



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, August 1, 1997

OVERVIEW

◆ Foreign investment down

In May, foreigners sold off Canadian debt instruments, reversing the amount they had bought in April. At the same time, Canadian residents reduced their holdings of foreign securities.

◆ Raw material prices decline

Manufacturers' raw material prices fell in June, almost entirely due to significantly lower crude oil prices.

◆ Industrial product prices relatively stable

The Industrial Product Price Index edged down between May and June, while the 12-month change rose slightly. Industrial product prices have been relatively stable for the last two years.

◆ Average workweek increases

The average number of hours worked per week for employees paid by the hour advanced for the second consecutive month in May. Because of this increase, earnings were higher in certain sectors.

◆ Department store sales on the rise

June department store sales were up compared with May. The fourth year-over-year increase since January was also recorded.

◆ Record public and private investment expected in 1997

Business and government plan to invest a record amount in plant and equipment in 1997. This is the fourth consecutive gain and the largest annual increase in investment since 1993.

Foreign investment down

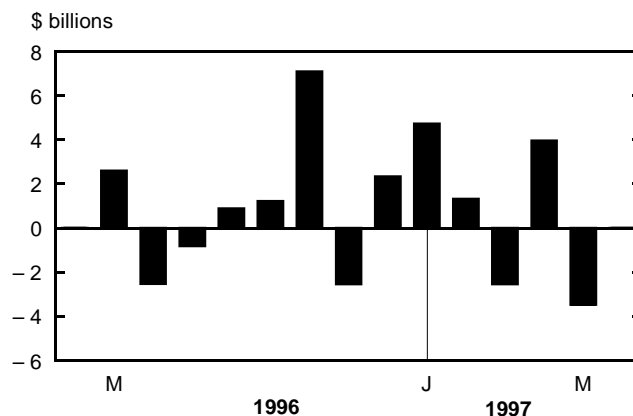
Foreigners sold off \$3.8 billion of Canadian debt instruments in May, reversing the amount they purchased in April. On the other hand, they bought \$0.3 billion of Canadian stocks after selling \$1.7 billion worth in the previous three months. Canadian residents reduced their holdings of foreign securities—the first significant reduction since January 1995.

After buying \$5.9 billion of Canadian bonds in April, foreigners sold off \$1.8 billion in May. This sell-off consisted of outstanding federal issues, primarily from U.S. investors. The \$1.4 billion worth of new bonds issued in foreign markets was the lowest amount in almost two years and was offset by a similar amount of retiring foreign-held issues.

Non-residents sold \$2.1 billion of money market paper (also exclusively federal paper) in May. Canadian residents sold off \$0.9 billion of foreign bonds, mainly U.S. treasury bonds. However, Canadian investors, notably through mutual funds, continued to purchase foreign stocks (\$0.2 billion), all of which went to overseas markets.

(continued on page 2)

Foreign investment in Canadian securities¹



1. Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

... Foreign investment down

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

The May 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: In May, both Canadian and U.S. short-term rates declined about 15 basis points from their April levels. This left the differential at about 215 basis points, continuing to favour investment in the United States. During the same period, Canadian long-term federal bond rates fell marginally, but more than those on comparable U.S. bonds. This narrowed the differential to just 15 basis points, still marginally favouring investment in Canada.

Stock prices: Canadian stock prices, as measured by the TSE 300 Index, shot up 6.8% in May, bringing the gain in the past two months to 9.1%. A 5.2% gain in May for U.S. stock prices, as measured by Standard and Poor's Composite 500 index, brought to 11.4% the gain in that market over the past two months.

Canadian dollar: After declining for three consecutive months, the Canadian dollar bounced back with a full 1 cent gain in May, closing the month at US 72.55 cents.

Raw material prices decline

Manufacturers' raw material prices fell 2.3% in June, to stand at 134.2. If the mineral fuels category—90% of which is crude oil—were excluded, raw material prices would have edged up marginally (+0.1%). Compared with June 1996, raw material prices were down 1.0%. Again, if mineral fuels were excluded, prices would have increased 1.3%.

