Friday, August 2, 1996

## OVERVIEW

### Gross domestic product maintains modest growth

Modest economic growth continued into May, when gross domestic product rose 0.2%, about equal to its average pace in the first four months of 1996.

### ♦ Weekly earnings increase

In May, average weekly earnings rose in almost all industries, most notably in construction.

## ♦ Number of UI beneficiaries up slightly

In May, 715,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance benefits, up a modest 1.3% from April.

## ♦ Industrial prices drop

The 12-month change in industrial prices dropped to -0.2% in June. This was the first time in over four years that the change turned negative. Between May and June prices fell 0.4%.

## ◆ Raw material prices decline

Between May and June, raw material prices fell, due almost entirely to crude oil and copper.

## ♦ Homicide rate drops

In 1995, the homicide rate fell for a fourth straight year, to its lowest level since 1969.

# Gross domestic product maintains modest growth

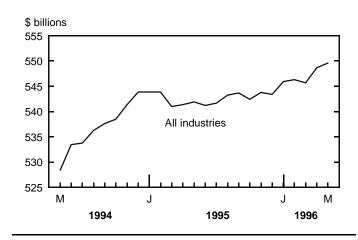
odest economic growth continued into May, as gross domestic product at factor cost rose 0.2%, about equal to its average pace in the first four months of 1996. Production in April and May averaged 0.6% above its first-quarter level, but some of this gain was due to a rebound in economic activity following strikes that halted Ontario government services and the auto industry. Output in the first quarter of 1996 had increased 0.5%.

Improvements in several manufacturing industries and in residential construction extended into May. Financial and related services, and wholesale trade continued to be major contributors to economic growth, while rebounds in the mining and utilities sectors also added to the overall gain. Community, business and personal services restrained growth the most, followed by retail trade and forestry.

The advance in manufacturing was fairly widespread for the second straight month, despite slowing from 1.5% in April to 0.2% in May. Much of the gain in April reflected the after-strike rebound in the motor vehicle industry, while May's slower growth was mostly due to a large drop in the fabrication of electrical and electronic products. In fact, excluding this group, output in manu-

(continued on page 2)

#### Gross domestic product at factor cost



#### ... Gross domestic product maintains modest growth

facturing jumped 1.2%. Production rose in 14 of the 21 major groups in May, compared with 15 in April.

Construction activity increased for a third straight month (+0.5%). Activity continued to pick up on residential construction projects, but eased on non-residential ones. Relatively low mortgage rates and fewer unoccupied dwellings encouraged residential construction. Auguring well for the near future, the number of dwelling starts maintained its level in June after jumping almost 30% in May, while the number of building permits issued remained steady in May.

Financial and related services output rose 0.5%. Activity by mutual funds remained strong, and growth in real estate activities resumed. Wholesale trade advanced 0.7%, a seventh consecutive monthly gain. Sales of computers and software products accounted for most of the advance, mainly reflecting much higher revenues related to installation and repairs.

Output in the mining sector increased 1.3%, led by a 2.3% advance in the production of crude oil and natural gas. The 2.3% gain mainly reflected higher production of natural gas, following several months of little change, and paralleled stronger domestic demand, notably by industry users, and continued growth in exports.

#### Note to readers

GDP of an industry is the value added by labour and capital in transforming inputs purchased from other industries into outputs.

Monthly GDP by industry is valued at 1986 prices. All data are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Community, business and personal services receded 0.8% in May. Amusement services plunged following a surge in April, when sales by lottery corporations picked up sharply. Lower attendance at spectator sports events and health services reinforced the decline.

Activity by retailers fell a further 0.2%. Unlike in earlier months, the weakness was much less widespread. Lower sales by motor vehicle dealers, service stations and supermarkets were responsible for most of the drop.

#### Available on CANSIM: matrices 4670-4674.

The May 1996 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (15-001-XPB, \$14/\$140) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Michel Girard (613-951-9145), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

## Weekly earnings increase

n May, average weekly earnings rose 1.4% to \$584.71. Employees in almost every industry realized gains, with the most notable increase occurring in construction. The overall advance was due largely to the increased number of hours worked per week by employees paid by the hour.

