



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, May 15, 1997

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Consumer Price Index, April 1997**

The prices of the goods and services contained in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket rose by 1.7% between April 1996 and April 1997. This was lower than the annual rates of 2.0% to 2.2% in the five previous months. In monthly terms, the CPI registered no change in April. Six provinces introduced sales tax changes in late March and early April.

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 - **Travel between Canada and other countries, March 1997**

Overnight trips between Canada and other countries were down for all directions in March. The decreases registered in trips of at least one night between Canada and the United States were greater than those with overseas countries.

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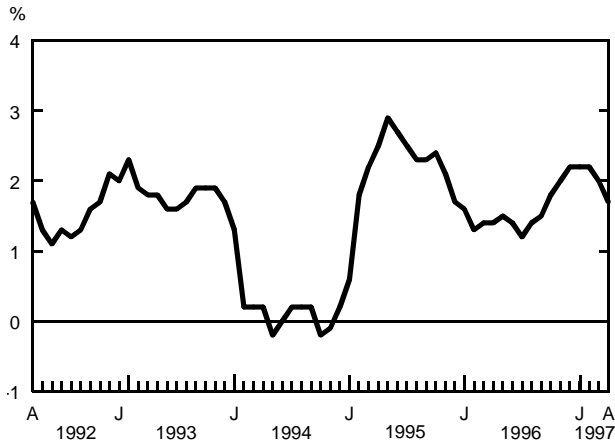
MAJOR RELEASES

Consumer Price Index

April 1997

The prices of the goods and services contained in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket rose by 1.7% between April 1996 and April 1997. Compared with April 1996, consumers paid lower prices for mortgage loans, fresh vegetables and soft drinks. Consumers paid more for new vehicles and vehicle insurance, university tuition, clothing, rental accommodation and meat.

Percentage change in the Consumer Price Index from the same month a year earlier



April's 1.7% increase was lower than the annual rates of 2.0% to 2.2% seen in the five previous months. The slowdown in overall inflation was related to smaller movements in the transportation and food sectors.

The CPI was unchanged between March and April

In monthly terms, the CPI registered no change in April. Price increases for clothing and several other commodities offset price declines for natural gas, gasoline and food.

Six provinces introduced sales tax changes in late March and April. Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick merged their provincial retail sales taxes with the federal Goods and Services Tax under the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). Saskatchewan lowered its provincial sales tax rate by two percent.

Note to reader

The April 1997 issue of the Consumer Price Index (62-001-XPB) features an article entitled *Major contributors to the change in the Consumer Price Index in 1996*.

According to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), inflation rose by 1.6% in 1996. This article attempts to trace the sources of this low rate of inflation. Part of the explanation is found in the modest growth in the economy. In particular, personal expenditures continue to be constrained in recent years due to the stagnation and declines of personal disposable incomes per person. Other macroeconomic factors are cited as having some influence on consumer demand.

The article also describes the behaviour of the larger CPI components and explains why price changes for certain goods and services deviated substantially from the average in 1996. Across provinces, the CPI varied from a low in British Columbia to a high in Manitoba and Alberta. Among G7 countries, Canada ranked with Japan and Germany as having the lowest rate of inflation. At the same time, Canada had the highest rate of unemployment among the same three countries.

Prince Edward Island and Quebec increased taxes on gasoline and cigarettes respectively. These changes are described in further detail later in the article. While changes affected some commodity series at the Canada level, the net impact at the All-items level was minimal.

Shoppers paid 1.1% more for clothing and 1.9% more for footwear in April than in March. A small part of the advance was related to tax increases in the Atlantic provinces. The clothing and footwear sector, which has shown little strength in recent years, may be emerging from the doldrums. Prices advanced for the fourth consecutive month, March and April movements were strong in seasonally adjusted terms, and the annual movement was the highest in five years.

Price advances were also noted in dental care, hotel/motel accommodation, newspapers and magazines.

Natural gas charges fell as summer rates were introduced in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia. A 1.5% decline in gasoline prices pulled down transportation costs. A factor behind this decline was a 16.5% drop in crude oil prices between January and March. Most of the downward influence on food came from lower prices for fresh vegetables, bananas, soft drinks, and bakery products.