In June, crude oil prices fell 8.3%, as supply overwhelmed demand. Lower monthly prices for grains (– 1.9%) and oilseeds (– 3.7%) were almost entirely offset by higher prices for green coffee (+7.6%) and unrefined sugar (+3.3%). Grain prices were 33.3% lower than in June 1996, while coffee prices more than doubled over a year earlier as coffee roasters faced one of the tightest supply conditions in over 20 years.

Wood prices edged up 0.8% in June, due to higher prices for logs and pulpwood. On a yearly basis, wood prices were up 4.2%. A slight decline (– 0.2%) was recorded for animals and animal products. Lower prices for cattle and furs, hides and skins were greatly offset by higher prices for chickens and hogs. Compared with June 1996, prices for animals and animal products rose 4.2%.

Non-ferrous metal prices were down 0.5% in June, as lower prices for aluminum materials, nickel concentrates, radioactive concentrates and gold were greatly offset by higher prices for copper concentrates. Compared with June 1996, non-ferrous metal prices were up 2.8%. Copper appears to be subject to strong demand and lean inventories.

Other notable price changes in June included a decline in gold and increases in corn, platinum and rubber.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2009.

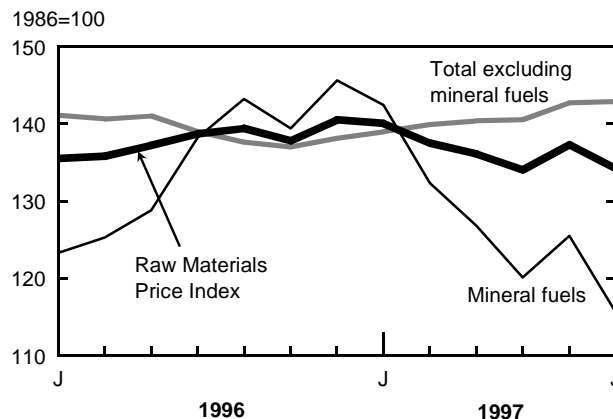
The June 1997 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of August. For further information, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848), Prices Division.

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. Also, unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

Conversion of indexes: In September (revised from July) 1997, Statistics Canada will be converting its economic series to 1992=100 as its time reference year. Series for Industrial Product Price Indexes, Raw Material Price Indexes and the Electric Power Selling Price Indexes will be converted. These indexes will be converted with the Daily release of September 1997 figures. The new series will be on different CANSIM matrices and will have different databank numbers. The existing series, on the 1986 time base, will be terminated with the publication of the August 1997 figures. The indexes will also be updated using a 1992 weighting pattern.

Raw material prices



Industrial product prices relatively stable

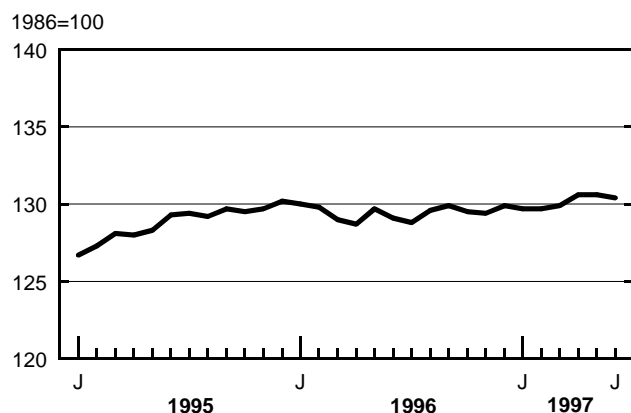
In June, the Industrial Product Price Index edged down 0.2% from May, while the 12-month change rose slightly (+1.0%). Industrial product prices have been relatively stable for the last two years. The Industrial Product Price Index declined to 130.4 in June, down from May's revised figure of 130.6.

