



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996**

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.

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- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996**

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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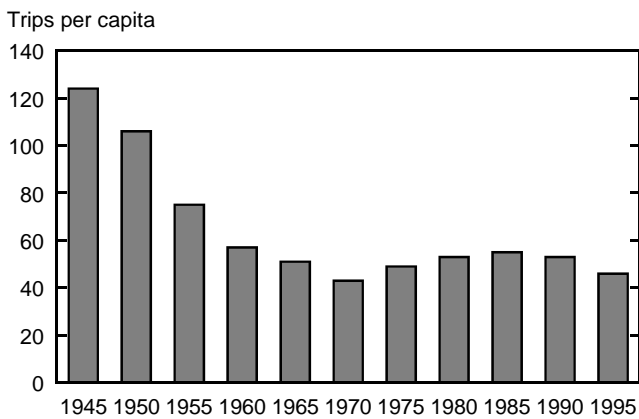
MAJOR RELEASES

Urban transit

1996

Despite the emphasis on taking public 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 since 1970 when the average fell to 43 trips per person. In contrast, Canadians were using mass transit at three times that rate at the end of the Second World War.

Transit patronage declining since the mid-1980s



The popularity of urban transportation plunged rapidly between 1950 and 1970 with the boom in automobiles and the growth of suburbs. It rebounded slightly during the 1980s when the energy crisis, the travel needs of persons without access to a car, and environmental awareness encouraged governments to turn more and more to mass transit.

Over the past four decades, urban transportation has undergone a radical change. In 1950, a wide segment of the population used urban transit in small as well as large cities.

Note to readers

Data on urban transit are being released in conjunction with National Transportation Week.

Figures on passenger trips are for urban transit service only, and exclude auxiliary transportation services such as those for schools, sightseeing and charters.

Beginning in 1995, Statistics Canada redesigned its urban transit survey from a monthly survey of companies generating more than \$1 million annually to a quarterly survey of those earning more than \$200,000. Small companies earning less than \$1 million annually represent fewer than 1% of total passengers carried. Even so, some of the increase in passenger trips for 1995 may be attributed to this change in survey design.

Motor vehicle registrations are collected as part of the federal government's fiscal transfers among provinces. Administrative requirements vary by province, so that certain categories may contain differences. For example, a motor vehicle may be registered as a passenger automobile in one province and a truck in another, depending on private or commercial use.

Transit trips and motor vehicle registrations per capita are simple averages calculated by dividing the respective totals by the Canadian population.

Today, total passenger trips are disproportionately accounted for by large urban areas with some form of rapid transit. Commuters in the nation's major metropolitan areas — Toronto, Montréal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton — are the heaviest users of urban transit. For example, in 1996, the 2.385 million residents of Metropolitan Toronto made 374 million trips on the local transit system, a nation-high average of over 155 trips per person.

Canadians everywhere own far more automobiles than a decade ago and are driving them longer. In 1995, there were 445 passenger cars for every 1,000 Canadians. The 13.1 million motor vehicles registered as passenger car in 1995 had an estimated average odometer reading of 96,930 kilometres; this compares with an average reading of 65,800 kilometres for the 10.3 million passenger cars in 1980.

Average odometer readings are based on estimates from the Canadian Automobile Association's annual vehicle durability survey.

Transit ridership reached peak in 1988

Urban transit passenger trips peaked in 1988 when Canadians made just over 1.5 billion trips on municipal bus and subway systems. Since then, however,

ridership has declined by an average of almost 2% a year.

Urban transit in Canada, passenger trips

| | Passenger trips (millions) | % change previous year | Trips per capita |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1987 | 1,475 | | 55.6 |
| 1988 | 1,511 | 2.5 | 56.2 |
| 1989 | 1,504 | -0.5 | 54.9 |
| 1990 | 1,478 | -1.7 | 53.2 |
| 1991 | 1,434 | -3.0 | 51.0 |
| 1992 | 1,414 | -1.4 | 49.5 |
| 1993 | 1,383 | -2.2 | 47.8 |
| 1994 | 1,349 | -2.5 | 46.1 |
| 1995 | 1,366 | 1.3 | 46.2 |
| 1996 | 1,349 | -1.3 | 45.5 |

In 1996, the 94 companies that comprised the urban transit industry recorded 1.35 billion passenger trips. According to Human Resources Development Canada, the transit industry experienced 40,800 person-days lost to strikes or lockouts in 1996. This loss accounts for over one-third of the decline in passenger trips from 1995 to 1996.