Changes in provincial sales taxes

Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick merged their provincial retail sales tax systems with the federal Goods and Services Tax (GST) under the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST). This change took effect on April 1, 1997.

The HST rate was set at 15%. Previous provincial sales tax rates for most taxable commodities was 12% in Newfoundland and 11% in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. As these were applied to the price of the item including the GST of 7%, the combined sales tax rates were 19.84% in Newfoundland and 18.77% in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

An important component of harmonization was establishing a common tax base. It was agreed that all commodities previously subject to the GST would be subject to the new HST. As a result, products (such as basic food items) which were not subject to GST or provincial sales taxes are not subject to the new HST. Commodities, which were subject to both provincial sales taxes and GST, are now subject to the lower HST. Items in this category include restaurant meals, telephone services, snack foods, cleaning supplies and household appliances. Items which were previously subject to the GST but not to provincial sales tax are now subject to HST. Examples of commodities in this category include fuel oil, postage and newspapers. There were differences in provincial tax bases before harmonization. For example, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick had provisions exempting men's and women's clothing items priced under \$100 from provincial taxation while Newfoundland did not. Therefore, the impact of the tax changes on clothing is different in Newfoundland than in the other two harmonizing provinces. There are also some differences in provincial taxation after harmonization. For example, Nova Scotia is phasing in the drop in tax on vehicle purchases.

Overall, the tax changes were largely offsetting in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. In Newfoundland, if prices had remained the same, the net result of these tax changes would have reduced consumer prices by a little more than half a percent. April data showed that prices decreased in Newfoundland by 1.0%. The prices of food from stores and clothing decreased more than the tax changes would suggest, while electricity and

fuel oil did not increase by the full amount of the tax increase.

In Saskatchewan, the provincial sales tax rate dropped from 9% to 7%. If prices had remained the same, the direct effect of this tax reduction would be approximately one percent in the All-items Index for Saskatchewan. The observed April decline for Saskatchewan was smaller (-0.4%). Part of the difference was due to alcohol prices which did not drop by the full amount of the tax reduction, and part was related to underlying price increases in commodities such as clothing and traveller accommodation.

Prince Edward Island increased its tax on gasoline, and Quebec increased cigarette taxes. These changes had very little impact on the All-items Index of either province.

Provincial highlights

Between April 1996 and April 1997, increases in provincial CPI's ranged from a low of 0.6% in British Columbia to a high of 2.7% in Nova Scotia. British Columbia showed lower than average annual movements for vehicle insurance premiums, gasoline prices, owned accommodation charges, and tuition fees. Larger than average price advances for gasoline, fuel oil, food from stores and clothing explained the maximum 2.7% increase in Nova Scotia.

Between March and April, changes in provincial CPI's ranged from a drop of 1.0% in Newfoundland to a rise of 0.1% in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and Ontario.

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

Available at 7 a.m. on the Internet at <http://www.statcan.ca> in *Latest news from Statistics Canada*. The April 1997 issue of the Consumer Price Index (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. See *How to order publications*. The May 1997 Consumer Price Index will be released on June 17th.

For further information on this release, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606; fax: 613 951-2848; Internet: shadsan@statcan.ca). □

Consumer Price Index, major components
1986=100

	April 1997	March 1997	April 1996	March 1997 to April 1997	April 1996 to April 1997
Not seasonally adjusted					
					% change
All-items	137.6	137.6	135.3	0.0	1.7
Food	129.4	129.8	128.3	-0.3	0.9
Shelter	134.7	134.8	134.1	-0.1	0.4
Household operations and furnishings	125.9	125.9	123.9	0.0	1.6
Clothing and footwear	134.6	133.2	132.0	1.1	2.0
Transportation	147.5	148.0	143.1	-0.3	3.1
Health and personal care	139.3	138.2	136.7	0.8	1.9
Recreation, education and reading	148.3	148.1	144.0	0.1	3.0
Alcoholic beverages and tobacco products	150.0	150.0	145.5	0.0	3.1
Goods	130.9	131.2	128.9	-0.2	1.6
Services	145.8	145.5	143.2	0.2	1.8
All-items excluding food and energy	140.1	139.9	137.6	0.1	1.8
Energy	133.0	135.2	130.8	-1.6	1.7
Purchasing power of the consumer dollar expressed in cents, compared with 1986	72.7	72.7	73.9		
All-items (1981=100)	182.2				