Average weekly earnings for retail trade employees fell slightly, to \$342.80. Despite several monthly fluctuations, retail trade earnings remained at about the same level as in the fall of 1995. In the health and social services industry, average weekly earnings rose \$13.96 to \$521.71. This was the first substantial

Average weekly earn Seasonally adjusted	nings, May 1996	6	
Province/	Industrial	% change,	% change,
Territory	aggregate (\$)	previous month	previous year
Canada	584.71	1.4	2.4
Newfoundland	543.25	4.2	1.1
Prince Edward Island	491.89	2.0	6.9
Nova Scotia	501.27	3.0	4.4
New Brunswick	514.60	1.0	0.9
Quebec	555.66	1.0	2.5
Ontario	616.52	0.1	1.9
Manitoba	522.57	2.3	3.7
Saskatchewan	535.06	9.5	9.6
Alberta	571.88	3.3	2.5
British Columbia	609.40	2.2	2.6
Yukon	700.43	1.0	9.2
Northwest Territories	732.94	1.4	4.4

#### Note to readers

With the release of the May 1996 data, this survey has expanded its use of administrative data. This, in turn, has improved coverage of employment levels and has resulted in revisions to previously released data. Consistent time series back to January 1983 are now available.

increase in earnings in this sector since January. Manufacturing employees' weekly earnings, up slightly from April, stood 3.1% higher than in May 1995. Hourly earnings for manufacturing employees paid by the hour (\$16.29 in May) have not grown for nearly a year.

Meanwhile, the number of employees on business payrolls continued to fluctuate in May (-55,000), returning employment to the same level as in November 1995. Hardest hit were the retail trade (particularly food stores and other retail stores), health and social services, and business services industries. Employment in the manufacturing and construction industries also fell. The upward trend in employment, which has characterised the business services industries for many years, appears to have stopped; all of its components were affected by the decline, except offices of architects, engineers and other scientific and technical services.

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

Employment, earnings and hours (72-002-XPB, \$31/\$310) will be available soon. For further information, contact Stephen Johnson (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; the Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

# Number of UI beneficiaries up slightly

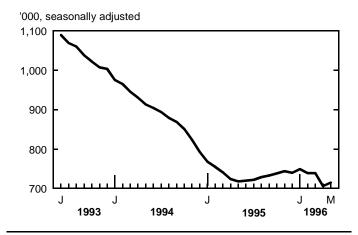
n May, 715,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, up a modest 1.3% from April. The number of beneficiaries declined significantly from May 1992 through June 1995 (-37.5%), then grew modestly from July 1995 through January 1996 (+4.0%). Since then, the number of recipients has fluctuated, and for the last two months declined to levels not observed since the fall of 1981. Nine of the 12 provinces and territories reported increases in May, with the largest occurring in Saskatchewan (+10.1%), Manitoba (+8.4%) and New Brunswick (+6.3%).

After remaining flat for the first four months of 1996, benefit payments fell 7.2% in May to \$799 million. All provinces and territories, except the Northwest Territories, reported declines. The largest relative monthly drops were recorded in Prince

#### **UI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits,** May 1996 Seasonally adjusted

Province/territory	Total '000	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	715	1.3	-0.3
Newfoundland	35	-0.6	-7.4
Prince Edward Island	9	0.9	-12.1
Nova Scotia	34	-5.4	-9.1
New Brunswick	40	6.3	-3.4
Quebec	251	2.0	1.1
Ontario	184	0.8	3.8
Manitoba	18	8.4	-6.9
Saskatchewan	15	10.1	2.6
Alberta	46	3.0	-8.9
British Columbia	81	-1.1	4.9
Yukon	1	0.8	0.0
Northwest Territories	1	2.1	20.5

# Number of UI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits



Edward Island (-16.1%), Nova Scotia (-13.8%) and New Brunswick (-11.4%). May's sharp decline can partly be explained by the fact that the April total was distorted by the unusual occurrence of five Mondays and Tuesdays. Most benefit payments are disbursed on Monday and Tuesday.

The number of individuals who applied for unemployment insurance benefits fell 9.4% to 246,000 in May. This was the first significant monthly drop since September 1994. Eight provinces and territories recorded declines; the largest occurred in Ontario (-21.8%), and accounted for 78% of the drop.