Just over half of operating expenses covered through fares

For every \$1.00 in operating expenses, transit authorities collected only about \$0.55 in revenue from passenger fares in 1996. The last time revenues from fares routinely outpaced expenses was in the early 1960s.

During the remainder of the 1960s, increased automobile dependency coupled with suburban growth resulted in tougher financial times for transit. Governments responded by creating subsidy programs during the 1970s.

Last year, transit authorities collected about \$1.6 billion in revenue from fares, up almost 5% from 1995. At the same time, total operating expenses rose 6% to \$3.0 billion.

Urban transit in Canada, revenues and expenses

| | 1995 | 1996 | % change |
|---------------------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Revenues (\$ 000) | | | |
| Urban service | 1,465,580 | 1,532,346 | 4.6 |
| Other service | 28,178 | 22,991 | -18.4 |
| Other revenue | 82,449 | 96,314 | 16.8 |
| Total operating | 1,576,207 | 1,651,651 | 4.8 |
| Expenses (\$ 000) | | | |
| Wages - operators | 1,273,312 | 1,273,697 | 0.0 |
| Repairs and maintenance | 656,315 | 650,407 | -0.9 |
| Energy | 205,048 | 211,722 | 3.3 |
| Other expenses | 711,381 | 882,032 | 24.0 |
| Total operating | 2,846,056 | 3,017,858 | 6.0 |
| Revenue-cost ratio | 0.554 | 0.547 | -1.2 |

Public financing of transit varies by province because of differences in funding formulas and urbanization.

The new reality of shrinking budgets means that the current level of transit funding is unlikely to continue. Unlike private vehicle infrastructure costs, transit subsidies are highly visible.

The industry continues to evolve from providing mass transit service — one size fits all — to delivering more innovative services. There is also a growing recognition by many, including the Transportation Association of Canada, that transit is key to a more sustainable urban transportation system.

A more complete description of this data release will be available in the *Surface and marine transport service bulletin*, Vol. 13, no. 4 (50-002-XPB, \$13/\$83), which will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Robert Lacroque (613-951-2486; Internet: lacroque@statcan.ca), or for analytical information, contact Larry McKeown (613-951-6153; fax: 613-951-0579; Internet: mckelar@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost

1996

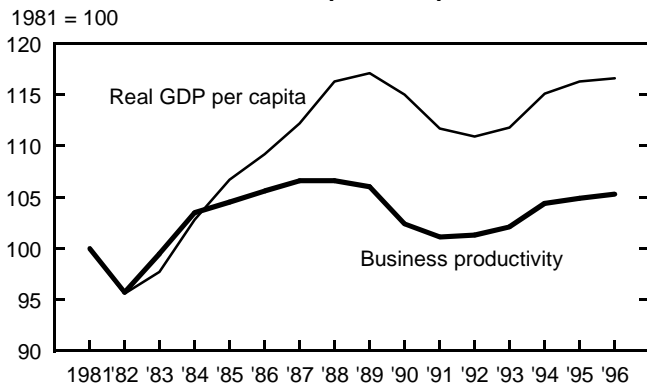
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and economic growth during the year. The business sector recorded a 0.4% increase in productivity last year, the same rate of growth as in 1995, but much lower than the 2.2% gain recorded in 1994.

Canadian manufacturing, an important segment of the business sector, showed a productivity increase of 1.3% in 1996, less than half its growth rate in 1995 (+2.8%).

Productivity is a measure of production efficiency that most economists regard as the foundation of a country's standard of living. Its growth rate is calculated as the difference between the growth in the amount of output produced (real GDP) and the growth of the quantity of all inputs used, such as labour and machinery and equipment. When all factors of production are included, it is referred to as "multifactor productivity."

Productivity gains in business over the past few years have been far less impressive than they were during the early to mid-1980s, when the economy was recovering more rapidly from the 1982 recession.

