

OVERVIEW

Infomat will not be published on December 27, 1996 and January 3, 1997. Publication will resume on January 10.

Bar chart showing monthly precipitation (mm) for the period November 1993 to October 1996. The y-axis ranges from 0 to 4 mm. The x-axis shows months from N 1993 to O 1996. Precipitation is generally low, with a notable peak in late 1995 and early 1996.

Month	Precipitation (mm)
N 1993	0.8
D 1993	0.5
J 1994	0.7
F 1994	0.7
M 1994	1.0
A 1994	0.7
M 1994	1.4
J 1994	2.1
J 1994	1.2
A 1994	1.5
S 1994	1.8
O 1994	1.8
N 1994	1.8
D 1994	2.4
J 1995	2.3
F 1995	2.0
M 1995	2.1
A 1995	1.8
M 1995	2.2
J 1995	1.7
J 1995	2.9
A 1995	2.9
S 1995	2.9
O 1995	2.7
N 1995	3.0
D 1995	2.8
J 1996	3.0
F 1996	2.4
M 1996	3.0
A 1996	3.1
M 1996	3.8
J 1996	3.1
J 1996	3.2
A 1996	3.8
S 1996	3.3
O 1996	1.5

... Weak exports cut trade surplus by more than half

Exports were further hampered by falling shipments of auto parts, which coincided with slower auto production in the United States.

Exports of industrial goods fell for the first time since May, dipping 9.9%. Declines were widespread, but metals, metal ores, and chemicals were at the forefront. Despite this month's downturn, the trend for most industrial goods continued to rise.

After escalating in September, machinery and equipment exports fell 5.7% in October. Sales of office machines, industrial machinery, and specialized equipment all weakened. Energy related exports eased back 3.7%, although exports of crude oil climbed for a second straight month as U.S. refiners began to build up fuel oil reserves.

Exports of forestry products declined as well (-2.3%), as slow sales of newsprint and lumber offset an increase in woodpulp; in the wake of a standstill in midsummer, recent price increases have helped give pulp exports a boost. October newsprint shipments remained sluggish due to high inventories in the United States. Strong shipments of grain, destined for customers in the Pacific Rim, Europe, and the Middle East offset some of the overall export declines.

As automobile production trailed off in October, so did imports of auto parts (-24.5%). Car and truck imports fell back as well, reflecting reduced automotive output in the United States. Despite the decline, sales of North American made vehicles advanced in October, drawing down dealer inventories for a second straight month.

Note to readers

Merchandise trade is one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services. In the third quarter of 1996, the overall merchandise trade surplus of \$ 10.2 billion contributed to a current account surplus of \$ 0.6 billion.

On the heels of a strong third quarter, machinery and equipment imports sagged (-1.6%) as purchases of specialized equipment and communications equipment dipped from recent highs. Earlier strength reflected third-quarter growth in business spending. Buoyant imports of energy products and industrial goods bolstered an otherwise negative import picture.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3611-3616, 3618-3629, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720 and 3887-3913.

Canadian international merchandise trade (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$182) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Suzie Carpentier (613-951-9647 or 1-800-294-5583), International Trade Division.

Current account data, which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, services transactions, investment income and transfers, are available on a quarterly basis in **Canada's balance of international payments** (67-001-XPB, \$36/\$120). (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Car insurance pushes up inflation rate

November's annual inflation rate was 2.0%. The increase from last month's rate of 1.8% was largely due to changes in motor vehicle insurance costs in Ontario. The advance in vehicle insurance premiums added close to 0.3% to the monthly and annual movements of the all-items CPI.

Half of the overall increase in prices from November 1995 resulted from higher transportation charges, particularly for

Note to readers

A description of how the CPI is calculated and used can be found in Your guide to the consumer price index, catalogue 62-557-XPB, free of charge.

gasoline, new vehicles and vehicle insurance. Other notable contributors were food, university tuition, telephone services, rental accommodation and fuel oil. At the same time, consumers benefited from lower mortgage costs.