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; the Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

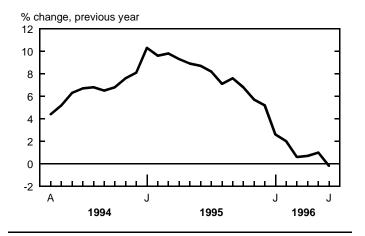
## Industrial prices drop

he 12-month change in industrial prices dropped to -0.2% in June. This was the first time in over four years that the change turned negative. Pulp and paper, primary metals, and chemicals accounted for most of the decline. June's performance was the weakest of all the G-7 countries, except Germany and France.

Between May and June, industrial prices fell 0.4% with prices declining in almost half of the 21 major categories. Gasoline, copper and newsprint made the most significant contributions to the overall price drop. Exchange rate movements had virtually no impact on June's price changes, as the value of the Canadian dollar was virtually the same in mid-June as in mid-May.

Prices for petroleum and its products declined in all stages of production and distribution in June. Crude oil prices fell for a second straight month (-4%). At the manufacturer's level, overall prices for gasoline and fuel oil dropped about 4%, after a small increase in May. In comparison, the corresponding price in the United States fell 5%. And according to the consumer

#### Industrial product prices



(continued on page 4)

#### ... Industrial prices drop

price index, Canadian consumers paid 3% less for gasoline in June than in the preceding month.

Copper prices dropped sharply in both Canada (-21%) and the United States (-17%). These declines were part of a world-wide plunge in copper prices brought about by a scandal involving a major Japanese company trading in copper.

Newsprint prices fell by 3.5% in Canada and by 4.4% in the United States. Although newsprint production is somewhat down, inventories of both sellers and buyers have remained relatively high.

Unlike newsprint, pulp prices climbed 1.5% in June; in the United States they rose 2.9%. Although Canadian pulp sales have been improving, customers may be retaining large inventories as a defense against further price increases.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2000-2008.

#### Note to readers

The industrial product price index (IPPI) reflects the prices producers receive as goods leave their plants. It does not reflect what consumers pay. Unlike the consumer price index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all costs (including transportation, wholesale, and retail) occurring from the time a good leaves a plant and a final user takes possession.

Since Canadian export producers often quote their prices in foreign currencies, changes in the exchange rate affect 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 about 0.2%.

The June 1996 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, \$21/\$210) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; the Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

## Raw material prices decline

Between May and June, raw material prices fell 2.3%, due to a drop in crude oil prices and substantially lower copper prices. If the mineral fuels category (90% of which is crude oil) were excluded, raw material prices would have declined by 1.6%.

Crude oil prices fell for the second straight month in June (-4%), after rising more than 23% in the first four months of 1996. The decline was due to Iraq's partial return to the world market, increased gasoline imports from Europe and South America into North America, and lower-than-expected demand for gasoline.

Non-ferrous metal prices decreased almost 9% in June. Declining the most were copper (-22%), gold (-2%) and lead (-4%). Copper prices dropped dramatically as a major Japanese company trading in copper was forced to consider selling off a large portion of its copper holdings. Copper prices may weaken further as a new mine development in Latin America comes online.

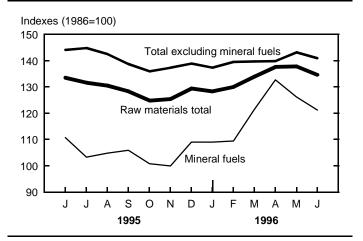
Wood prices have remained stagnant over the first six months of 1996. Vegetable product prices fell almost 1%, as higher prices for unrefined sugar and coffee partly offset lower prices for wheat and oilseeds. The cancellation of a major U.S. wheat contract with China was partly responsible for lower wheat prices. Animal and animal product prices rose a marginal 0.3% in June. Higher prices for cattle for slaughter, chickens, and calves for slaughter were partly offset by lower hog prices.

Between June 1995 and June 1996, raw material prices increased 0.8%. Prices jumped 10% for crude oil. Vegetable product prices rose almost 18% as higher prices for grains and oilseeds were slightly offset by lower potato, unrefined sugar, coffee and rubber prices. Animal and animal product prices grew more than 6%. Prices in this group increased for hogs and chickens and declined for cattle for slaughter. Prices fell for

#### 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 world markets. Also, unlike the industrial product price index, the RMPI includes goods not produced in Canada.