Movement in the exchange rate between the Canadian and U.S. dollar had no impact on the month-to-month change. If the effect of exchange rate movements on the 12-month change in industrial prices were removed, Canada would have seen a 0.8% rise in industrial prices between June 1996 and June 1997.

The most important monthly price changes were for gasoline and fuel oil, softwood lumber and pork. In the primary metal products category, the 8.6% decline for nickel products was mostly offset by price increases for copper and copper alloy products (+2.1%) and aluminum products (+0.7%).

Gasoline and fuel oil prices fell 1.4% in June after remaining virtually unchanged in May. At the retail level, consumers paid

Industrial product prices



Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers in Canada 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.

Canadian producers export many goods. They often quote their prices in foreign currencies, particularly for motor vehicles, pulp, paper, and wood products. A rise or fall in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar therefore affects the IPPI. A 1.0% change in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar has been estimated to change the IPPI by approximately 0.2%.

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0.9% more at the gas pumps than they did in May, and 1.7% more than in June 1996. Softwood lumber prices were down 1.3%, but were 5.8% higher than 12 months earlier. The overall price level for fresh and frozen pork dropped 2.8% after reaching a near-record high in May; prices remained 7.8% higher than in June 1996.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2000-2008.

The June 1997 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of August. For further information, contact Elvira Marinelli (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848), Prices Division.

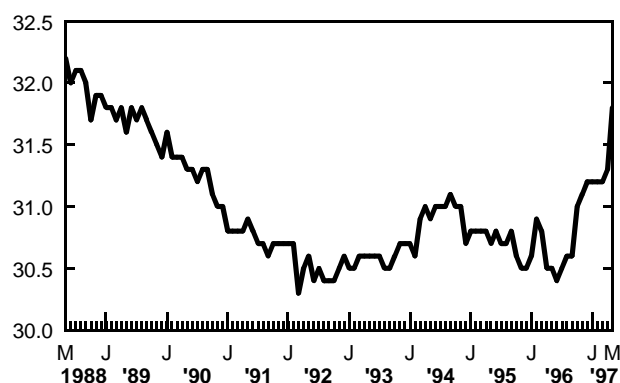
Average workweek increases

In May, the estimated average number of hours worked per week for employees paid by the hour advanced to 31.8 hours. With the increase in average hours, average weekly earnings rose by \$4.62 (+0.8%) to \$604.56. This was the second consecutive monthly gain.

Due to these increased hours, substantial gains in earnings were posted in logging and forestry services, manufacturing, construction, accommodation, food and beverage services, and wholesale trade.

Compared with May 1996, employees' average weekly earnings were 3.0% higher, mostly because of the increases seen in the logging and forestry sector, businesses services, and manufacturing.

Average workweek for hourly employees



(continued on page 4)

... Average workweek increases

Average weekly earnings, May 1997

Seasonally adjusted

	Industrial aggregate \$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	604.56	0.8	3.0
Newfoundland	538.78	2.6	1.7
Prince Edward Island	501.25	2.1	0.7
Nova Scotia	503.66	0.5	0.9
New Brunswick	530.08	2.0	3.3
Quebec	572.95	1.9	3.1
Ontario	643.53	0.6	2.7
Manitoba	529.85	0.4	2.0
Saskatchewan	532.56	0.1	2.9
Alberta	604.23	-0.8	5.6
British Columbia	618.07	0.4	3.1
Yukon	692.14	-3.7	2.2
Northwest Territories	739.68	2.7	3.4

The estimated number of employees on company payrolls rose slightly for the second consecutive month. Employment gains in Ontario were partly offset by declines in most other provinces, particularly British Columbia. Since January, payroll employment has increased by 138,000, due mainly to gains in accommodation, food and beverage services, manufacturing, and wholesale trade.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4285-4466, 9438-9452, 9639-9664 and 9899-9911.