As well as productivity, real GDP per capita was still lower in 1996 than its previous peak in 1989



For example, both productivity and real gross domestic product per capita, a commonly used indicator of the standard of living, took only three years to regain the ground lost during the 1982 recession. In contrast, these two indicators had not regained the ground lost during the 1990-92 recession by the end of 1996.

Definitions

Productivity refers to multifactor productivity, which is a measure of the technical efficiency of production. Its growth rate is calculated as the difference between the growth of the quantity of output produced (real value added) and the weighted growth of the quantity of all primary inputs used.

Labour productivity, or real gross domestic product (GDP) per hour worked, is the ratio between output and labour input (hours worked). Economic performance as measured by labour productivity must be interpreted carefully, since these estimates reflect changes in the other factors of production in addition to growth in productive efficiency.

Unit labour cost is the labour cost per unit of output. It is calculated as the ratio between labour compensation and real GDP. It is also the equivalent of the ratio between labour compensation per hour worked and labour productivity. Unit labour cost will increase when labour compensation per hour worked increases more rapidly than labour productivity.

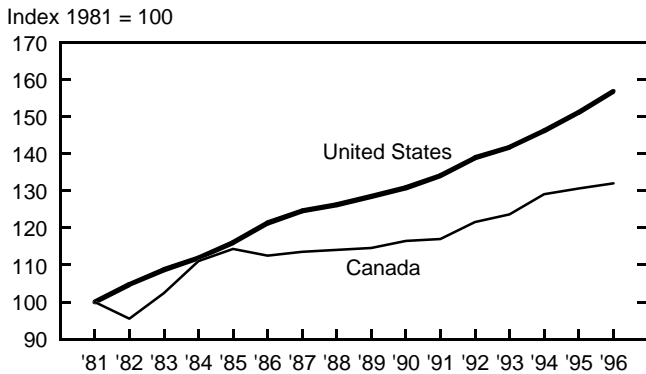
Labour compensation includes all payments in cash or in kind by domestic producers to persons at work as remuneration for work. This includes the salaries and supplementary labour income of paid workers, plus an imputed labour income for self-employed workers.

Business sector goods include agriculture, fishing, forestry, mining activities, manufacturing, construction and public utilities. Business sector services comprise transportation and storage, communications, wholesale and retail trade, finance, insurance and real estate and the group of community, business and personal services.

Canadian services outperformed American counterparts

While the performance of the whole Canadian business sector has remained quite comparable with its American counterpart since 1961, labour productivity of Canadian manufacturing started to lag behind the United States in 1986. However, Canada has performed better than the United States in the services sector as well as some goods producing industries (for example, construction and mining), which accounts for 75% of total production in the business sector.

A productivity gap in favor of American manufacturers started to show up in 1986



From 1961 to 1985, labour productivity in both the Canadian and the U.S. manufacturing sectors grew at much the same rate. Since then, a widening gap has emerged in favor of American manufacturing. Between 1986 and 1996, labour productivity grew on average 1.6% per year in Canada and 2.6% in the United States.

Studies by Statistics Canada in 1994 showed that this gap is mainly attributed to a greater concentration of U.S. manufacturing activities in new, fast-growing sectors such as computers, office automation and electronic equipment (see *Highlights in Aggregate productivity measures, 1994*, 15-204-XPE).

In 1996, American manufacturers recorded 3.8% growth in labour productivity compared with only 1.1% in Canada. The U.S. gain was up slightly from 1995, while the rate in Canada was virtually unchanged.