Between October and November 1996, consumers saw average prices rise by 0.4%. Advances in new vehicle prices, automobile insurance premiums in Ontario, and food prices were mostly behind the rise. However, prices were lower for traveller accommodation, clothing, piped gas, owned accommodation and telephone services.

Between November 1995 and November 1996, increases in provincial CPIs ranged from a low of 0.7% in British Columbia to a high of 2.9% in Nova Scotia. From October to November 1996, the index varied between no change in Prince Edward Island and a rise of 0.7% in Ontario.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 7440-7454, 7477 and 7478.

The November 1996 issue of the Consumer price index (62-001-XPB, \$10/\$100) is now available. For further information, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: shadsan@statcan.ca), Prices Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

The Consumer price index, November 1996

% change, previous year*

Province/ territory	All- items	Food	Energy	Housing	Transportation
Canada	2.0	3.0	6.1	0.1	5.9
Newfoundland	2.3	4.6	5.0	1.7	4.2
Prince Edward Island	1.1	0.5	3.7	1.3	2.2
Nova Scotia	2.9	3.2	10.3	3.3	4.6
New Brunswick	2.6	2.9	10.3	2.8	4.6
Quebec	2.1	4.1	6.7	0.8	4.0
Ontario	2.3	1.7	6.9	-0.3	9.2
Manitoba	2.7	4.8	3.5	0.8	4.8
Saskatchewan	2.6	3.6	8.2	3.0	5.4
Alberta	2.2	5.1	6.0	0.6	4.1
British Columbia	0.7	2.1	0.7	-1.8	2.2
Whitehorse	1.6	2.9	5.1	0.1	4.6
Yellowknife	1.2	2.7	3.7	0.0	4.9

* Data are not seasonally adjusted.

GM strike behind falling shipments

Despite a solid showing by the rest of the manufacturing sectors, a three-week strike at General Motors caused total manufacturing shipments to slip 2.6%, to \$33.2 billion in October. Excluding the auto sector, shipments actually increased 1.6%, the sixth increase in seven months. Overall, shipments have experienced halting growth in recent months after a weak 1995. Inventories were up for the third time in a row, reinforcing the view that the downward adjustments observed recently may have ended. Unfilled orders were little changed.

October's falling shipments reversed gains made since May of this year and interrupted the general upward trend of the last few months. However, growth in sectors other than the auto sector was widespread, occurring in 15 of 22 major industry groups, which accounted for almost two-thirds of total shipments. The only significant decreases were in the motor vehicle and parts industries (-21.2%).

The refined petroleum and coal products industry continued its steady growth (+5.8%), buoyed by rising prices of crude petroleum. October's rise in shipments is the 11th in 12 months, and leaves this industry's level 35.1% higher than in November 1995. Other significant increases were recorded in the food industry (+2.1%) and the primary metals industry (+2.9%).

After falling 2.3% from April to July, inventories edged up 0.6% to \$45.1 billion in October. This is the largest of three consecutive increases, indicating that recent downward movements in inventories may have been sufficient to bring them in line with shipments. The largest increases were in the motor vehicle parts and accessories (+5.1%), refined petroleum and coal (+3.5%) and motor vehicle (+4.0%) industries.

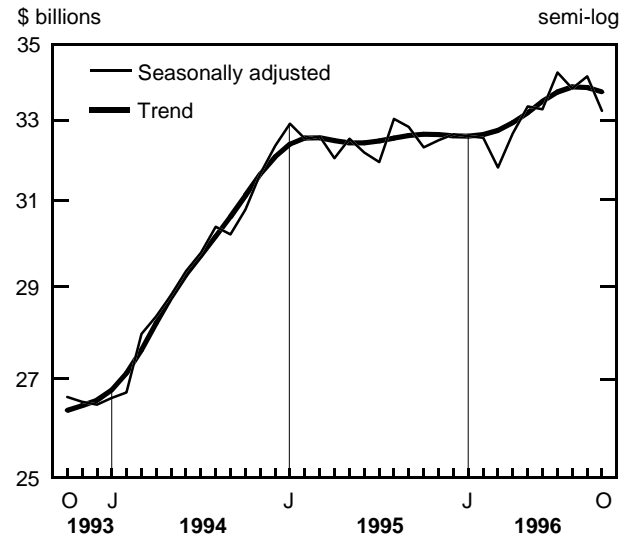
Manufacturers' shipments, October 1996 Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	33,238	-2.6
Newfoundland	119	1.2
Prince Edward Island	55	5.7
Nova Scotia	519	-1.2
New Brunswick	692	2.8
Quebec	8,194	0.2
Ontario	16,780	-6.6
Manitoba	807	3.2
Saskatchewan	464	6.3
Alberta	2,732	5.1
British Columbia	2,871	2.4
Yukon and NWT	5	20.4

