



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, August 9, 1996

OVERVIEW

◆ Residential permits continue to rise

In the second quarter of 1996, low prices and mortgage rates caused the value of residential building permits to rise for a second straight quarter.

◆ Help-wanted ads remain unchanged

The number of help-wanted ads in newspapers remained unchanged between June and July.

◆ Manufacturers expect higher production

In the July Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers indicated that they intend to increase production, but do not plan to change employment levels.

◆ Labour income up slightly

In May, employees' wages and salaries rose for a second straight month.

◆ Crime rate declines

In 1995, for the fourth straight year, Canada's crime rate fell following 30 years of almost constant increase.

Residential permits continue to rise

In the second quarter of 1996, low prices and mortgage rates caused the value of residential building permits issued by municipalities to rise 0.5% to \$3.8 billion. A near-20% increase in the previous quarter had broken a string of six consecutive quarterly declines.

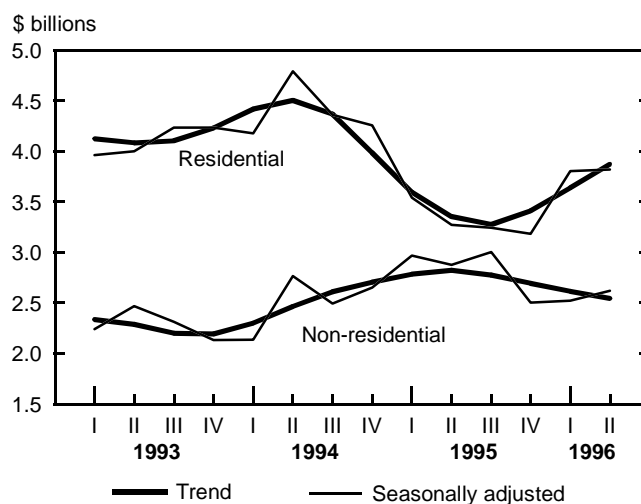
A 16.8% surge in the value of planned single-family dwellings (which represent over 70% of the housing industry) led to a sharp increase in residential construction intentions compared with the same quarter in 1995. Construction intentions for multi-family dwellings rose 2.1% to \$1,121 million, their highest level since the last quarter of 1994.

Across Canada, British Columbia posted the strongest residential-sector increase, led by its multi-family component. Gains in single-family dwellings were behind notable advances in Alberta and Quebec. Ontario reported the most significant decline, caused by drops in both the single- and multi-family components.

Non-residential construction intentions rose 3.9% to \$2.6 billion, following a 0.7% increase in the previous quarter. The advance was mainly attributable to the commercial component, which

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Residential and non-residential building permits



... Residential permits continue to rise

posted its best result since the fourth quarter of 1991. The institutional component also increased, mainly due to improvements to medical facilities. The industrial component rose slightly following a strong first quarter.

British Columbia led the advance in the non-residential sector, as commercial projects reached levels not seen since the second quarter of 1995. Notable gains also occurred in Saskatchewan and Alberta. Ontario and Quebec reported the most significant decreases, due mainly to a lack of industrial projects in Ontario and institutional projects in Quebec.

In the first half of 1996, the value of single-family dwelling permits rose 13.6% from the same period in 1995. Construction intentions for multi-family dwellings grew by a substantial 8.0%. Non-residential permits fell 12.0% due to year-over-year drops in the institutional and industrial components. This is consistent with spending cut-backs announced by all levels of governments and the recent slump in profits for the industrial sector.

On a monthly basis, the total value of building permits slipped 0.4% to \$2.2 billion in June. Non-residential permits fell 10.0% to

Note to readers

Each month, the Building and Demolitions Permits Survey covers 2,400 municipalities representing 93% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 7% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers, culverts) and land.

Unless otherwise stated, all data are seasonally adjusted.

\$0.9 billion, following a sharp increase in May. Residential permits surged 6.9% to \$1.4 billion, the second straight monthly increase.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3-7, 16-22 and 24-32), 129, 137, 443, 989-992, 994, 995 and 4073.