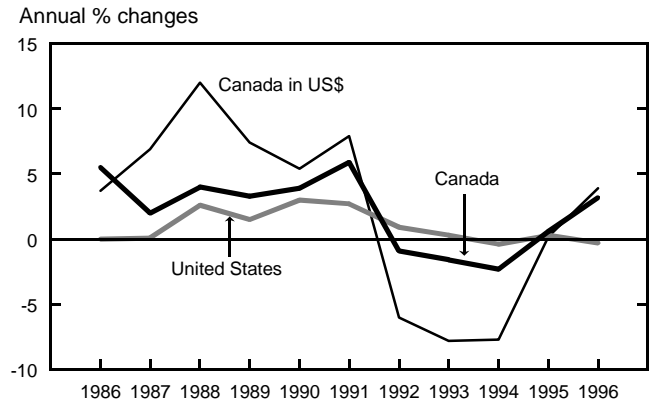
Unit labour cost: Lower increases in Canada since 1992, with the exception of 1996

Even though U.S. workers obtained higher pay increases than Canadian workers since 1986, greater labour productivity gains in the United States tempered the increases in U.S. unit labour costs. However, the last 10 years can be separated into two sub-periods, each with quite different histories.

From 1986 to 1991, unit labour costs in U.S. manufacturers increased less than in Canada; this trend was reversed after 1991. Since 1992, Canadian manufacturers were helped by a lower growth of hourly wage rates and by the depreciation of the Canadian dollar. This allowed Canadian manufacturers to keep increases in their unit labour cost below their American competitors between 1992 and 1995. However, preliminary data for 1996 indicate that unit

labour cost increases in Canada were greater than the United States.

In terms of labour costs, Canadian manufacturers' competitive position deteriorated in 1996



Services contributed as much to productivity growth as goods-producing industries

Preliminary estimates for 1996 show that both Canadian services and goods-producing industries registered similar productivity growth. However, the service sector had a much stronger growth in output (+3.4%) and in hours worked (+2.9%). Detailed estimates of labour productivity indicate that services generally registered an increase, with the exception of the community, business and personal services industry group (CBP).

This CBP group, which comprises mainly business, accommodation and food, private health, personal and recreational services, experienced its third productivity decrease in four years. These decreases occurred at the same time as the share of hours worked from the self-employed increased. This new wave of individuals going into business was associated with a decline in measured labour productivity. However, it is important to note that there are greater difficulties with precisely measuring output for these industries, especially for the self-employed.

Since this CBP group represents more than 30% of services-producing industries and 17% of the overall business sector's output, its productivity decline had a significant negative impact on aggregate performance. When this group is excluded, labour productivity of the service sector industries showed an increase of 2.3% while business sector productivity growth registered a 1.4% increase in 1996.

Elsewhere, communications, public utilities and transportation and storage registered the largest

productivity increases in 1996. The performance of these three industries was accompanied by significant layoffs.

Hourly compensation increased more rapidly in 1996

Preliminary estimates for hourly compensation paid to workers in the business sector jumped 3.1% in 1996. This compares with the cumulative 2.6% increase of the previous three years. Hourly compensation went up roughly at the same pace in both the goods and services producing industries.

Increases in hourly compensation occurred in every industry. The most notable changes occurred in forestry, public utilities as well as finance, insurance and real estate industries. The increase in hourly compensation in the finance, insurance and real estate industries is mainly due to the increases in the commissions earned by workers who benefited from the performance of financial markets and from the recovery of the real estate market in 1996.

Unit labour cost in the business sector rose moderately after years of stability

Reflecting mainly the increase in hourly compensation in 1996, unit labour cost increased

2.8% in the business sector. Labour cost per unit of output reflects changes in both hourly compensation and labour productivity.

Although this increase doubles the growth observed in 1995, unit labour cost grew only 1.4% on average since 1990. In comparison, during the 1980's, unit labour cost grew on average 5.2%.

Increases in unit labour cost were higher in construction (+5.9%), community, business and personal services (+5.2%), agriculture (+4.6%) and forestry (+4.4%). Robust productivity growth in communication and public utilities led to a decline in unit labor cost in these industries, despite the high levels of hourly wage rate growth in these activities.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 7898 and 7916-7939.

For further information, contact Jean-Pierre Maynard (613-951-3654; fax: 613-951-0489), Micro Economic Analysis Division.