Consumer Price Index by province, Whitehorse and Yellowknife
1986=100

	April 1997	March 1997	April 1996	March 1997 to April 1997	April 1996 to April 1997
Not seasonally adjusted					
					% change
Newfoundland	131.4	132.7	128.9	-1.0	1.9
Prince Edward Island	135.7	135.7	133.3	0.0	1.8
Nova Scotia	135.3	135.1	131.7	0.1	2.7
New Brunswick	133.7	133.6	130.8	0.1	2.2
Quebec	134.8	134.6	133.0	0.1	1.4
Ontario	139.0	138.9	136.2	0.1	2.1
Manitoba	141.3	141.4	138.1	-0.1	2.3
Saskatchewan	139.5	140.1	137.7	-0.4	1.3
Alberta	137.8	138.3	135.4	-0.4	1.8
British Columbia	139.4	139.6	138.5	-0.1	0.6
Whitehorse	134.4	134.5	131.0	-0.1	2.6
Yellowknife	134.5	134.1	133.8	0.3	0.5

Travel between Canada and other countries

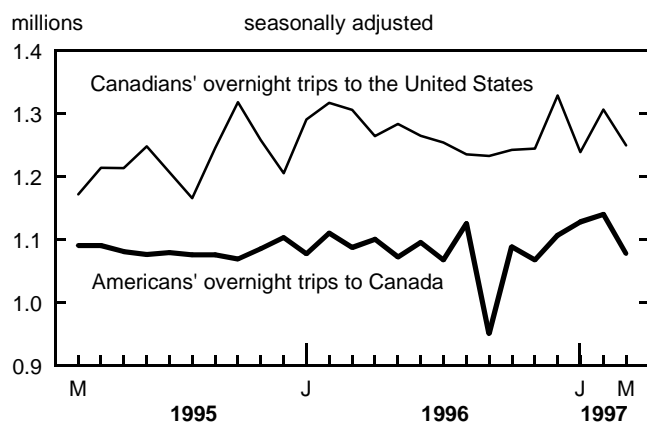
March 1997

Overnight trips between Canada and other countries were down for all directions in March. The decreases registered in trips of at least one night between Canada and the United States were greater than those with overseas countries.

Sharp decrease in overnight trips by Americans to Canada

In March, the number of trips of at least one night by foreigners to Canada was down 4.1% to 1.5 million. Americans stayed at least one night in Canada on 1.1 million occasions, 5.5% fewer than in the previous month. February's level was the highest in nine years. The March drop contrasts with the long-term trend in trips of at least one night by Americans to Canada, which had been up since mid-1992.

Overnight trips between Canada and the United States dropped in both directions in March



Overseas residents (from countries other than the United States) made 407,000 trips of at least one night in March, down slightly from February's record level. Trips of this type have generally increased since mid-1992.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise specified, data in this release are seasonally adjusted (adjusted for variations that repeat annually and for variability caused by the different volumes of travellers associated with different days of the week). Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data. Year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data (the actual traffic counts). Excursions are same-day trips.

Trips of one or more nights to Canada by residents of selected overseas countries

	Mar. 1997 ^P	Mar. 1996 to Mar. 1997
	unadjusted	
	'000	% change
Europe	110	7.5
France	14	-20.1
Germany	18	-7.5
United Kingdom	46	30.4
Other Europe	31	6.6
Asia	91	16.0
Hong Kong	13	36.3
Japan	41	8.6
South Korea	7	5.5
Taiwan	8	7.8
Other Asia	21	29.2
Other countries	30	15.3
Australia	7	11.1
Other countries	23	16.7

^P Preliminary figures.

Trips of at least one night by Canadians to the United States fell

In March, Canadians made 4.4% fewer overnight trips to the United States than in February. After peaking at 1.8 million in December 1991, overnight trips to the United States decreased until mid-1994. They have fluctuated around 1.2 million since.

