between 219,000 and 250,000 , the lowest level recorded since the 1981-to-1982 period.
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; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

## New from Statistics Canada

## Labour force update: Older workers

Spring 1998

The Spring 1998 issue of Labour force update profiles older workers. It describes the major labour market trends and characteristics of workers over 55 years and their relative risk of job loss over time. Also briefly examined are retirement patterns and potential differences between today's older workers and those in the next generation.

Each quarter, Labour force update features the latest information and relevant trends relating to a particular labour market issue. The informative commentary, charts and analytical tables provide concise and up-to-date information and a useful starting point for further research.
The Spring 1998 issue of Labour force update (71-005-XPB, \$29/\$96) is now available. For further information, contact Nathalie Caron (613-951-4168), Household Surveys Division.

## High school may not be enough <br> 1995 School Leavers Follow-up Survey

High school may not be enough examines in-depth the results from the 1995 School Leavers Follow-up Survey. (The survey's initial results were released in October 1996 as After high school, the first years, catalogue no. 81-581-XPB.) The recently released report includes an overview of the youth labour market and a discussion of school-to-work transitions. A range of topics is addressed relating to young people's experiences beyond high school: education and training, involvement in the labour market, and the kinds of skills being used. Also explored is the potential importance of early childhood experiences on eventual outcomes.

Results from the 1991 School Leavers Survey and from the 1995 School Leavers Follow-up Survey present a unique opportunity to examine school-to-work transitions. The initial survey interviewed youths aged 18 to 20 to collect information about school-leaving (youths who leave high school without graduating). The 1995 follow-up survey re-interviewed the same people, who were by then aged 22 to 24. Together, these two sources make it possible to assess the progress of not only school leavers, but of all young people this age. (Both surveys were conducted by Statistics Canada on behalf of Human Resources Development Canada.)
To obtain High school may not be enough (Statistics Canada catalogue no. 81-585-XPE; Human Resources Development Canada catalogue no. SP-105-05-98E), contact the Public Enquiries Centre (fax: 819-953-7260), Communications Branch, Human Resources Development Canada, Hull, Quebec, K1A 0J9. The publication is also available on the Internet: www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrdc/corp/ stratpol/arbsite/research/rsctoc_e.html. For further information, contact Jeff Frank (613-951-1504; fax: 613-951-9040; franjef@statcan.ca), Centre for Education Statistics or Louise Boyer (819-994-3695; fax: 819-953-8584; louise.boyer@spg.org), Human Resources Development Canada.

## Current trends



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






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) | April | 205.2 | 0.4\% | 6.8\% |
| Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion) | Q1 1998* | 27.3 | - 6.0\% | 2.6\% |
| Capacity utilization (\%) | Q4 1997 | 85.6 | $0.3 \dagger$ | $2.5 \dagger$ |
| DOMESTIC DEMAND |  |  |  |  |
| Retail trade (\$ billion) | March* | 20.1 | 0.2\% | 6.0\% |
| 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 | $-0.1 \dagger$ | - $1.1 \dagger$ |
| Participation rate (\%) | April | 65.1 | $0.2 \dagger$ | $0.3 \dagger$ |
| 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) | March | 37.6 | 0.9\% | 5.4\% |
| New orders (\$ billion) | March | 37.7 | 0.6\% | 4.9\% |
| Unfilled orders (\$ billion) | March | 43.5 | 0.2\% | 21.2\% |
| Inventory/shipments ratio | March | 1.28 | - 0.02 | -0.01 |
| PRICES |  |  |  |  |
| Consumer Price Index (1992=100) | April | 108.3 | -0.1\% | 0.8\% |
| 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\% |

## Infomat <br> A weekly review

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## Key release calendar: June 1998

| Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| National economic and financial accounts, Q1 1998 <br> Balance of international payments, Q1 1998 <br> Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry, March 1998 | Changes in family environment: Children in Canada/ Children of the North: A profile of the children in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, 1994 | $3$ <br> Small business profile, 1995 | 4 Building permits, <br> April 1998 <br> A profile of inmates in Canada's adult correctional facilities <br> Help-wanted Index, May 1998 | 5 <br> Labour Force Survey, May 1998 <br> Hospital utilization, 1995-1996 |
| $8$ <br> Industrial capacity utilization rates, Q1 1998 | Families: Social and economic characteristics, occupied private dwellings, housing costs, 1996 Census | 10 <br> New housing Price Index, April 1998 | 11 | 12 <br> New motor vehicle sales, April 1998 |
| 15 <br> Children's books, 1996-1997 | 16 <br> Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, April 1998 <br> Travel between Canada and other countries, April 1998 | 17 | $18$ <br> Canadian international merchandise trade, April 1998 | 19 <br> Consumer Price Index, May 1998 <br> Violence committed by strangers |
| 22 | 23 Canada's international transactions in securities, April 1998 <br> Composite Index, May 1998 <br> Employment Insurance, April 1998 | 24 <br> Wholesale trade, April 1998 | 25 <br> Retail trade, April 1998 | 26 Industrial Product Price Index, May 1998 <br> Raw Materials Price Index, May 1998 <br> Preparedness for the Year 2000 <br> Employment, earnings and hours, April 1998 |
| National tourism indicators, Q1 1998 <br> Canada's international transactions in services, 1997 | 30 <br> Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry, April 1998 <br> Field crop reporting series: Seeded area, principal field crops |  |  |  |

Note: Release dates for Canadian international merchandise trade, the Consumer Price Index and the Labour Force Survey are fixed; dates for other data series may change.


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