Contribution of multifactor productivity, labour input, capital input to real value added growth, Canada

| | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | Annual % change (Törnqvist indices) | | | | | | | | |
| Business sector | | | | | | | | | |
| Multifactor productivity | -0.0 | -0.5 | -3.4 | -1.2 | 0.2 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 0.4 | 0.4 |
| +Labour contribution | 2.8 | 1.0 | -0.1 | -3.0 | -0.9 | 1.6 | 2.5 | 1.4 | 1.5 |
| +Capital contribution | 1.5 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 0.6 | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.4 |
| =Real value added | 4.4 | 2.5 | -1.7 | -3.1 | 0.1 | 3.1 | 5.2 | 2.4 | 2.4 |
| Services industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Multifactor productivity | -0.3 | -0.3 | -4.1 | -1.0 | -0.3 | -0.4 | 1.1 | -0.1 | 0.3 |
| +Labour contribution | 2.8 | 1.2 | 1.6 | -1.9 | 0.0 | 1.6 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 2.0 |
| +Capital contribution | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.1 | 1.3 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 1.1 | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| =Real value added | 5.1 | 3.5 | -0.5 | -1.5 | 1.3 | 2.8 | 4.8 | 2.9 | 3.4 |
| Goods industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Multifactor productivity | 0.3 | -0.8 | -2.6 | -1.5 | 0.7 | 2.0 | 3.1 | 0.9 | 0.5 |
| +Labour contribution | 2.8 | 0.8 | -1.9 | -4.4 | -2.1 | 1.7 | 2.8 | 1.0 | 0.8 |
| +Capital contribution | 0.5 | 1.4 | 1.4 | 0.7 | 0.1 | -0.2 | -0.2 | -0.0 | -0.1 |
| =Real value added | 3.6 | 1.4 | -3.1 | -5.0 | -1.2 | 3.5 | 5.8 | 1.9 | 1.1 |
| Manufacturing industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Multifactor productivity | -0.4 | -1.6 | -4.0 | -3.8 | 1.0 | 3.3 | 6.2 | 2.8 | 1.3 |
| +Labour contribution | 2.8 | 0.3 | -3.3 | -4.9 | -1.3 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 1.7 | 0.2 |
| +Capital contribution | 2.1 | 2.4 | 2.6 | 1.0 | 0.4 | -0.7 | -1.0 | -0.9 | -0.2 |
| =Real value added | 4.6 | 0.8 | -4.7 | -7.2 | 0.0 | 4.6 | 7.3 | 3.7 | 1.3 |

Note: Economic growth measured by "Real Value Added", originates from the contribution of primary factors (labour and capital) as well as the technical progress estimated by multifactor productivity. The above table summarizes the contribution of each of these to the growth of "Real Value Added".

Growth rates of business sector productivity measures

| | Labour productivity | | Hourly compensation | | Unit labour cost | | Canadian unit labour cost in U.S. \$ |
|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|------|------------------|------|--------------------------------------|
| | Canada | U.S. | Canada | U.S. | Canada | U.S. | |
| 1981 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 12.9 | 9.6 | 10.6 | 7.4 | 7.8 |
| 1982 | -0.8 | -0.7 | 10.0 | 7.6 | 11.0 | 8.2 | 7.8 |
| 1983 | 4.1 | 3.3 | 4.9 | 4.1 | 0.8 | 0.7 | 0.9 |
| 1984 | 3.5 | 2.5 | 5.1 | 4.3 | 1.5 | 2.0 | -3.4 |
| 1985 | 0.5 | 1.9 | 3.8 | 5.0 | 3.2 | 3.0 | -2.1 |
| 1986 | 1.5 | 2.6 | 4.8 | 5.2 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 1.4 |
| 1987 | 1.1 | -0.2 | 5.9 | 3.8 | 4.8 | 4.0 | 9.8 |
| 1988 | 0.8 | 0.5 | 6.3 | 4.5 | 5.4 | 4.0 | 13.6 |
| 1989 | 0.9 | 0.8 | 6.6 | 2.8 | 5.7 | 1.9 | 9.9 |
| 1990 | -1.6 | 0.8 | 4.1 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 4.9 | 7.3 |
| 1991 | 1.1 | 0.6 | 5.7 | 4.8 | 4.6 | 4.2 | 6.5 |
| 1992 | 1.6 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 5.2 | 1.4 | 1.7 | -3.9 |
| 1993 | 1.0 | 0.2 | 0.1 | 2.5 | -0.9 | 2.3 | -7.1 |
| 1994 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 0.7 | 1.9 | -1.1 | 1.4 | -6.6 |
| 1995 | 0.5 | 0.1 | 1.9 | 3.1 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 0.9 |
| 1996 | 0.3 | 1.0 | 3.1 | 3.8 | 2.8 | 2.8 | 3.5 |

Source: Productivity and related data from the United States used in this publication were released on May 7, 1997, by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C.

