



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, May 27, 1998

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Characteristics of international travellers, 1997**

The number of trips from the United States to Canada increased 5.2% in 1997, as Americans took advantage of their stronger dollar. Canadians made a record number of overseas trips last year, while the number of overseas visitors to Canada was down for the first time since 1991.

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- **Railway carloadings, 1997**

In 1997, the railways transported a record 288.9 million tonnes of freight, 7.7% more than in 1996. Coal was the commodity with the highest volume, while wheat shipments posted the biggest percentage increase due to a bumper crop and improved grain handling.

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OTHER RELEASES

- The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada

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- Railway carloadings, seven-day period ending May 14, 1998

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MAJOR RELEASES

Characteristics of international travellers 1997

In 1997, Americans took 13.4 million overnight trips to Canada, up 3.8% from 1996. Meanwhile, Canadians made a record 4.0 million overnight trips to overseas destinations, up 8.5% from 1996.

Overseas residents made 4.2 million overnight trips to Canada in 1997, down 3.3% from the previous year. The Western provinces were most affected economically by this drop. However, the Maritimes—especially Prince Edward Island with the opening of Confederation Bridge on May 31, 1997—saw overseas tourists spend more money than in 1996 in their provinces.

Increase in overnight trips from the United States

After decreasing slightly in 1996, the number of overnight trips to Canada from the United States increased 3.8% in 1997, to 13.4 million. Air travel was up again, but the growth rate for that mode of travel was below the double-digit rate that followed the implementation of the Open Skies agreement with the United States.

The number of short trips (less than one week) rose 4.8%, whereas trips lasting more than two weeks were down. Since short trips represent 85% of Americans' overnight trips to Canada, Americans overall stayed in Canada 1.2% longer than in 1996, and spent 4.0% more money.

More same-day visits from the United States in the Niagara area

The number of same day visits from the United States to the St. Catharines-Niagara census metropolitan area jumped 30% in 1997, driving the same-day spending up by more than 60% to \$281 million. The opening of a casino in Niagara in December 1996 is probably related to these increases. More than three-quarters of the visitors are New York State residents, and their same-day spending in the St. Catharines-Niagara area almost doubled from \$110 million in 1996 to \$217 million in 1997.

Note to readers

A tourist is a traveller who stays at least one night in a place visited.

The international travel account data for the first quarter of 1998 will be released on Friday, May 29.

The 1996 edition of the publication International travel—travel between Canada and other countries (66-201-XPB) will also be released on May 29.

Characteristics of overnight trips to Canada from the United States

	1996	1997	1996 to 1997 % change
	'000 trips		
Total trips	12,909	13,401	3.8
Transportation mode			
Automobile	8,325	8,399	0.9
Plane	3,047	3,224	5.8
Others	1,536	1,778	15.7
Region of residence			
Eastern ¹	8,654	8,896	2.8
Western ²	4,254	4,505	5.9
Purpose of trip			
Business	1,970	2,099	6.6
Pleasure	7,392	7,613	3.0
Visit friends or relatives	2,221	2,375	6.9
Others	1,325	1,315	-0.8
Length of stay			
1 night	2,721	2,916	7.1
2-6 nights	8,101	8,421	4.0
7-13 nights	1,758	1,771	0.7
14-20 nights	244	216	-11.1
21 nights or more	85	77	-9.2

¹ Includes New England, Mid-Atlantic and South Atlantic, East-northcentral and East-southcentral.

² Includes West-northcentral, West-southcentral, Mountain, Pacific, Alaska and Hawaii.

Exchange-rate factors and Asia's financial crisis cut into overseas visits to Canada

The number of overseas trips to Canada fell to 4.2 million in 1997, a drop of 3.3% and the first since 1991. Double-digit increases had been registered over the three previous years.

Two main factors explain the 1997 drop: the currencies in many Asian and European countries depreciated in relation to the Canadian dollar, making Canada a more expensive destination; and, the financial crisis in Asia had a negative impact on leisure

travel by Asian residents. In fact, the World Travel Organization reported slower growth in international tourist arrivals in 1997, mainly due to the Asian financial crisis.

These two factors have also contributed to a drop in the number of travellers visiting the United States from some of their major markets, including France, Germany, South Korea, Hong Kong and Switzerland.

The situation in the United States indirectly affected international travel to Canada. Forty percent of overseas visitors coming to Canada enter via the United States. The number of such travellers entering Canada via the United States dropped by 13% in 1997, to 1.7 million.

However, the number of overseas residents entering Canada directly was up 4.5% in 1997, to 2.5 million. An increase in direct entries to Canada is important economically because travellers who enter Canada directly stay longer and spend more per trip than travellers entering Canada via the United States.

