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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

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Canadian international merchandise trade

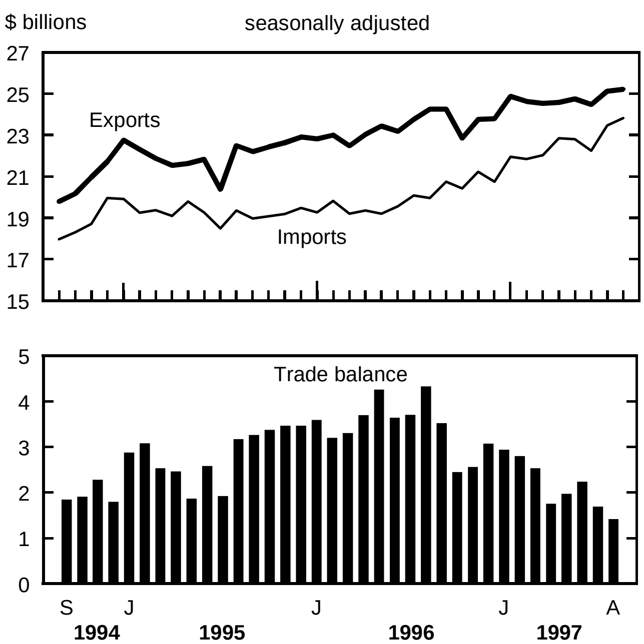
August 1997

Exports edged up 0.4% in August to $25.2 billion. While exports of automotive products and industrial goods fell significantly from their historic highs recorded in July, consumer goods and energy product exports experienced strong growth.

Imports continued to climb, reaching a record $23.8 billion in August, up 1.6% over July. The increase in August followed a 5.5% jump in July as imports of machinery and equipment, industrial goods and consumer products continued to set the pace.

The strong performance of imports coupled with more moderate growth in exports reduced the merchandise trade balance to $1.4 billion — its lowest level since May 1994. The weak trade balance could be attributed to strong import growth in goods related to business investment (mainly industrial goods, and machinery and equipment) and falling automotive products exports.

Exports, imports and trade balance



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

Strong energy and consumer goods exports partly offset by decline in automotive and industrial goods

Exports remained at record levels in August, edging up slightly to $25.2 billion (+0.4% over July). While exports of automotive products and industrial goods fell significantly from their record highs in July, consumer goods and energy product exports experienced robust growth.

Energy products jumped 15.4% in August, following a 9.4% decline in July. The main contributor to this growth was crude petroleum exports. After falling 19.5% in July, crude petroleum exports leaped significantly (+45.2%) in August. Most of the August increase could be attributed to crude oil shipped via pipeline to U.S. refineries.

Exports of consumer goods reached a record $936.3 million in August (+28.6%). Most of this increase was due to the launch of new pharmaceutical products into the U.S. market.

After jumping 12.1% in July, automotive products declined 6.6% in August. While exports of automotive products have experienced some volatility in the last few months, the trend remained flat with no sustained increase since December of 1996. The August decline was mainly attributable to seasonal shutdowns and reduced overseas exports.

Industrial goods declined 3.7% in August. The precious metal and alloys (-37.3%) group was the main contributor to this decline.

Forestry product exports remained quite stable in August (+0.3%). Gains in lumber exports (+6.4%), mainly to Japan, were partially offset by declines in woodpulp, other wood products exports (-4.0%) and newsprint paper (-4.1%).

Industrial goods and machinery and equipment continued to pace imports

Imports continued to advance, reaching a record $23.8 billion in August, up 1.6% over July. The increase in August followed a 5.5% jump in July, as imports of machinery and equipment, industrial goods and consumer products continued to set the pace.

Industrial goods increased 4.0% in August, mostly due to strong imports of chemicals and plastics (+6.5%) and metal and metal ores (+3.5%).

Machinery and equipment imports surpassed their record level in July, increasing 0.9% in August. Office machines and equipment (mostly computers) led this sector with a 9.4% increase. This was partially offset by a decline in aircraft and other transportation equipment (-4.9%).