Growth rates of manufacturing industries productivity measures

| | Labour productivity | | Hourly compensation | | Unit labour cost | | Canadian unit labour cost in U.S.\$ |
|------|---------------------|------|---------------------|------|------------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| | Canada | U.S. | Canada | U.S. | Canada | U.S. | |
| 1981 | 4.9 | 1.3 | 15.1 | 9.9 | 9.7 | 8.6 | 7.0 |
| 1982 | -4.5 | 4.7 | 10.6 | 9.6 | 15.8 | 4.7 | 12.6 |
| 1983 | 7.3 | 3.8 | 6.1 | 2.7 | -1.1 | -1.0 | -1.0 |
| 1984 | 8.5 | 2.9 | 4.7 | 3.5 | -3.4 | 0.5 | -8.1 |
| 1985 | 2.9 | 3.7 | 5.2 | 5.5 | 2.2 | 1.6 | -3.1 |
| 1986 | -1.6 | 4.5 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 5.5 | 0.0 | 3.7 |
| 1987 | 0.9 | 2.7 | 3.0 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 0.1 | 6.9 |
| 1988 | 0.4 | 1.3 | 4.4 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 2.6 | 12.0 |
| 1989 | 0.4 | 1.8 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 3.3 | 1.5 | 7.4 |
| 1990 | 1.7 | 1.8 | 5.6 | 4.8 | 3.9 | 3.0 | 5.4 |
| 1991 | 0.4 | 2.5 | 6.4 | 5.2 | 5.9 | 2.7 | 7.9 |
| 1992 | 3.9 | 3.6 | 3.0 | 4.5 | -0.9 | 0.9 | -6.0 |
| 1993 | 1.7 | 2.1 | 0.1 | 2.4 | -1.6 | 0.3 | -7.8 |
| 1994 | 4.4 | 3.1 | 2.0 | 2.7 | -2.3 | -0.4 | -7.7 |
| 1995 | 1.2 | 3.4 | 1.8 | 3.7 | 0.6 | 0.3 | 0.2 |
| 1996 | 1.1 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 3.5 | 3.2 | -0.3 | 3.9 |

Source: Productivity and related data from the United States used in this publication were released on May 7, 1997, by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Washington, D.C.