Detailed industry data and other labour market indicators are available through standard tables in the monthly publication *Employment, earnings and hours* (72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320), the historical publication *Annual estimates of employment, earnings and hours, 1983-1995* (diskette: 72F0002XDE, \$120) and by custom tabulations. For further information, contact Stephen Johnson (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

Department store sales on the rise

In June, seasonally adjusted department store sales reached \$1,317 million (+0.4%). Compared with June 1996, sales were up 10.4%, the fourth double-digit year-over-year increase reported since the beginning of the year.

Department store sales including concessions, June 1997

Unadjusted

	June 1997	June 1996 to June 1997	January 1997 to June 1997	January- June 1996 to January- June 1997
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
Canada	1,253.6	9.3	6,453.4	9.3
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island	22.3	9.0	112.0	6.3
Nova Scotia	37.4	9.6	191.1	7.5
New Brunswick	28.2	5.8	140.8	4.7
Quebec	239.7	8.4	1,211.3	6.4
Ontario	534.2	12.7	2,705.4	11.2
Manitoba	53.5	5.2	271.3	6.0
Saskatchewan	42.0	9.3	210.5	10.9
Alberta	135.4	9.8	719.5	11.5
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories	160.9	1.7	891.3	8.3

Sales for the first half of 1997 rose to \$7,748.5 million (+9.5%). Sales in the first two quarters contributed to this increase, the first with a rise of 8.7% and the second with 10.2%. Department store sales have been increasing since the end of 1993, except for a pause in the latter half of 1995. Unadjusted sales totalled \$1,254 million, a 9.3% increase over June 1996. Cumulative sales for the first six months of 1997 were \$6,453 million, up 9.3% from the same period last year (unadjusted).

In June, Ontario led all provinces in unadjusted year-over-year sales, posting a double-digit increase (+12.7%) for the fourth consecutive month. British Columbia (which includes the Yukon and the Northwest Territories) reported the smallest year-over-year gain (+1.7%). This slight rise followed May's substantial 16.6% increase. Since the beginning of the year, Alberta (+11.5%), Ontario (+11.2%) and Saskatchewan (+10.9%) posted the largest year-over-year gains. New Brunswick recorded the smallest year-to-date increase: 4.7%.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

The June 1997 issue of *Department store sales and stocks* (63-002-XPB, \$17/\$165) will be available shortly. For analytical information, contact Irwin Bess (613-951-4166), Retail Commodity Section; for further information on this release, contact Louise G  n  reux (613-951-3549), Distributive Trades Division.

Record public and private investment expected in 1997

Business and government plan to invest a record \$110.9 billion in plant and equipment in 1997, an 11% increase from 1996 and the fourth consecutive gain.

With solid gains in production, accompanied by healthy profits and rising rates of capacity use, companies are spending in plant and equipment at record levels. The bullish spending represents increased investment not only in machinery and equipment (+13%), but also in building and engineering assets (+9%). Companies involved in crude oil exploration, leasing, telecommunications, pipelines and manufacturing are spending the most. Investment in housing is also strong and is expected to increase 13.3% to \$35.7 billion in 1997.

Petroleum and natural gas exploration companies plan a record investment of \$13.4 billion in 1997 (+\$2.8 billion) — the second largest increase ever. Leasing companies are expected to invest \$9.0 billion in cars and trucks in 1997, a significant increase of \$2.4 billion. The continuing competition between cable and telephone companies is leading to planned investment of \$6.0 billion in 1997, a 29% increase over 1996. Investment by manufacturing companies in machinery and equipment is expected to increase 15% in 1997, led by producers of chemicals, primary metals and transportation equipment.