Characteristics of overnight trips to Canada from overseas countries

	1996	1997	1996 to 1997 %
	'000 trips		change
Total	4,377	4,234	-3.3
Entry type			
Direct	2,430	2,540	4.5
Via the U.S.	1,946	1,694	-12.9
Land	1,096	813	-25.8
Other	850	881	3.7
Purpose of trip			
Business	671	769	14.7
Visit to friends or relatives	1,171	1,204	2.8
Pleasure	2,360	2,080	-11.9
Other	174	181	3.6
Origin			
Europe	2,288	2,260	-1.2
United Kingdom	691	734	6.2
France	460	439	-4.4
Germany	447	398	-11.1
Netherlands	114	115	1.3
Switzerland	107	101	-5.5
Italy	106	102	-4.3
Asia	1,511	1,376	-8.9
Japan	648	566	-12.7
South Korea	159	147	-7.6
Hong Kong	199	146	-26.3
Taiwan	132	138	5.0
Others	578	599	3.5
Australia	149	150	0.5
Mexico	80	96	18.8

Significant economic impact on PEI from the Confederation Bridge

Prince Edward Island attracted substantially more visitors with the opening in May 1997 of the Confederation Bridge. This new access to the island is an attraction in itself. Americans made almost 200,000 overnight visits to PEI in 1997, almost a 50% increase from 1996. Overseas residents made 52,000 overnight visits to the island, 40% more than in 1996. Europeans accounted for two thirds of the visits by overseas residents (34,000), a jump of 71% over the previous year.

During these 252,000 visits, foreign visitors injected \$78 million into PEI's economy, 42% more than last year. This growing influx of visitors coincided with a greater number of visits to the neighbouring provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, both from the United States and from overseas countries.

While the Maritime provinces received more visitors in 1997 than in 1996, the Western provinces were adversely affected by the drop in Asian and European visitors to Canada: 22% fewer visits were recorded in Alberta, 20% fewer in British Columbia.

More visits by Canadians to sun spots

Although Europe is still the preferred destination for Canadians (apart from the United States), the sun spots in the United States and overseas saw greater numbers of Canadians last year.

Despite a slight drop (-1.1%) in Canadians' overnight trips to the United States, their number of overnight visits to Florida was up 9.6% to 2.1 million. Last year, Canadians made 1.0 million visits to California, an increase of 7.4%.

Canadians visited sun spots in Central America and the Caribbean more often in 1997. And visits to Mexico jumped 29% to 567,000, second in overseas destinations after the United Kingdom.

Destinations most visited by Canadians for an overnight stay

	1996	1997	1996 to 1997
	'000 trips		%
United States			
New York	2,644	2,399	-9.3
Florida	1,913	2,098	9.6
Washington	1,845	1,900	3.0
Michigan	1,355	1,326	-2.2
California	931	1,000	7.4
Europe			
United Kingdom	737	770	4.4
France	424	404	-4.8
Germany	236	229	-2.8
Italy	183	163	-12.1
Netherlands	177	145	-18.3
Switzerland	123	123	- -
Other			
Hong Kong	157	139	-11.8
Dominican Republic	112	138	23.0
Mexico	438	567	29.5

-- Amount too small to be expressed.

This release presents a brief overview of data now available from the International Travel Survey. The tables on which this analysis is based, together with various statistical profiles and microdata files on international travellers for the fourth quarter and full year of 1997 are now available on request. To order any of these products, contact Carol Moskaluk (613-951-9169; moskcar@statcan.ca).

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

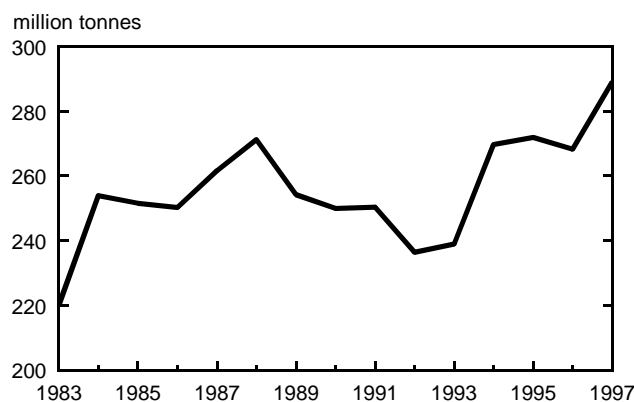
Railway carloadings

1997

In 1997, the railways transported a record 288.9 million tonnes of freight in 1997, 7.7% more than in 1996. Coal was the commodity with the highest volume. Wheat shipments posted the biggest percentage increase due to a bumper crop and improved grain handling by the two major railways after 1996's backlog.

Total traffic carried during 1997 consisted of 266.6 million tonnes of freight loaded domestically, plus another 22.3 million tonnes that Canadian railways received from U.S. rail connections.