Canadians also travelled less to countries other than the United States in March compared with the previous month. They made 328,000 trips overseas, down 0.7% from February's peak. The trend in Canadians' trips overseas has generally been upward since early 1991. Overall, Canadians made 1.6 million trips of at least one night abroad in March, down 3.6% from February.

Fewer same-day car trips between Canada and the United States

Car excursions (same-day trips) between Canada and the United States decreased in both directions in March, in almost every province. Canadians made 4.3% fewer cross-border car trips in March compared with February. This drop, the largest monthly decrease in two years, brought the number of Canadians' cross-border car trips to 2.9 million. Cross-border car trips peaked at 5.4 million in November 1991, when the Canadian dollar was worth US\$0.88. Canadian car excursions to the United States then decreased until early 1994 when it reached 3.0 million, and has fluctuated since.

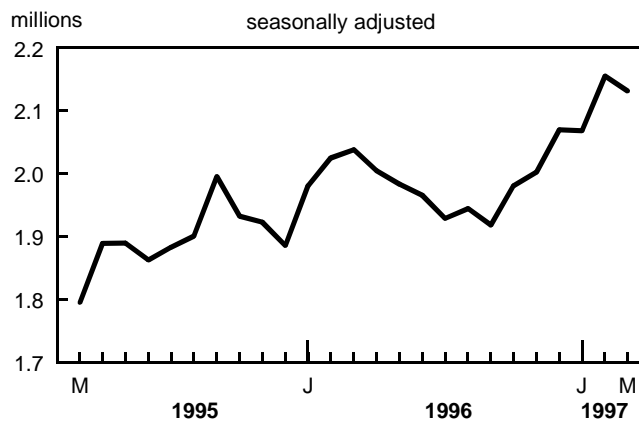
Same day cross-border car trips

	Americans to Canada		Canadians to the United States	
	Mar. 1997 ^P	Mar. 1996 to Mar. 1997	Mar. 1997 ^P	Mar. 1996 to Mar. 1997
	unadjusted			
	'000	% change	'000	% change
Canada	1,885	8.5	2,950	-3.0
New Brunswick	109	-4.1	390	-7.1
Quebec	75	-10.4	234	-12.7
Ontario	1,494	12.7	1,415	0.0
Manitoba	19	-10.2	47	-4.5
Saskatchewan	4	-3.2	15	-12.1
Alberta	7	4.3	11	-5.1
British Columbia	175	-3.0	836	-2.7
Yukon	2	7.4	2	35.5

^P Preliminary figures.

Americans made 2.1 million car excursions to Canada in March, a 1.1% drop from February. The number of same-day car trips by Americans to Canada remained close to 50% higher than the most recent low of 1.4 million reached in January 1994, and has trended upward since.

Car excursions to Canada by Americans decreased in March following February's 16-year high



The number of cross-border car trips made by Americans via the Rainbow and Whirlpool bridges in Niagara Falls almost doubled again in March compared with a year earlier (unadjusted data). A casino located near the two bridges on the Ontario side has been in operation since December 1996.

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

The March 1997 issue of *International travel, advance information* (66-001-PPB, \$8/\$73) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Luc Dubois (613-951-1674; fax: 613-951-2909; Internet: duboluc@statcan.ca), International Travel Section, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. □

Travel between Canada and other countries

	Jan. 1997	Feb. 1997 ^r	March 1997 ^p	Feb. 1997 to March 1997 ^p
seasonally adjusted				
	'000			% change
Canadian trips abroad				
Car trips to the United States				
Same-day	2,932	3,051	2,921	-4.3
One or more nights	758	793	780	-1.7
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,238	1,306	1,249	-4.4
Other countries	323	330	328	-0.7
Travel to Canada				
Car trips from the United States				
Same-day	2,068	2,155	2,131	-1.1
One or more nights	702	717	690	-3.7
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,128	1,140	1,077	-5.5
Other countries ²	391	408	407	-0.3
	March 1997 ^p	March 1996 to March 1997	Jan.- March 1997 ^p	Jan.- March 1996 to Jan.- March 1997
unadjusted				
	'000	% change	'000	% change
Canadian trips abroad				
Car trips to the United States				
Same-day	2,950	-3.0	7,756	-2.8
One or more nights	876	3.1	1,732	-2.1
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,520	2.9	3,374	-0.7
Other countries	485	6.7	1,320	7.0
Travel to Canada				
Car trips from the United States				
Same-day	1,885	8.5	5,017	7.1
One or more nights	403	7.2	1,013	4.8
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	658	6.5	1,690	5.3
Other countries ²	231	11.7	578	14.2

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

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.