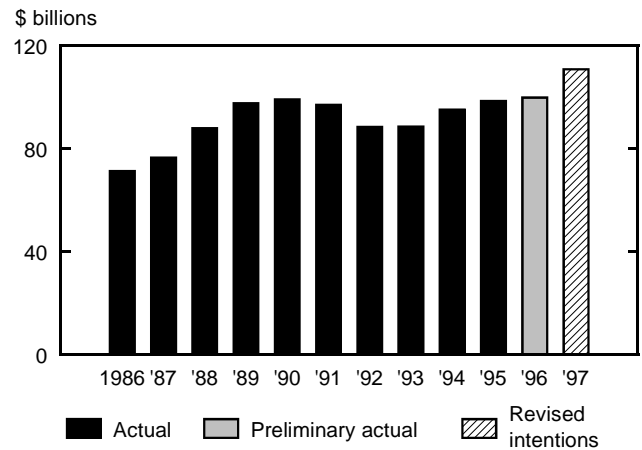
Investment in residential housing is expected to increase 13.3% in 1997 and reach \$35.7 billion. This is the second consecutive increase since the trough in 1995. The latest monthly survey of building permits, which provides an early indication of future building activity, also confirms comparable growth for residential construction.

Ontario and Alberta, with increases of \$5.7 billion and \$4.6 billion respectively, account for two-thirds of the total \$15.2 billion increase in 1997. With the national growth rate at 11.6%, the Northwest Territories and Alberta are outpacing the other provinces with 26% and 23%, respectively, growth in total investment. Decreased investment plans are observed in the Yukon, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick. The expected growth rate of 4.8% in Quebec is not as strong as the double-digit growth rate anticipated in the remaining provinces.

Note to readers

Revised spending intentions are based on a sample survey of 23,000 businesses, governments and institutions. The survey, conducted from April to June 1997, had a 77% response rate. Severe flooding in Manitoba hampered data collection activities; as a result, the response rate for Manitoba was 62%. The coefficient of variation, which measures the precision of the estimated data, is 0.6% at the Canada level. Data in this release are in current dollars.

Spending in plant and equipment



Available on CANSIM: matrices 3101–3132, 3134 and 3135.

Private and public investment in Canada, revised intentions 1997 (61-206-XPB, \$44) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Gilbert Paquette (613-951-9818; 1 800 571-0494; Internet: gilbert@statcan.ca); for analytical information, contact Mychèle Gagnon (613-951-9815; ext. 122; Internet: gagnmyc@statcan.ca) or Irfan Hashmi (613-951-9815, ext. 120; Internet: hashirf@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

New from Statistics Canada

Family income 1995

The data on family income, which were derived from the 1995 income tax returns filed in the spring of 1996, are a unique source of information on small areas and are ideal for supporting market analyses and policy decisions. The data are available by province and territory, city, town, census metropolitan area and census division, as well as by forward sortation area (the first three characters of the postal code) and letter carrier walk. Data are available for over 26,000 postal areas.

For more information, contact Client Services (613-951-9720; fax: 613-951-4745; Internet: saadinfo@statcan.ca), Small Area and Administrative Data Division.

The labour market: Mid-year review 1997

The labour market: Mid-year review summarizes changes and trends in the labour market during the first six months of 1997.

The increase in employment from December 1996 to June 1997 almost matched that of the first six months of 1994, which was the best year in the 1990s for overall employment growth. As well, the employment rate showed signs of revival, increasing from a low of 58.3% in February 1997 to 58.9% in June. Employment gains were posted mainly in self-employment, full-time work and among adults. Ontario and Quebec contributed most to the increase in employment, while New Brunswick, Saskatchewan and Quebec demonstrated impressive growth rates.

The Autumn 1997 issue of *Perspectives on labour and income*, which includes the article "The labour market: Mid-year review" (75-001-XPE, \$18/\$58), will be available in September. For further information, contact Jeffrey Smith (613-951-6894); to order "The labour market: Mid-year review" by fax (\$40), contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4628), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.



Health reports Summer 1997

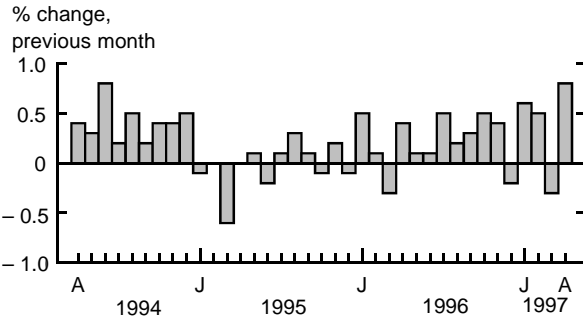
The Summer 1997 issue of *Health reports* contains articles entitled: "Update on breast cancer mortality, 1995," "Who doesn't get a mammogram?," "Narrowing mortality gaps, 1978 to 1995," "Monthly and daily patterns of death" and "Gender differences in abdominal aortic aneurysm surgery."