Measures of labour productivity and unit labour cost, Canada

| | 1988 | 1989 | 1990 | 1991 | 1992 | 1993 | 1994 | 1995 | 1996 |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | Annual % change (Laspeyres indices) | | | | | | | | |
| Business sector | | | | | | | | | |
| Labour productivity | 0.8 | 0.9 | -1.6 | 1.1 | 1.6 | 1.0 | 1.8 | 0.5 | 0.3 |
| Real GDP | 4.9 | 2.4 | -1.5 | -3.2 | 0.2 | 3.2 | 5.4 | 2.5 | 2.4 |
| Hours | 4.1 | 1.4 | 0.1 | -4.2 | -1.4 | 2.2 | 3.5 | 2.0 | 2.1 |
| Hourly compensation | 6.3 | 6.6 | 4.1 | 5.7 | 3.1 | 0.1 | 0.7 | 1.9 | 3.1 |
| Unit labour cost | 5.4 | 5.7 | 5.8 | 4.6 | 1.4 | -0.9 | -1.1 | 1.4 | 2.8 |
| Services industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Labour productivity | 1.2 | 1.4 | -2.8 | 1.3 | 1.0 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 0.4 | 0.5 |
| Real GDP | 5.5 | 3.3 | -0.7 | -1.7 | 0.9 | 2.8 | 4.8 | 2.9 | 3.4 |
| Hours | 4.2 | 1.8 | 2.1 | -3.0 | -0.0 | 2.3 | 3.5 | 2.5 | 2.9 |
| Hourly compensation | 6.0 | 7.6 | 3.7 | 6.6 | 3.1 | 0.2 | 0.5 | 1.7 | 3.0 |
| Unit labour cost | 4.8 | 6.1 | 6.7 | 5.2 | 2.1 | -0.3 | -0.8 | 1.4 | 2.5 |
| Goods industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Labour productivity | 0.4 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.4 | 3.0 | 1.6 | 2.5 | 0.9 | 0.5 |
| Real GDP | 4.4 | 1.4 | -2.3 | -4.8 | -0.6 | 3.6 | 6.0 | 1.9 | 1.2 |
| Hours | 3.9 | 0.9 | -2.8 | -6.1 | -3.5 | 1.9 | 3.5 | 1.0 | 0.7 |
| Hourly compensation | 6.6 | 5.5 | 5.0 | 4.7 | 3.2 | -0.1 | 0.9 | 2.2 | 3.4 |
| Unit labour cost | 6.2 | 4.9 | 4.4 | 3.2 | 0.2 | -1.7 | -1.5 | 1.2 | 2.9 |
| Manufacturing industries | | | | | | | | | |
| Labour productivity | 0.4 | 0.4 | 1.7 | 0.4 | 3.9 | 1.7 | 4.4 | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| Real GDP | 5.1 | 0.9 | -3.7 | -7.1 | 1.3 | 4.8 | 7.6 | 3.8 | 1.3 |
| Hours | 4.6 | 0.5 | -5.3 | -7.5 | -2.5 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 2.6 | 0.2 |
| Hourly compensation | 4.4 | 3.8 | 5.6 | 6.4 | 3.0 | 0.1 | 2.0 | 1.8 | 4.4 |
| Unit labour cost | 4.0 | 3.3 | 3.9 | 5.9 | -0.9 | -1.6 | -2.3 | 0.6 | 3.2 |



OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index

May 1997

The index that measures the number of help-wanted newspaper advertisements rose for the eighth consecutive month (1991=100). This time it was up 4% to reach 106. Increases were recorded in nine provinces, with Newfoundland remaining at its April level.

From November 1994 through December 1995, the index declined, and this was followed by 10 months of little change. Since October 1996 the index has increased 20%. The recent rise in the index is in line with improvement in other economic indicators.

Provincially, the index for Ontario advanced 3% to 110. This is the highest level recorded since February 1991. The provincial index has risen 18% since October 1996.

The index for Quebec rose 3% to 93, its fourth consecutive rise and the first time since March 1996 that the index has broken from the 84-to-90 range.

British Columbia's index increased 1% to 76, 13% higher than October 1996.

The Prairie provinces index gained 4% to reach 125 with all provinces recording increases. Since October 1996, the Prairies index has increased 33%, heavily influenced by Alberta's index which has risen 40% in this time period.

In the Atlantic provinces, the index posted a 3% gain to 119, its highest level since December 1990. Three of the provinces recorded increases in May with Prince Edward Island (+9%) leading the way for the third consecutive month. After remaining flat in 1995 and 1996, the Atlantic provinces index has recorded significant growth since January 1997, advancing 16%.

Note: The Help-wanted-Index uses the Census of Population estimates as weights for the index. With the release of the June 1997 Help-wanted Index, the index will be reweighted using the 1996 Census of Population estimates. The Help-wanted Index series will be revised historically from January 1981. For added convenience, beginning with next months' releases — the monthly seasonally adjusted and trend cycle data series along with the annual data series for all provinces and cities will be added to CANSIM. The Help-wanted Index is compiled from the number of help-wanted ads published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas. The index is a measure of companies intentions to hire new workers. These

indices have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons

Help-wanted Index (1991=100)

| | May 1997 | April 1997 | May 1996 to May 1997 | April to May 1997 |
|----------------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | seasonally adjusted | | | |
| | | | | % change |
| Canada | 106 | 102 | 20 | 4 |
| Atlantic provinces | 119 | 115 | 16 | 3 |
| Newfoundland | 90 | 90 | 13 | 0 |
| Prince Edward Island | 199 | 182 | 35 | 9 |
| Nova Scotia | 112 | 110 | 15 | 2 |
| New Brunswick | 121 | 115 | 3 | 5 |
| Quebec | 93 | 90 | 7 | 3 |
| Ontario | 110 | 107 | 21 | 3 |
| Prairies provinces | 125 | 120 | 36 | 4 |
| Manitoba | 132 | 126 | 27 | 5 |
| Saskatchewan | 122 | 117 | 31 | 4 |
| Alberta | 123 | 118 | 43 | 4 |
| British Columbia | 76 | 75 | 17 | 1 |