Note to readers

Unfilled orders are a stock of orders which will contribute to future shipments, assuming that orders are not cancelled. New orders represent orders received whether shipped in the current month or not. They are measured as the sum of shipments for the current month (i.e., orders received this month and shipped within the same month), plus the change in unfilled orders.

Shipments



The inventories-to-shipments ratio jumped to 1.36 from 1.31 in September. This increase moved the ratio away from the near-historical lows recorded in the last few months.

Manufacturers' backlog of unfilled orders, a key determinant of future shipments, rose 0.2% to \$33.7 billion. After weakening significantly in the latter part of 1995, the level of unfilled orders has stabilized, and is now trending downward slightly. The largest increases in October were recorded in the motor vehicle (+1.4%) and the fabricated metal products (+1.7%) industries.

New orders fell by 1.1% to \$33.3 billion.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9579 and 9581-9593.

The September 1996 issue of *Monthly survey of manufacturing* (31-001-XPB, \$19/\$190) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Henry Glouchkow (613-951-9833), or Robert Traversy (613-951-9497), Industry Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Composite index continues to pick up growth

The leading indicator increased its rate of growth to 0.8% in November, having steadily accelerated from its lows of 0.4% in July and August. However, most of the upswing was confined to financial markets, with little impact so far on output or jobs outside the housing sector.

Housing activities picked up after repeated cuts to interest rates. Housing starts rebounded in November to recover all of their recent losses; this followed stronger sales of existing houses in September and October. Furniture and appliance sales firmed in tandem with housing, posting their strongest gain in nearly two years. Elsewhere, spending was slack, as outlays for durable goods remained unchanged.

Financial markets continued to soar in November, after sharp gains in October. The stock market recorded its largest increase in

over three years. Corporations stepped up new issues, which should encourage a further upswing in investment by firms.

The strength of investment industries sustained growth in manufacturing. The ratio of shipments to stocks of finished goods continued to rise, hitting its highest level since mid-1995. New orders also rose. Strong business demand for services continued to offset weakness in jobs for consumer services.

The growth of the U.S. leading indicator slowed. However, most of the deceleration originated in a short average work week as a result of the labour dispute in the auto sector. Consumer confidence remained buoyant and orders for consumer goods strengthened with the coming of the Christmas season.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

The December issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Vehicle sales reach 13-month peak

New motor vehicle sales reached a 13-month high of 104,094 in October, as a result of increased sales of both cars and trucks. Total new vehicle sales rose 3.7%, the fifth monthly increase in six months. Year-to-date gains, however, were little better than those in the first 10 months of 1995.

Truck sales rose 5.7% to 46,520 in October. Since June 1995, rebounding truck sales have recovered all the ground lost in a nine-month downward trend between mid-1994 and mid-1995. Sales in the first 10 months of 1996 were up 5.6% over the same period in 1995.

The Big Three automakers saw car sales fall, while other automakers enjoyed sales jumps. Total car sales for October rose 2.1%, a 13-month high, but year-to-date sales continued to trail those of the same period in 1995.

Consumers spent an average of 7.0% more than in the previous year on passenger cars (before taxes). Over the five years since October 1991, consumers' average expenditure increased 33.7%, to \$22,300 from \$16,700 per car. Average spending on cars reflects consumers' choices of models and options, industry changes to standard car features, and price changes.