OTHER RELEASES

Focus on culture

Spring 1997

The lead article in the Spring 1997 issue of the quarterly bulletin *Focus on culture* looks at changes in the supply of television programming. The prominence of television in the early 1950s as a family leisure activity helped guarantee its economic viability through advertising revenues. Now, however, audiences are fragmented by a multiplicity of program and station choices. As well, numerous other leisure activities compete for viewers' time. The long-term expectations for traditional television programming are questioned.

The visual arts and artistic design labour force is the focus of a second article, which introduces a new Culture Statistics Program initiative. Data from a variety of in-house sources have been integrated as a first step in improving overall statistical knowledge of the sector. Compared with the total Canadian labour force, the visual arts and artistic design labour force is more likely to be highly educated and self-employed.

A third article explores the cultural component of tourism, which includes attendance at festivals, theatres, museums, historic sites, national parks and other related sites and events. Cultural activities and events stimulate tourism both within and from outside Canada. In turn, travel agendas that include a cultural component make an important economic contribution to the Canadian culture sector.

Fluctuations in federal government spending on culture between 1984/85 and 1994/95 are examined in the final article. After a declining growth rate in the latter half of the 1980s, federal cultural expenditures actually dropped in 1991/92 and further declined in each of the next two years before increasing in 1994/95. This recent growth was mainly because of the increased costs associated with the downsizing of federal cultural departments and agencies, including staff severance packages.

The Spring 1997 issue of *Focus on culture*, Vol. 9, no. 1 (87-004-XPB, \$9/\$27) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Mary Cromie (613-951-6864), Culture Statistics Program. ■

Machinery and equipment price indexes

First quarter 1997 (preliminary)

The overall Machinery and Equipment Price Index (1986=100) was at 122.9 in the first quarter of 1997, up

0.7% from the previous quarter and 1.7% higher than the first quarter of 1996.

Among industry divisions, the largest contributors to the overall quarterly price movement were manufacturing (+0.9%), agriculture (+1.3%) and transportation, communication, storage and utilities (+0.3%).

The same industries were the largest contributors to the overall quarterly price movements between the first quarters of 1996 and 1997, with increases of 1.8% for manufacturing, 3.3% for agriculture and 1.3% for transportation, communication, storage and utilities.

Machinery and equipment price indexes (1986=100)

	First quarter 1997 ^P	Fourth quarter 1996 to First quarter 1997	First quarter 1996 to First quarter 1997
	% change		
Machinery and Equipment Price Index	122.9	0.7	1.7
Industry			
Agriculture	149.7	1.3	3.3
Forestry	134.1	0.4	1.2
Fishing	118.5	0.3	-0.3
Mines, quarries and oil wells	121.9	0.7	1.3
Manufacturing	127.3	0.9	1.8
Construction	124.8	0.6	0.6
Transportation, communication, storage and utilities	115.4	0.3	1.3
Trade	113.2	0.1	0.6
Finance, insurance and real estate	106.0	0.2	0.4
Community, business and personal services	107.9	0.0	1.4
Public administration	120.3	0.6	1.0

^P Preliminary figures.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2023-2025.

The first quarter issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24 / \$79) will be available in June. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending May 10, 1997 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending May 10, 1997, totalled 308 613 tonnes, down 4.3% from the week-earlier 322 614 tonnes, and up 7.6% from the year-earlier 286 812 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 5 390 916 tonnes, a 2.7% increase compared with 5 249 757 tonnes for the same period in 1996.