Health reports provides comprehensive and timely analysis of national and provincial health information and vital statistics derived from surveys or administrative databases. It is designed for a broad audience including health professionals, researchers, policy makers, educators and students.

The Summer 1997 issue of *Health reports*, Vol. 9, no. 1 (82-003-XPB, \$35/\$116), is now available. For further information, contact Jane Gentleman (613-951-8553; fax: 613-951-0792; Internet: gentjan@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

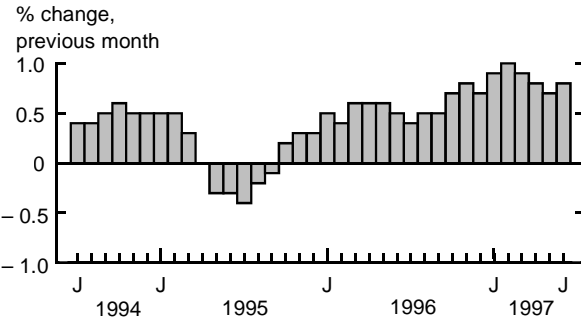
Current trends

Gross domestic product



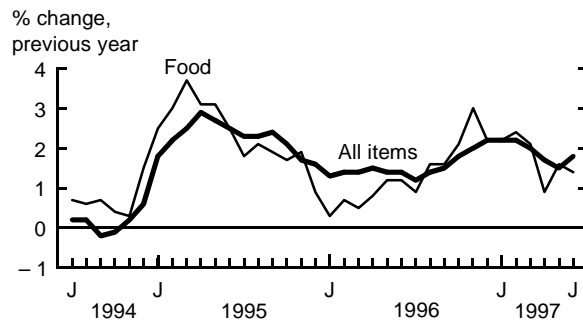
Real gross domestic product at factor cost advanced 0.8% between March and April.

Composite Index



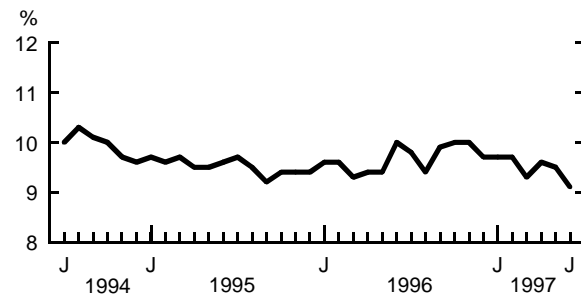
The Composite Index grew by 0.8% in June.

Consumer Price Index



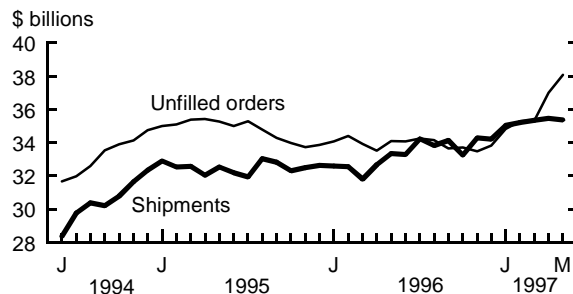
Consumers paid 1.8% more for goods and services in June 1997 than the year before. Food prices rose by 1.4%.