Nine out of 10 cars sold in October were built in North America and fetched an average price of \$21,300, up 5.7% from October 1995. The average price of cars built overseas jumped 22.2% to \$29,400.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

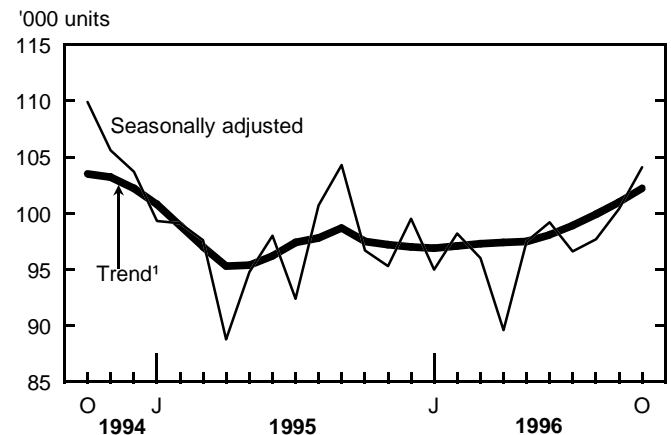
The October 1996 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XPB, \$16/\$160) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Louise G  n  reux (613-951-3549). For analytical information, contact Mary Beth Garneau (613-951-9824; Internet: lizimar@statcan.ca), Industry Division.

Note to readers

Motor vehicles are divided into two categories: passenger cars and trucks. Passenger cars include cars used for personal and commercial purposes. Trucks include minivans, sport utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

All data have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

New motor vehicle sales



¹ The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

More foreigners visit Canada

Foreigners' overnight travel to Canada rebounded in October, jumping 9.2%, the largest increase since May 1986. This brought the number of overnight trips made by foreign residents to 1.5 million, slightly below the April 1996 peak.

The main contributors to the increase were Americans who made 113,000 more trips in October than in September. They travelled 1.1 million times to Canada in October to spend at least one night, up 11.6% from the previous month. The number of trips of this type has generally been fluctuating around 1.1 million since early 1995.

Residents of countries other than the United States also made more overnight trips to Canada than in September: 376,000 trips in October (+2.8%). October's level was only marginally lower than the record 378,000 overnight trips last June. Trips of this type have been relatively stable since March. Prior to this period of stability, the trend had been upward since mid-1992.

In October, Canadians' overnight trips overseas increased 3.1% to a record 311,000. They also made 1.2 million overnight trips to the United States, 1.0 % more than in September. While the

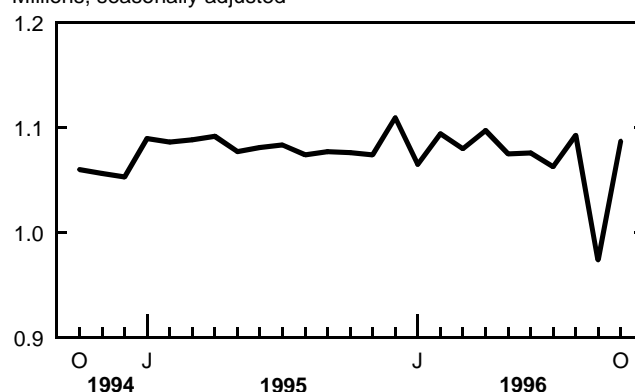
Note to readers

Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data, while year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data (the actual traffic counts).

Overseas countries are countries other than the United States. Excursions are same-day trips.

Overnight trips to Canada by Americans

Millions, seasonally adjusted



Travel between Canada and other countries, October 1996

	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous year
	seasonally adjusted		unadjusted	
Canadian trips abroad				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same day	3,021	3.3	2,978	-2.4
One or more nights	760	-2.5	685	-15.1
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,235	1.0	1,120	-7.7
Other countries	311	3.1	247	3.0
Travel to Canada				
Auto trips from the United States				
Same day	1,966	2.7	1,866	1.2
One or more nights	687	15.4	531	-1.1
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,087	11.6	875	1.9
Other countries ²	376	2.8	331	5.8

¹ Estimates for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and estimated numbers for planes, trains, boats and other methods.

² Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only, via the United States.

United States remains Canadians' most popular foreign destination for overnight trips, the proportion of trips to overseas destinations has been increasing (from 12.5% in 1991 to 20.1% in 1996).