Imports of automotive products declined slightly in August (-1.0%). Following an increase in July, a decrease in motor vehicle parts (-5.4%) was not fully offset by an increase in both passenger cars (+5.6%) and trucks (+3.4%).

After two months of strong increases, energy imports dropped significantly in August (-19.9%) as Canadian demand returned to normal levels.

Revisions

Merchandise trade data are revised on a continuing basis for every month of the current year. Factors that create the need for revisions include: the late receipt of import and export documentation, incorrect information on customs documents, replacement of estimated figures with actual values once available, changes to classification of merchandise based on more current information, and updated seasonal adjustments. Revised data can be obtained by accessing the relevant CANSIM matrices.

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

This release contains a summary of the merchandise trade data, which will be available shortly in *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, $19/$188). The publication will include tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. 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, $38/$124). See *How to order publications*.

For more timely receipt of the merchandise trade data, a fax service is available on the morning of release.

For further information on this release, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647; 1 800 294-5583), Marketing and Client Services Section, International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade of Canada

	June 1997	July 1997	Aug. 1997	June 1997 to July 1997	July 1997 to Aug. 1997	Jan.-Aug. 1996	Jan.-Aug. 1997	Jan.-Aug. 1996 to Jan.-Aug. 1997	Aug. 1996 to Aug. 1997
	seasonally adjusted, $ current								
	$ millions			% change		$ millions		% change	
Principal trading partners									
Exports									
United States	19,937	20,583	20,685	3.2	0.5	146,713	160,632	9.5	7.2
Japan	858	889	813	3.6	-8.5	8,083	7,965	-1.5	-24.5
European Union	1,392	1,344	1,393	-3.4	3.6	11,894	10,801	-9.2	-4.9
Other OECD countries[1]	380	329	308	-13.4	-6.4	3,689	2,910	-21.1	-38.8
All other countries	1,893	1,976	2,017	4.4	2.1	15,555	15,826	1.7	4.8
Total	24,460	25,121	25,216	2.7	0.4	185,934	198,134	6.6	4.0
Imports									
United States	17,138	18,072	18,257	5.4	1.0	119,299	138,189	15.8	18.6
Japan	716	690	731	-3.6	5.9	4,681	5,484	17.2	36.4
European Union	1,834	1,967	1,904	7.3	-3.2	13,218	15,749	19.1	18.6
Other OECD countries[1]	718	786	832	9.5	5.9	5,974	6,195	3.7	17.0
All other countries	1,841	1,945	2,100	5.6	8.0	13,265	15,390	16.0	22.7
Total	22,247	23,461	23,825	5.5	1.6	156,437	181,007	15.7	19.4
Balance									
United States	2,799	2,511	2,428	...	...	27,414	22,443	...	...
Japan	142	199	82	...	...	3,402	2,481	...	...
European Union	-442	-623	-511	...	...	-1,324	-4,948	...	...
Other OECD countries[1]	-338	-457	-524	...	...	-2,285	-3,285	...	...
All other countries	52	31	-83	...	...	2,290	436	...	...
Total	2,213	1,660	1,391	...	...	29,497	17,127	...	...
Principal commodity groupings[2]									
Exports									
Agricultural and fishing products	1,757	1,911	1,849	8.8	-3.2	14,601	14,857	1.8	1.8
Energy products	2,436	2,208	2,549	-9.4	15.4	18,052	19,784	9.6	6.4
Forestry products	3,073	2,968	2,977	-3.4	0.3	23,950	24,217	1.1	-4.0
Industrial goods and materials	4,264	4,550	4,380	6.7	-3.7	32,876	34,863	6.0	4.5
Machinery and equipment	5,054	5,247	5,121	3.8	-2.4	38,029	40,538	6.6	6.5
Automotive products	5,482	6,145	5,741	12.1	-6.6	42,825	46,779	9.2	-3.0
Other consumer goods	757	728	936	-3.8	28.6	5,431	6,097	12.3	32.6
Special transactions trade[3]	1,046	1,043	1,047	-0.3	0.4	7,425	8,147	9.7	11.3
Imports									
Agricultural and fishing products	1,248	1,357	1,300	8.7	-4.2	9,262	10,173	9.8	10.3
Energy products	996	1,124	900	12.9	-19.9	6,432	7,757	20.6	6.6
Forestry products	190	202	203	6.3	0.5	1,233	1,561	26.6	26.1
Industrial goods and materials	4,283	4,447	4,626	3.8	4.0	29,946	34,822	16.3	21.9
Machinery and equipment	7,100	7,787	7,860	9.7	0.9	50,014	58,872	17.7	25.8
Automotive products	5,006	5,149	5,095	2.9	-1.0	33,940	39,133	15.3	14.8
Other consumer goods	2,358	2,439	2,507	3.4	2.8	17,021	19,039	11.9	21.2
Special transactions trade[3]	543	531	531	-2.2	0.0	4,534	4,599	1.4	-8.6