The June 1996 issue of **Building permits** (paper version: 64-001-XPB, \$24/\$240; microfiche version: 64-001-XMB, \$25/\$135) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Building permits, June 1996

Seasonally adjusted

Province/Territory	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	2,241	-0.4	1,368	6.9	874	-10.0
Newfoundland	14	-30.6	11	-25.1	4	-43.3
Prince Edward Island	4	-55.0	3	-52.0	2	-59.3
Nova Scotia	47	2.3	32	10.8	15	-12.0
New Brunswick	48	25.0	18	4.0	30	42.6
Quebec	367	-4.9	201	1.6	166	-11.8
Ontario	764	-7.0	442	-0.2	321	-15.0
Manitoba	49	2.5	30	23.6	19	-19.6
Saskatchewan	58	-12.9	19	-18.2	39	-10.1
Alberta	247	4.6	150	1.9	97	9.0
British Columbia	634	11.2	456	22.2	178	-9.7
Yukon	5	26.4	3	15.6	2	53.3
Northwest Territories	4	8.7	2	43.7	2	-11.9

Help-wanted ads remain unchanged

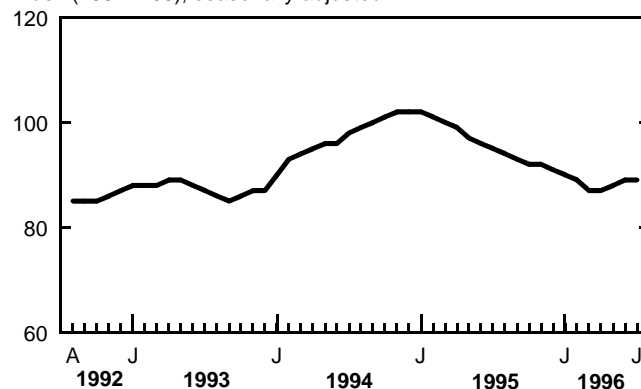
The number of help-wanted ads in newspapers remained unchanged in July at 89. Growth in the Prairie provinces was offset by declines in the Atlantic region, Ontario and British Columbia. Between November 1994 and March 1996, the index declined 15%; since then it has increased 2%.

The index in the Prairies rose for the fifth consecutive month (+2% to 94). Alberta continued to contribute to this growth — its index grew by 2% to 88 and has risen 14% since January 1996. Saskatchewan recorded the largest monthly advance (+4% to 99), its fourth consecutive increase.

In Quebec, the index was unchanged from June at 89. While the Canada index last peaked in November 1994, the Quebec index did so in April 1995. Between April 1995 and May 1996, the index fell 16%; it has since climbed 2%.

Help-wanted index

Index (1991=100), seasonally adjusted



(continued on page 3)

... Help-wanted ads remain unchanged

The index in the Atlantic region decreased for a third consecutive month (-1% to 101). Declines were recorded in all provinces, except Nova Scotia, where the index increased by 3% from June.

Help-wanted index, July 1996

(1991=100)

Seasonally adjusted

	Level	% change, previous year	% change, previous month
Canada	89	-6	0
Atlantic provinces	101	-1	-1
Quebec	89	-11	0
Ontario	93	-9	-1
Prairie provinces	94	9	2
British Columbia	64	-12	-2

Note to readers

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

After two consecutive months of growth, Ontario slipped 1% to 93 in July.

In British Columbia, the index fell 2% to 64. Since its last peak in March 1994, the index has dropped 28%. Over this period, January 1996 was the only month to record an increase.

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

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

Manufacturers expect higher production

In the July 1996 Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers were more satisfied with their levels of orders received and less concerned about inventory levels. But while a rising number of manufacturers expected to increase production over the next three months, they did not anticipate changing employment levels in the near future.

The balance of manufacturers' opinions concerning new orders turned positive for the first time in five quarters (+10). This was its highest level since it reached +21 in January 1995. (The balance of opinion of +10 in July was calculated by subtracting the 14% of manufacturers who stated that their orders received were declining from the 24% who said they were rising.)

Concern about finished product inventories subsided in July (to -12) from the high levels recorded in the previous two surveys. This result is supported by data from the Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, which has reported a downward trend in inventory size, after rising during most of 1995.

Consistent with the two preceding indicators, the balance of opinion for production prospects reached +8, its highest level since early 1995.

The July survey showed that 76% of manufacturers expected "little change" in their workforce. The balance of opinion was 0, up from -4 in April.