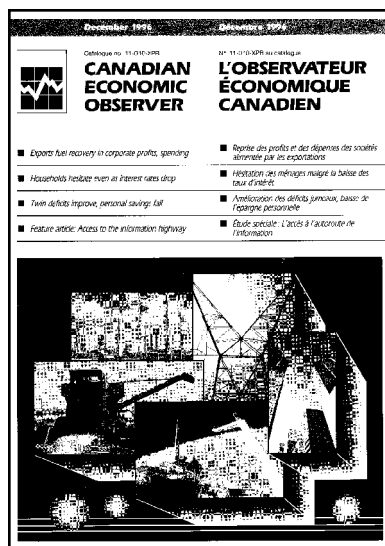
The number of car excursions Canadians made south of the border was up 3.3% in October, to 3.0 million trips. At that time, the Canadian dollar averaged U.S.\$0.74, a full cent more than in September. Despite October's advance, the number of same-day car trips to the United States remained well below the November 1991 peak (5.4 million), when the dollar was worth US\$0.88. This type of travel has been relatively stable since April 1994.

Americans also made more same-day cross-border car trips in October (+2.7% to 2.0 million). Nonetheless, the trend has generally been downward since peaking in February.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2661-2697, 5780-6046 and 8200-8328.

The October 1996 issue of *International Travel, advance information* (66-001-PPB, \$7/\$70) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Luc Dubois (613-951-1674, fax: 613-951-2909, Internet: duboluc@statcan.ca), Education, Culture and Tourism Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Canadian economic observer

December 1996

The December issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, presents a monthly summary of the economy and November's major current economic events, and a feature article on the information highway. A statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

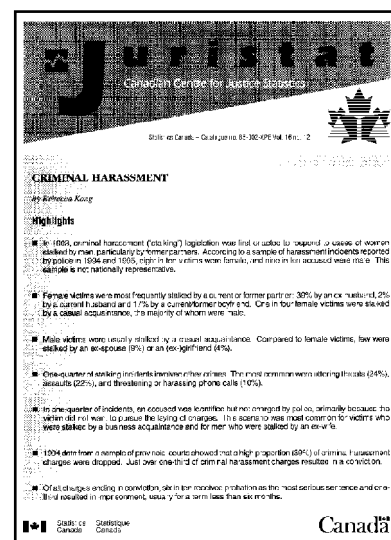
The December 1996 issue of Canadian economic observer (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627; Internet: ceo@statcan.ca) Current Analysis Group.

Juristat: Criminal harassment

1994 and 1995

For the first time, Statistics Canada releases a report on criminal harassment, more commonly known as "stalking". This issue of *Juristat*, published by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, presents information on criminal harassment incidents reported to the police as well as the outcomes of criminal harassment charges heard in provincial courts.

The vol. 16, no. 12 issue of Juristat (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.



Work arrangements: 1995 overview

Statistics Canada announces the advance release of "Work arrangements: 1995 overview," scheduled for publication in the Spring 1997 issue of *Perspectives on labour and income*. The article is available immediately by fax. It highlights comparable data from the 1991 and 1995 Surveys of Work Arrangements, as well as new results from the 1995 survey.

Work arrangements of paid workers have changed since 1991. For example, a higher proportion of employees work weekends. More have a flexitime work arrangement (that is, they are able to start and end work at varying times), and the proportion who regularly work at home for some or all of their paid work has increased.

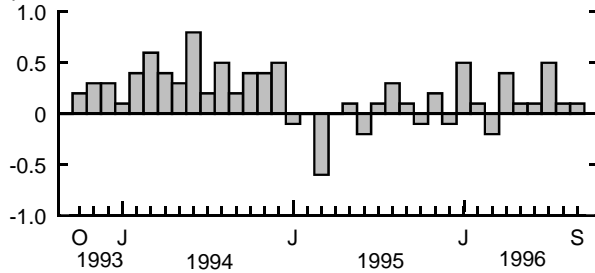
About 28% of employees preferred to work more hours for more pay while 6% preferred fewer hours for less pay, according to new findings from the 1995 survey. Around 1.3 million employees described their job as non-permanent. Over half of all employees were covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan or group RRSP, 59% by a health plan, and 55% by a dental plan. In addition, 57% were entitled to paid sick leave.