... *Figures not appropriate or not applicable.*
1 *Includes Australia, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey.*
2 *Figures not adjusted to balance-of-payments basis*
3 *Mainly low-valued transactions, value of repairs to equipment and goods returned to country of origin.*

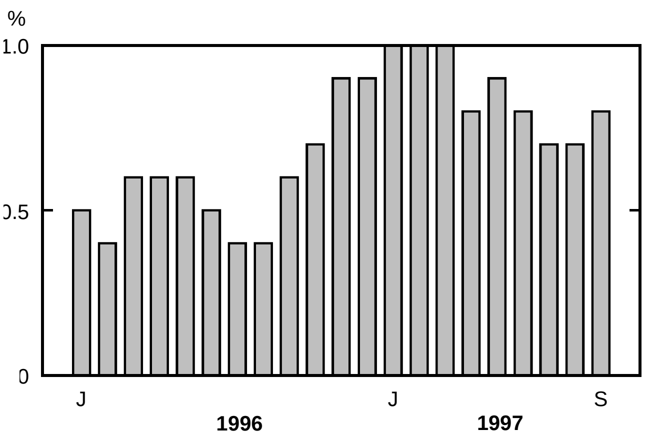
■

Composite Index

September 1997

The leading indicator rose by 0.8% in September, about equal to its average gain since the start of the year. Nine of the ten components were up, one more than in August, as manufacturing picked up and reinforced growth in business investment and consumer demand.

Composite Index, smoothed % change



Durable goods continued to power household demand, as they have all year long. Sharply higher spending was driven by autos, as supply disruptions ended and rebates were boosted. The growth of demand for personal services remained modest. Housing was braked by housing starts, which backed off slightly from a five-year high in Ontario, while existing house sales have yet to regain the ground lost in July. Mortgage rates fell further at month-end.

Strong demand for machinery and equipment on both sides of the border led the renewed strength in manufacturing activity. The trend of new orders for durable goods accelerated, while the ratio of shipments to stocks of finished goods rose for the first time in three months. The average workweek posted its 10th straight increase, a good sign for further gains in manufacturing employment.

Manufacturing also was a leading light in the growth of the U.S. leading index, which posted its 18th advance in a row. Orders for both consumer and investment goods advanced, while delivery times continued to slow down and the workweek lengthened.

Financial markets in Canada reflected the solid pace of economic growth, with stocks surging to a new record high.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

For further information on the economy, consult the October issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, $23/$227), which will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627) or Tim Prichard (951-1789), Current Economic Analysis Group. □