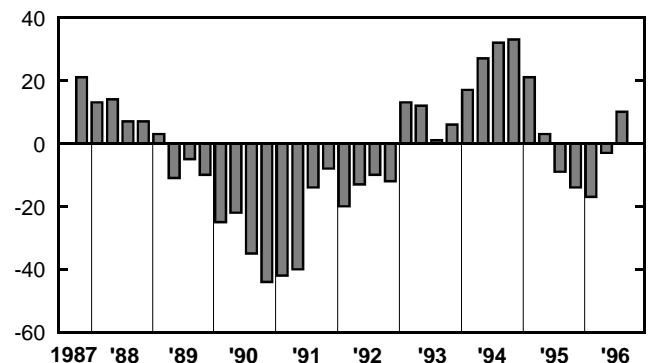
Note to readers

The Business Conditions Survey is conducted every January, April, July and October. The majority of responses are recorded in the first two weeks of these months. Results are based on replies from about 5,000 manufacturers and are weighted by a manufacturer's shipments or employment. Consequently, larger manufacturers have a correspondingly larger impact on the results than do smaller manufacturers.

Except for the data on production difficulties, data in this release are seasonally adjusted.

Balance of opinion for current level of orders received

%, seasonally adjusted



Business Conditions Survey

July 1996

	1995		1996		
	July	Oct.	Jan.	April	July
Balance of opinion*on:					
Production	-4	1	-2	0	8
New Orders	-9	-14	-17	-3	10
Unfilled Orders	-16	-19	-14	-2	-4
Inventories	-15	-15	-21	-26	-12
Employment	-4	-4	-8	-4	0

* The balance is the difference between the proportion of positive responses, such as higher volumes of production, and negative responses, such as lower volumes of production.

Only 2% of manufacturers reported difficulties with a shortage of working capital, down from 4% in April. Shortages of skilled labour remained a difficulty for 3% of manufacturers. Some 88% of manufacturers stated that they have no production difficulties at this time.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2843-2845.

For further information, contact Claude Robillard (613-951-3507), Industry Division.

Labour income up slightly

In May, employees' wages and salaries rose for a second straight month (+0.2%). Although employment fell in May, strong growth in average weekly earnings contributed to the slight rise in wages and salaries. Despite fluctuations since the beginning of the year, wages and salaries increased 2.4% in the first five months of 1996 over the same period in 1995.

The May increase stemmed from transportation, storage, communications and other utilities, finance, insurance and real estate, mines, quarries and oil wells, and health and social services. Higher average weekly earnings were responsible for growth in these industries. Wages and salaries in manufacturing also rose slightly for a second consecutive month (+0.2%).

In contrast, decreases were noted in construction, commercial and personal services, and local administration. Lower employment affected all of these industries.

Wages and salaries, May 1996 Seasonally adjusted

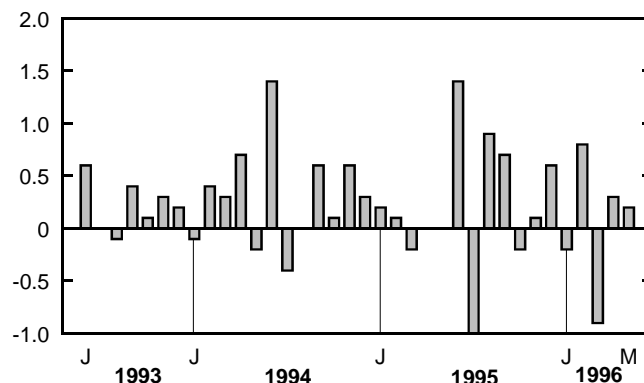
Province/Territory	\$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	30,832	0.2	2.6
Newfoundland	392	1.4	-2.6
Prince Edward Island	121	2.7	12.8
Nova Scotia	723	0.4	1.5
New Brunswick	615	-0.4	2.2
Quebec	6,883	-0.5	1.9
Ontario	12,676	-0.8	2.9
Manitoba	1,031	0.8	2.5
Saskatchewan	802	1.6	1.0
Alberta	3,101	1.3	2.7
British Columbia	4,256	1.5	3.5
Yukon and Northwest Territories/Abroad	202	-0.5	3.4

Note to readers

Labour income consists of wages and salaries (87%), plus supplementary labour income (13%). Wages and salaries include items such as bonuses, gratuities, taxable allowances and retroactive wage payments. Supplementary labour income is employers' contributions to employee welfare, pension, workers' compensation and unemployment insurance plans. Labour income accounts for about 54% of gross domestic product.