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

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

Short-term Expectations Survey

Every month, Statistics Canada canvasses a group of economic analysts for one-month-ahead forecasts of key economic indicators. Participants in this survey forecast the year-over-year changes in the Consumer Price Index, the unemployment rate and participation rate, merchandise exports and imports, and the monthly change in gross domestic product at factor cost.

- The mean forecast for May's Consumer Price Index is a year-over-year change of 1.7%. Opinions range from 1.6% to 1.8%. The mean forecast for April (+2.0%) overestimated the outcome (+1.7%).
- The forecasters estimate May's unemployment rate to be 9.5% (minimum 9.4% and a maximum of 9.9%). In April, the mean forecast (9.3%)

underestimated the outcome (9.6%). The mean forecast for the participation rate in the labour force is 64.9%. Forecasts range from 64.7% to 65.0%. The mean forecast for April (64.7%) underestimated the outcome (64.8%).

- The mean forecast for exports in April is \$23.8 billion. Opinions range from \$23.0 billion to \$24.4 billion. Last month's forecast (\$23.8 billion) slightly overestimated the outcome (\$23.7 billion). The mean forecast for imports for April is \$21.1 billion. Forecasts range from \$20.7 billion to \$21.5 billion. Last month's forecast (\$21.6) overestimated the outcome of \$20.6 billion.
- The mean forecast for real gross domestic product in April is a 0.4% increase. Opinions range from +0.2% to +0.6%. The March forecast (+0.4%) overestimated the outcome (-0.3%).

The next release will be on July 9, 1997. For a set of tables, or for further information on this release, contact Heather Prieur (613-951-3055). ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending May 31, 1997 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending May 31, 1997, totalled 321 656 tonnes, up 7.3% from

the week-earlier 299 756 tonnes and up 14.0% from the year-earlier 282 058 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 6 295 474 tonnes, a 3.3% increase compared with 6 093 236 tonnes for the same period in 1996.

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

Egg production

April 1997 (preliminary)

Egg production estimates for April are now available.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1145, 1146 and 5689-5691.

To order *Production and stocks of eggs and poultry* (\$115/year), contact Julie Gordon (613-951-5039), Agriculture Division.

For further information on this release, contact Sandy Giefeldt (613-951-2505), Livestock and Animal Product Section, Agriculture Division. ■

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Grain trade of Canada, 1995-96
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Exports: Merchandise trade, 1996, (paper version)
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 (Canada: \$258; outside Canada: US\$258).

Retail trade, March 1997
Catalogue number 63-005-XPB
 (Canada: \$21/\$206; outside Canada: US\$21/US\$206).

Labour force information, week ended May 17, 1997
Catalogue number 71-001-PPB
 (Canada: \$10/\$120; outside Canada: US\$10/US\$120).
Available at 7:00 a.m. on Friday, June 6. Release available on the Internet at www.statcan.ca at 7:00 a.m.

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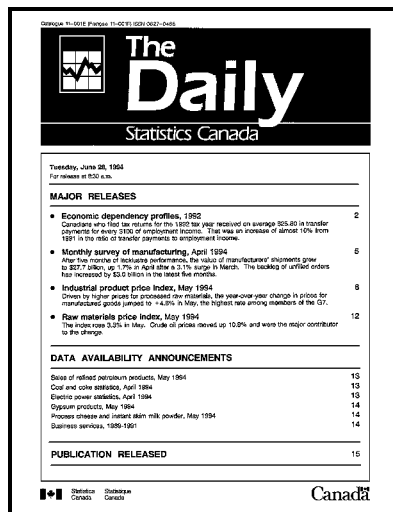
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