#### Raw material prices



non-ferrous metals and wood. Excluding mineral fuels, overall raw material prices would have fallen by 2.2%.

#### Available on CANSIM: matrix 2009.

The June 1996 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, \$21/\$210) will be available soon. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; the Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

## Homicide rate drops

In 1995, the homicide rate fell (-3% to 1.98 homicides per 100,000 people) for a fourth straight year, to its lowest level since 1969. Police reported 586 homicides, 10 fewer than in 1994.

The homicide rate fell in all provinces except Quebec, British Columbia and Newfoundland. Generally, the highest rates were recorded in the West. For the fourth straight year, British Columbia had the highest rate, followed by Manitoba and Alberta. Prince Edward Island, with one homicide, reported the lowest rate, followed by Newfoundland and Ontario.

The nine largest census metropolitan areas represented 48% of the population, but accounted for 54% of all homicides. Of these nine, Vancouver, Ottawa and Hamilton had the highest rates, while Québec, Toronto and Calgary recorded the lowest.

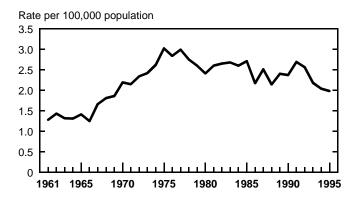
Although the homicide rate for adults has fallen over the past decade, it has remained relatively stable for youths aged 12 to 17. From 1985 to 1994, the youth homicide rate fluctuated between 1.5 and 2.5 homicides for every 100,000 youths. It is difficult to establish if the 1995 rate of 2.7 homicides represents a new trend or if it is a year-to-year fluctuation. In 1995, 65 youths were charged with homicides, up from 1994 and the highest level recorded since 1975.

In 1995, 176 homicides were committed with firearms. In 1995, slightly more victims were killed by stabbing (31%) than by shooting (30%). Over the past 10 years, the use of handguns has increased, while the use of rifles/shotguns has fallen.

Where an accused was identified, 47% of victims were killed by someone they knew, 36% by a spouse or other family member, and 16% by a stranger (2% unknown). Spousal homicides continue to account for one out of every six solved homicides. In 1995, 90 persons were killed by either a current or former spouse — 69 women and 21 men.

In 1995, women were six times more likely to be killed by a spouse than by a stranger. Males have consistently accounted for

#### Homicide rate



the majority of homicides (67% in 1995) as well as the majority of those accused of murder (87% in 1995). In total, 52 children under the age of 12 were murdered in 1995, of which eight were infants.

Compared with the United States, Canada has a relatively low homicide rate. The U.S. rate, according to preliminary 1995 data, was four times higher than Canada's. However, Canada's rate is generally higher than many European nations'. The rate for England and Wales, for example, was 30% lower than that in Canada.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 314-317 and 319 and tables 00160401-00160405.

The vol. 16, no. 11 of Juristat: Homicide in Canada, 1995 (85-002-XPE, \$10/\$90) is now available. For further information, contact Information and Client Services (613-951-9023; 1-800-387-2231), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

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The Inventory of Statistics Canada's questionnaires, 1995, on CD-ROM (12-205-XCB, \$150) is now available. The price is subject to Statistics Canada's discount policy. For further information, or to order this product, contact Michael Webber (613-951-3458; fax: 613-951-8578; Internet: webbmik@statcan.ca), Standards Division.