The Spring 1997 issue Perspectives on labour and income (75-001-XPE, \$17/\$56) will be available in March. For further information, contact Ernest Akyeampong (613-951-4624). To order the facsimile copy of this article (\$40), contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4628), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

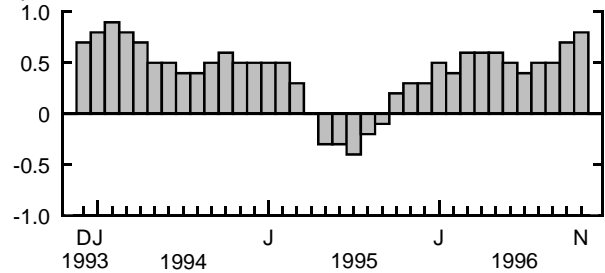
% change,
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost increased 0.1% between August and September.

Composite index

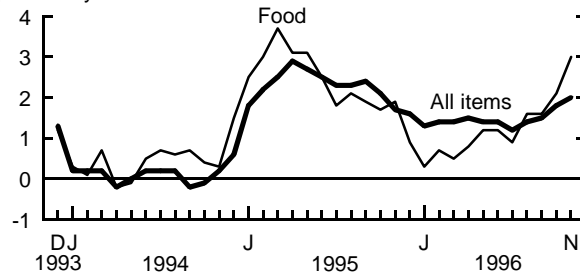
% change,
previous month



The composite index grew by 0.8% in November.

Consumer price index

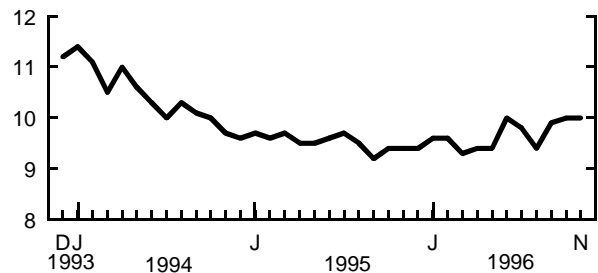
% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 2.0% more for goods and services in November 1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 3.0%.

Unemployment rate

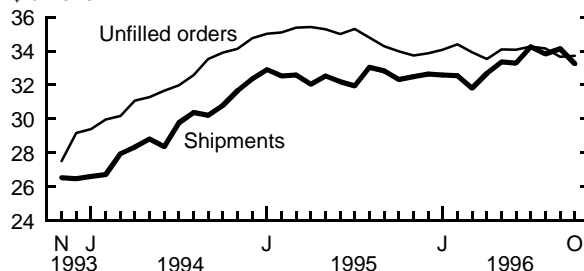
%



In November, the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 10.0%.

Manufacturing

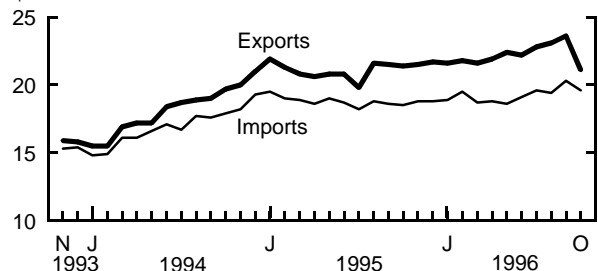
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments fell 2.6% in October to \$33.2 billion. The level of unfilled orders rose 0.2% to \$33.7 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In October, the value of merchandise exports fell 10.4% from September to \$21.1 billion. Imports dropped 3.3% to \$19.6 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)	September	552.6	0.1%	1.8%
Composite index (1981=100)	November*	183.2	0.8%	6.4%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1996	24.4	7.5%	3.8%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1996	83.8	1.3†	0.8†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	September	17.9	0.2%	0.8%
New motor vehicle sales ('000 units)	October*	104.1	3.7%	7.7%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	November	13.7	0.1%	1.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	November	10.0	0.0†	0.6†
Participation rate (%)	November	65.0	0.0†	0.5†
Labour income (\$ billion)	September	35.9	0.3%	2.1%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	September	585.90	-0.5%	1.8%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	October*	21.1	-10.4%	-1.2%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	October*	19.6	-3.3%	6.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	October*	1.5	-1.8	0.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	October*	33.2	-2.6%	2.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	October*	33.3	-1.1%	4.0%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	October*	33.7	0.2%	-0.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	October*	1.36	0.05	-0.05
PRICES				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	November*	136.8	0.4%	2.0%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	October	129.1	-0.5%	-0.3%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	October	140.9	0.5%	12.9%
New housing price index (1986=100)	October	131.4	-0.1%	-1.6%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