Unemployment rate



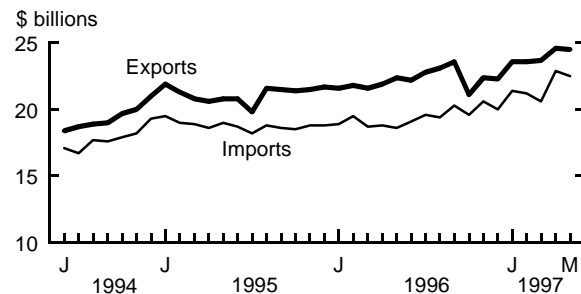
In June, the unemployment rate dropped 0.4 percentage points to 9.1%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments fell 0.2% in May to \$35.4 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 2.4% to \$38.1 billion.

Merchandise trade



In May, the value of merchandise exports decreased 0.1% from April to \$24.5 billion. Imports fell 1.6% to \$22.5 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, 1986)	April	567.4	0.8%	3.7%
Composite Index (1981=100)	June	195.1	0.8%	9.6%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q1 1997	25.5	3.3%	10.5%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 1997	85.0	0.6†	2.9†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	May	19.3	0.5%	7.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	May	114.9	1.8%	16.8%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	June	13.9	0.4%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	June	9.1	- 0.4†	- 0.9†
Participation rate (%)	June	64.8	- 0.1†	0.0†
Labour income (\$ billion)	April	37.08	0.5%	4.6%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	May*	604.56	0.8%	3.0%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	May	24.5	- 0.1%	4.5%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	May	22.5	- 1.6%	17.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	May	2.0	0.3	- 2.2
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	May	35.4	- 0.2%	6.0%
New orders (\$ billion)	May	36.2	- 2.4%	6.8%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	May	38.1	2.4%	11.7%
Inventory/shipments ratio	May	1.30	0.01	- 0.05
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1986=100)	June	138.0	0.2%	1.8%
Industrial Product Price Index (1986=100)	June*	130.4	- 0.2%	1.0%
Raw Materials Price Index (1986=100)	June*	134.2	- 2.3%	- 1.0%
New Housing Price Index (1986=100)	May	132.8	0.1%	1.0%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

* new this week

† percentage point

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Publications released from July 25 to 31, 1997

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
AGRICULTURE				
Cereals and oilseeds review	May 1997	22-007-XPB	15/149	15/149
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS				
Juristat: Canadian crime statistics, Vol. 17, no. 8	1996	85-002-XPE	10/93	10/93
Juristat: Homicide in Canada, Vol. 17, no. 9	1996	85-002-XPE	10/93	10/93
HEALTH STATISTICS				
Health reports, Vol. 9, no. 1	Summer 1997	82-003-XPB	35/116	35/116
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Imports by commodity:				
Microfiche version	May 1997	65-007-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper version	May 1997	65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK				
Private and public investment in Canada:				
Microfiche version	Revised intentions 1997	61-206-XMB	37	37
Paper version	Revised intentions 1997	61-206-XPB	44	44
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Construction type plywood	May 1997	35-001-XPB	7/62	7/62
Crude petroleum and natural gas production	April 1997	26-006-XPB	19/186	19/186
Gas utilities	April 1997	55-002-XPB	17/165	17/165
Energy statistics handbook:				
Electronic version	July 1997	57-601-XDE	284	284
Paper version	July 1997	57-601-UPB	387	387
Production and disposition of tobacco products	June 1997	32-022-XPB	7/62	7/62
Shipments of solid fuel-burning heating products	Q2 1997	25-002-XPB	8/25	8/25
NATIONAL ACCOUNTS AND ENVIRONMENT				
Canada's international transactions in securities	April 1997	67-002-XPB	18/176	18/176
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REDESIGN PROJECT				
Telephone statistics	May 1997	56-002-XPB	10/93	10/93

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Key release calendar: August 1997				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 Business Conditions Survey, Canadian manufacturing industries, July 1997
4	5 Building permits, June 1997 Farm Input Price Index, Q2 1997	6 Seniors, 1995	7 Help-wanted Index, July 1997	8 Labour Force Survey, July 1997
11	12 New Housing Price Index, June 1997	13 New motor vehicle sales, June 1997	14	15 Travel between Canada and other countries, June 1997 Composite Index, July 1997
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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.