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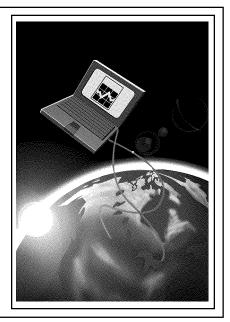
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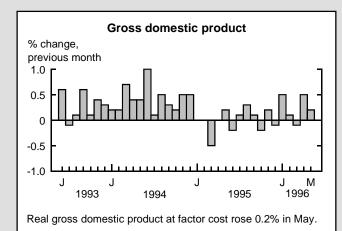
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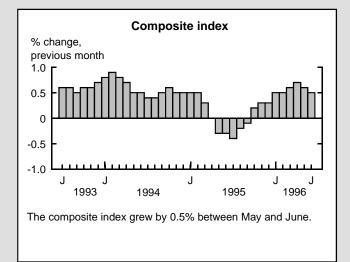
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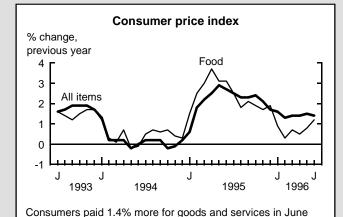
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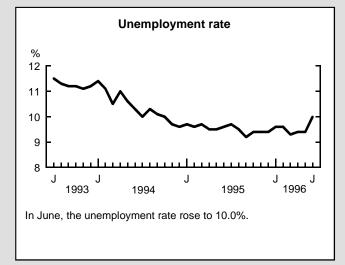
## **Current trends**

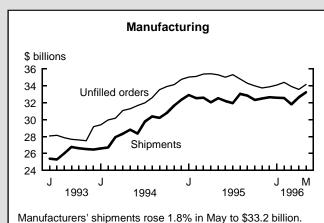






1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 1.2%.







to \$22.4 billion. Imports declined by 2.1% to \$18.3 billion.

The level of unfilled orders rose 1.7% to \$34.2 billion.

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted except the consumer price index.

Lat	Latest monthly statistics						
	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year			
GENERAL							
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1986)	Mav*	549.6	0.2%	1.4%			
Composite index (1981=100)	June	178.4	0.5%	3.4%			
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	1st quarter	21.6	-7.5%	-7.2%			
Capacity utilization (%)	1st quarter	82.8	-0.1†	-3.0†			
DOMESTIC DEMAND							
Retail trade (\$ billion)	May	17.8	0.0%	1.1%			
New motor vehicle sales ('000 units)	May	97.0	8.2%	2.3%			
LABOUR							
Employment (millions)	June	13.6	-0.4%	0.9%			
Unemployment rate (%)	June	10.0	0.6†	0.4†			
Participation rate (%)	June	64.8	0.0†	-0.1†			
Labour income (\$ billion)	April	35.3	0.3%	2.5%			
Average weekly earnings (\$)	May*	584.71	1.4%	2.4%			
INTERNATIONAL TRADE							
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	May	22.4	2.9%	7.9%			
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	May	18.3	-2.1%	-3.8%			
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	May	4.1	1.0	2.4			
MANUFACTURING							
Shipments (\$ billion)	May	33.2	1.8%	2.1%			
New orders (\$ billion)	May	33.8	4.6%	4.4%			
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	May	34.2	1.7%	-3.2%			
Inventory/shipments ratio	May	1.36	-0.03	0.00			
PRICES							
Consumer price index (1986=100)	June	135.6	-0.1%	1.4%			
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	June*	129.1	-0.4%	-0.2%			
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	June*	134.6	-2.3%	0.8%			
New housing price index (1986=100)	May	131.5	-0.1%	-2.5%			

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

# Infomat A weekly review

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<sup>\*</sup> new this week

<sup>†</sup> percentage point

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Advisory Services Statistics Canada Avord Tower, 9th Floor 2002 Victoria Avenue Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 0R7

Local calls: (306) 780-5405 Toll free: 1-800-667-7164 Fax: 1-306-780-5403

#### Southern Alberta

Advisory Services Statistics Canada First Street Plaza, Room 401 138-4th Avenue Southeast Calgary, Alberta T2G 4Z6

Local calls: (403) 292-6717 Toll free: 1-800-882-5616 Fax: 1-403-292-4958

## Alberta and the Northwest Territories

Advisory Services Statistics Canada 8th Floor, Park Square 10001 Bellamy Hill Edmonton, Alberta T5J 3B6

Local calls: (403) 495-3027 Toll free: 1-800-563-7828 Fax: 1-403-495-5318

#### British Columbia and the Yukon

Advisory Services Statistics Canada Library Square Tower, Suite 600 300 West Georgia Street Vancouver, B.C. V6B 6C7

Local calls: (604) 666-3691 Toll free: 1-800-663-1551 Fax: 1-604-666-4863

## **Telecommunications Device for the Hearing Impaired**

Toll free: 1-800-363-7629