Infomat

A weekly review

Published by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-N, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Editor: Anna Kemeny (613) 951-1197
Head of Official Release: Jacques Lefebvre (613) 951-1088

Catalogue: 11-002E. Price: Canada: \$4.00 per issue, \$140.00 per year; United States: US\$5.00 per issue, US\$168.00 per year; Other countries: US\$5.00 per issue, US\$196.00. Canadian customers please add 7% GST.

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Publications released from December 13 to 19, 1996

Division/title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (Cdn.\$)	United States	Other countries
			US\$		
BALANCE OF PAYMENTS					
Canada's balance of international payments	Third quarter 1996	67-001-XPB	36/120	44/144	51/168
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS					
Juristat: Criminal harassment	Vol. 16 no. 12	85-002-XPE	10/90	12/108	14/126
INDUSTRY					
Apparent per capita food consumption in Canada	1995	32-230-XPB	32	39	45
Department store sales and stocks	October 1996	63-002-XPB	16/160	20/192	23/224
Electric lamps (light bulbs and tubes)	October 1996	43-009-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	October 1996	46-002-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Logging industry	1994	25-201-XPB	33	40	47
Machinery Industries (Except Electrical Machinery	1994	42-250-XPB	38	46	54
Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	October 1996	31-001-XPB	19/190	23/228	27/266
Oil pipeline transport	September 1996	55-001-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Oils and fats	October 1996	32-006-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard	October 1996	36-003-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Primary iron and steel	October 1996	41-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	October 1996	25-001-XPB	7/70	9/84	10/98
Refined Petroleum and Coal Products Industries	1994	45-250-XPB	38	46	54
Refined petroleum products	September 1996	45-004-XPB	20/200	24/240	28/280
Rubber and Plastic Products Industries	1994	33-250-XPB	38	46	54
Shipments of office furniture products	Jan.-June, 1996	35-006SXPB	14/27	17/33	20/38
Steel wire and specified wire products	October 1996	41-006-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS					
Gross domestic product by industry	September 1996	15-001-XPB	14/140	17/168	20/196
INTERNATIONAL TRADE					
Exports by country					
Microfiche version	January - Sept. 1996	65-003-XMB	60/200	72/240	84/280
Paper version	January - Sept. 1996	65-003-XPB	120/400	145/480	168/560
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK					
Building permits					
Microfiche version	October 1996	64-001-XMB	25/135	30/162	35/189
Paper version	October 1996	64-001-XPB	25/135	30/162	35/189
LABOUR					
Employment, earnings and hours	September 1996	72-002-XPB	31/310	38/372	44/434
PRICES					
Average prices of selected farm inputs	October 1996	62-012-XPB	9/48	11/58	13/68
Consumer prices and price indexes	July - Sept. 1996	62-010-XPB	24/80	29/96	34/112
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6 	7 	8 	9 Help-wanted index, December 1996	10 Labour force survey, December 1996 New housing price index, November 1996
13 Building permits, November 1996 New motor vehicle sales, November 1996	14 	15 	16 	17 Canadian international trade, November 1996 Travel between Canada and other countries, November 1996
20 Monthly survey of manufacturing, November 1996	21 Wholesale trade, November 1996	22 Composite index, December 1996 Retail trade, November 1996	23 Consumer price index, December 1996 Canada's international transactions in securities, November 1996	24
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