Composite Index

	April 1997	May 1997	June 1997	July 1997	Aug. 1997	Sept. 1997	Last month of data available
							% change
Composite leading indicator (1981=100)	**192.1**	**193.9**	**195.5**	**196.9**	**198.2**	**199.8**	**0.8**
Housing index (1981=100)[1]	135.3	135.0	133.9	132.6	131.4	130.2	-0.9
Business and personal services employment ('000)	2,076	2,089	2,105	2,114	2,124	2,133	0.4
TSE 300 stock price index (1975=1,000)	6,021	6,101	6,194	6,340	6,462	6,611	2.3
Money supply, M1 ($ millions, 1981)[2]	36,521	36,904	37,107	37,289	37,635	38,054	1.1
U.S. composite leading indicator (1967=100)[3]	220.7	221.1	221.4	221.7	222.0	222.4	0.2
Manufacturing							
Average workweek (hours)	38.9	39.2	39.3	39.5	39.6	39.7	0.3
New orders, durables ($ millions, 1981)[4]	13,068	13,253	13,572	13,844	13,964	14,169	1.5
Shipments/inventories of finished goods[4]	1.67	1.67	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.69	0.01[5]
Retail trade							
Furniture and appliance sales ($ millions, 1981)[4]	1,206.1	1,217.1	1,227.7	1,238.8	1,249.0	1 258.0	0.7
Other durable goods sales ($ millions, 1981)[4]	4,145.7	4,174.4	4 210.5	4,256.0	4,284.7	4,321.7	0.9
Unsmoothed composite	194.4	198.6	198.3	199.1	200.3	204.6	2.1

1 *Composite Index of housing starts (units) and house sales (multiple listing service).*
2 *Deflated by the Consumer Price Index for all items.*
3 *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated but the figures themselves refer to data for the month immediately preceding.*
4 *The figures in this row reflect data published in the month indicated but the figures themselves refer to data for two preceding months.*
5 *Difference from previous month.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Export and import price indexes

August 1997

Current- and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1986=100) on a balance-of-payments basis are now available. Price indexes are listed from January 1986 to August 1997 for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups (62 exports and 61 imports).

Current- and fixed-weighted U.S. price indexes (1986=100) are also available on a customs basis. Price indexes are listed from January 1986 to August 1997. Included with the U.S. commodity indexes are the 10 all countries and U.S. only standard international trade classification (SITC) section indexes.

Indexes for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups are also now available on a customs basis.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3611-3616, 3618-3629, 3651 and 3685.

The August 1997 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, $19/$188) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Denis Pilon (613-951-4808), Price Index Unit, International Trade Division. ■

Postcensal estimates of population by age and sex

July 1, 1997 (preliminary)

The preliminary postcensal estimates by age and sex at July 1, 1997, as well as the updated postcensal figures at July 1, 1996, 1995, 1994 and 1993, and the final figures for 1992 are now available. The corresponding components of population growth for the year ending June 30, 1992 to 1997 are also available.

These population figures do not take into account the 1996 Census results. They are estimates based on the 1991 Census counts adjusted for net undercoverage. Estimates of population based on the 1996 Census results will be available in the fall of 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 6270-6295, 6303-6341 and 6367-6393.

These estimates will appear in *Annual demographic statistics, 1997* (91-213-XPB, $67), which will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or Daniel Larrivée (613-951-0694; fax: 613-951-2307; Internet: *lardani@statcan.ca*) or Lise Champagne (613-951-2320; fax: 613-951-2307; Internet: *chamlis@statcan.ca*), Demography Division.■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Industry price indexes, August 1997
Catalogue number 62-011-XPB
(Canada: $22/$217; outside Canada: US$22/US$217).

Employment, earnings and hours, July 1997
Catalogue number 72-002-XPB
(Canada: $32/$320; outside Canada: US$32/US$320).

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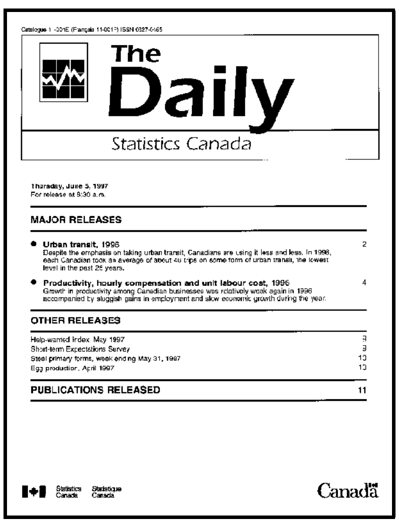
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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