Total wages and salaries

% change, previous month, seasonally adjusted



Available on CANSIM: matrices 1791 and 1792.

For further information, contact Jean Lambert (613-951-4051; fax: 613-951-3618), National Accounts and Environment Division.

Crime rate declines

Canada's crime rate — an indicator of public safety — fell 1% in 1995, its fourth straight annual drop, following 30 years of almost constant increase.

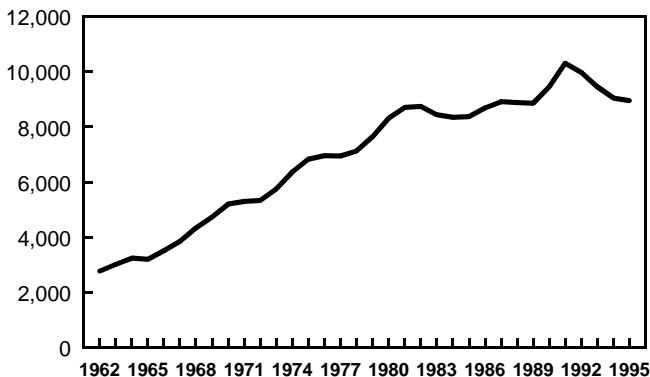
The violent crime rate recorded its most significant annual decline since the inception of the survey in 1962. Nevertheless, the rate in 1995 remained 36% higher than a decade earlier. Most categories of violent crime dropped: the rate of minor assaults, which accounted for 60% of the almost 300,000 violent crimes; sexual assaults; and the homicide rate, which reached its lowest level since 1969. Robbery was the only violent crime category to show an increase (+3%). The number of homicides committed with a firearm decreased by 10%.

After declining for three consecutive years, the property crime rate stabilized in 1995: residential break-ins increased slightly, while break-ins at businesses fell by a comparable proportion. Motor vehicle thefts stayed unchanged for the second consecutive year, at about 450 vehicles per day.

Although the overall crime rate for youths aged 12 to 17 remained stable in 1995, the violent crime rate for this age group rose. The proportion of youths charged with property offenses dropped for the fourth straight year. Youths tend to be charged

Crime rate

Rate per 100,000 population



with proportionately fewer violent offences than adults (19% and 29% respectively, in 1995). Youths were most commonly charged with motor vehicle theft, arson, break-ins and robbery.

(continued on page 5)

... Crime rate declines

Across Canada, the overall crime rate remained stable in Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, rose in Saskatchewan and Prince Edward Island, and fell everywhere else. Six of the nine largest census metropolitan areas reported declines from the previous year, with the largest occurring in Winnipeg. The crime rate remained stable in Ottawa and Vancouver, while Québec reported a small increase.

Vancouver reported the highest crime rate, followed by Ottawa and Winnipeg. Québec reported the lowest crime rate, followed by Toronto and Montreal.

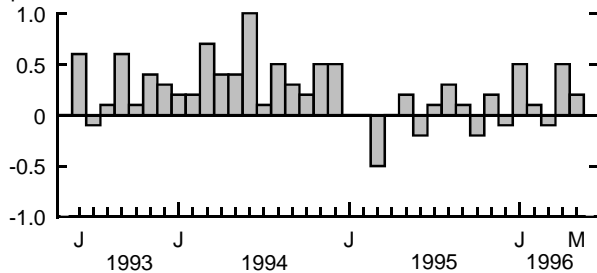
Available on CANSIM: matrix 2198-2200 and tables 00140103 and 00150202.

*The vol.16, no.10 issue of **Juristat: crime statistics, 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.*

Current trends

Gross domestic product

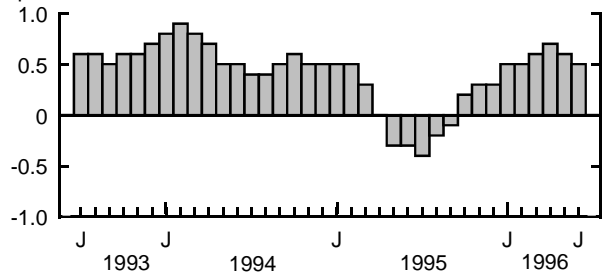
% change,
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost rose 0.2% in May.