For more detailed information on this release, contact Andy Shinnan (613-951-3515; Internet: ashinny@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Pulpwood and wood residue statistics

March 1997

Pulpwood receipts in March totalled 3 569 676 cubic metres, up 18.4% from 3 014 282 cubic metres in March 1996. Wood residue receipts totalled 6 422 422 cubic metres, up 7.8% from 5 959 163 cubic metres a year earlier. Consumption of pulpwood and wood residue totalled 9 503 315 cubic metres, up 7.4% from 8 850 690 cubic metres in March 1996. The closing inventory of pulpwood and wood residue decreased 13.6% to 15 692 546 cubic metres, down from 18 165 877 cubic metres a year earlier. Year-to-date consumption of pulpwood and wood residue (28 276 229 cubic metres) increased 5.6% from 26 788 329 cubic metres a year earlier. Figures for 1996 have been revised.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 54.

The March 1997 issue of *Pulpwood and wood residue statistics* (25-001-XPB, \$8/\$73) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Liisa Pent (613-951-3531; Internet: pentlii@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Port activity

Fourth quarter 1996

Canadian ports handled 357.9 million tonnes of goods during the last quarter of 1996, a 0.7 % drop compared with the same period a year earlier.

This decline was due to a 3.1%, or 3.1 million tonne, drop in domestic shipments of goods during the fourth quarter of 1996.

During the same period, international cargo handled inched up by 0.5 million tonnes, a 0.2 %

increase. Shipments of goods to foreign countries fell by 1.3 % to 174.3 million tonnes, while international cargo arrivals increased 3.3 % to 86.0 million tonnes.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 145 and 146.

Fourth quarter data for 1996 will be published in the issue of *Surface and marine transport, Service bulletin, Vol. 9, no. 7* (50-002-XPB, \$11/\$80), which will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Bob Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0579; Internet: lacroque@statcan.ca), Marine Transport Unit, Transportation Division. ■

For-hire trucking (commodity origin and destination)

Third and fourth quarter 1996 (preliminary)

After a slow first quarter, Canada-based for-hire trucking companies saw activity increase for the remainder of the year and moved a total of 229 million tonnes of freight, up 8.5% from 1995.

These companies moved over 47 million tonnes of freight between Canada and the United States in 1996, an 8% increase from 1995.

Preliminary results are now available from the For-hire Trucking (commodity origin and destination) Survey for the third and fourth quarters of 1996. The survey measures intercity commodity movements (distances of 25 kilometres or more) of Canada-based for-hire carriers with annual intercity revenues of \$1 million or more.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 143.

Data for 1996 will appear in *Surface and marine transport service bulletin, Vol. 13, no. 2* (50-002-XPB, \$11/\$80). See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; Internet: lacroque@statcan.ca; fax: 613-951-0579) or Wendy Christoff (613-951-2498; Internet: chriswen@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Financial statistics for Canadian-domiciled marine carriers 1995 (preliminary)

For the 1995 reporting year, the Marine Financial Survey included firms earning gross operating revenues of \$500,000 or more.

In 1995, total operating revenues reached \$2.75 billion with operating expenses at \$3.54 billion. Of the 21,940 employees in the industry, 60.6% were vessel crew. Property and equipment was valued at \$3.42 billion, with a depreciated value of \$1.76 billion.

For further information on this release, contact Bob Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0579; Internet: *laroque@statcan.ca*), Marine Transport Unit, Transportation Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Oil pipeline transport, February 1997
Catalogue number 55-001-XPB
(Canada: \$12/\$114; outside Canada: US\$ 12/US\$114).

Consumer Price Index, April 1997
Catalogue number 62-001-XPB
(Canada: \$11/\$103; outside Canada: US\$ 11/US\$103).

Department store sales and stocks, March 1997
Catalogue number 63-002-XPB
(Canada: \$17/\$165; outside Canada: US\$ 17/US\$165).

Births and deaths, 1995, microfiche version
Catalogue number 84-210-XMB
(Canada: \$25; outside Canada: US\$25).

Births and deaths, 1995, paper version
Catalogue number 84-210-XPB
(Canada: \$35; outside Canada: US\$35).

Focus on culture, Spring 1997
Catalogue number 87-004-XPB
(Canada: \$9/\$27; outside Canada: US\$ 9/US\$27).

All prices exclude sales tax.

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