Composite index

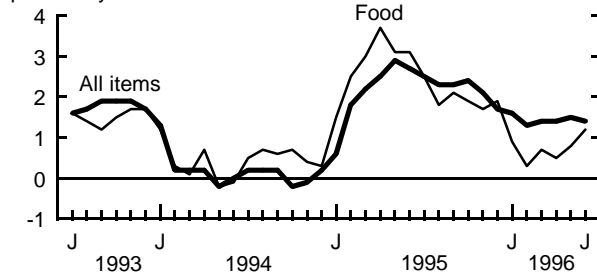
% change,
previous month



The composite index grew by 0.5% between May and June.

Consumer price index

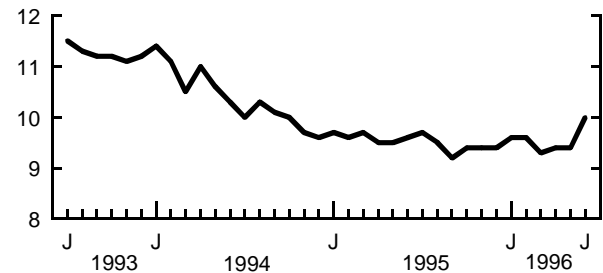
% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 1.4% more for goods and services in June 1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 1.2%.

Unemployment rate

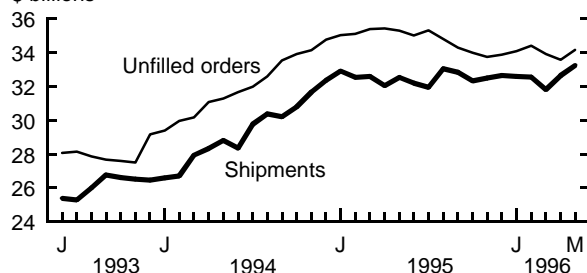
%



In June, the unemployment rate rose to 10.0%.

Manufacturing

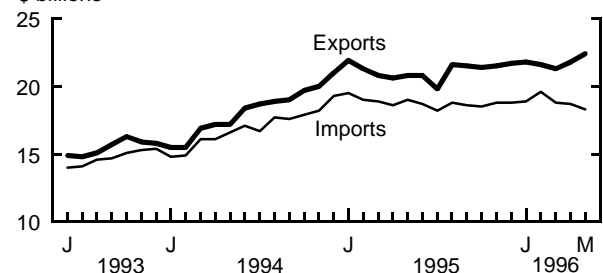
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 1.8% in May to \$33.2 billion. The level of unfilled orders rose 1.7% to \$34.2 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In May, the value of merchandise exports rose 2.9% from April to \$22.4 billion. Imports declined by 2.1% to \$18.3 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)	May	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)	May*	35.4	0.2%	2.6%
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.

* new this week

† percentage point

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A weekly review

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Publications released from August 2 to 8, 1996

Division/title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (Cdn.\$)	United States	Other countries
			US\$		
AGRICULTURE					
Cereals and oilseeds review	May 1996	22-007-XPB	15/144	18/173	21/202
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS					
Canada's international transactions in securities	May 1996	67-002-XPB	17/170	21/204	24/238
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SYSTEMS					
The Statistics Canada total work accounts system	1992	89-549-XPE	48	58	68
HEALTH STATISTICS					
Mortality: summary list of causes	1993	84-209-XPB	30	36	42
Mortality: summary list of causes	1994	84-209-XPB	30	36	42
INDUSTRY					
Asphalt roofing	June 1996	45-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Cement	June 1996	44-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Coal and coke statistics	May 1996	45-002-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Department store sales and stocks	June 1996	63-002-XPB	16/160	20/192	23/224
Electric lamps (light bulbs and tubes)	March 1996	43-009-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Electric power statistics	May 1996	57-001-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Electric power statistics	1994	57-202-XPB	29	35	41
Sawmills and planing mills	May 1996	35-003-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
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