Total traffic carried by rail



In 1997, receipts from U.S. rail connections were up 10.3% compared with 1996. These receipts had almost doubled between 1992 and 1997. This reflects growth in trade as well as increased overland traffic brought about by the Free Trade Agreements between the two countries. Increased co-operation between the railways of the two countries also contributed to the rise in receipts from U.S. connections.

A 7.5% increase in commodities loaded domestically last year was due to improved domestic demand for goods combined with an increase in exports, especially bulk commodities and containerized cargo. This gain in domestic loadings more than compensated for the previous year's decline. Nonetheless, the healthy growth in 1997 was still well short of the 12.9% increase in 1994, which was triggered mainly by strong exports.

Note to readers

This report, released in conjunction with National Transportation Week (May 25 to 29), is based on cumulative data for 1997 from the Monthly Carloadings Survey. The results of this survey are available six weeks after the reference period and provide a good indication of the current business activity.

Total traffic excludes interchanges between Canadian carriers, in order to avoid duplication in the tonnage loaded data.

Intermodal operations are those that involve more than one mode for transportation of commodities. Goods are carried in a highway trailer or freight container that is transferred between a rail car and some other mode, usually a truck or ship. Intermodal traffic includes containers-on-flat-cars and trailers-on-flat-cars loaded domestically, plus those received from U.S. rail connections.

Railway carloadings

Commodity	1996	1997	1996 to 1997
	metric tonnes		% change
Coal	39 103 500	40 479 335	3.5
Iron ore and concentrates	36 790 613	39 253 577	6.7
Wheat	19 818 585	25 892 600	30.6
Container on flat car	14 049 155	15 795 729	12.4
Potash	12 255 572	14 203 734	15.9
Pulpwood chips	11 269 242	12 820 954	13.8
Other grain	10 002 213	9 547 857	-4.5
Lumber	10 053 547	9 436 225	-6.1
Wood pulp	8 484 493	8 693 070	2.5
Other chemicals and acids	7 475 992	7 385 881	-1.2
Commodities loaded, total	247 976 993	266 611 733	7.5
Non-carload traffic	12 418	7 609	-38.7
Receipts from U.S. connections	20 195 393	22 282 456	10.3
Total traffic (unduplicated)	268 184 804	288 901 798	7.7
Interchanges between Canadian carriers	28 307 275	25 477 135	-10.0
Intermodal			
Container on flat car (COFC) loaded	14 049 155	15 803 894	12.5
Trailer on flat car (TOFC) loaded	2 508 174	1 986 019	-20.8
COFC and TOFC included in receipts from U.S.	3 497 184	3 480 843	-0.5
Intermodal, total	20 054 513	21 270 756	6.1

Coal and iron ore—the top commodities

Railways transported more coal and iron ore in 1997 than any other commodity. They carried 40 million tonnes of coal, up 3.5% from 1996, and 39 million tonnes of iron ore and concentrates, a 6.7% increase. Loadings of coal have now grown for a fifth consecutive

year. Coal and other bulk commodities are mostly transported domestically to ports, to be exported by marine transport.

Wheat shipments showed the strongest percentage increase, up 30.6% to 26 million tonnes. This growth resulted from a bumper crop and improved grain handling by the two major railways after 1996's backlog.

Also showing strong increases were potash shipments, rising 15.9% to 14 million tonnes, while shipments of pulpwood chips advanced 13.8% to 13 million tonnes.

Loadings of only three commodities declined in 1997: grain other than wheat, lumber, and chemicals and acids.

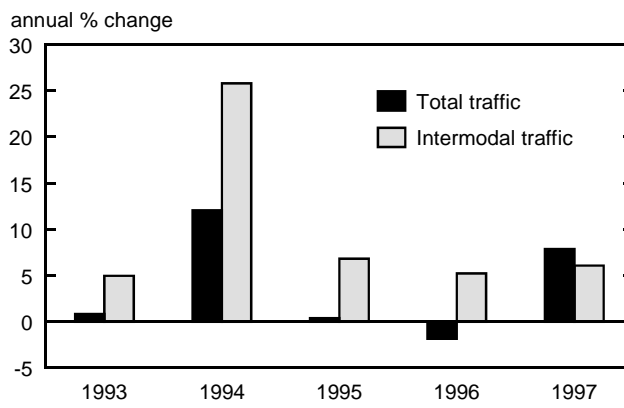
Since 1992, the ranking of the top-10 commodities has varied from one year to the next. However, the commodities have remained unchanged. The contribution of these commodities to total loadings has also remained quite stable over the past four years.

Strong growth in intermodal traffic

Intermodal traffic has experienced strong growth during the past five years. Between 1992 and 1997, overall intermodal traffic grew 57.4% to 21.3 million tonnes. On the other hand, total traffic excluding intermodal shipments advanced 20.1% during the same period.

Except in 1997, annual growth in intermodal traffic has by far outpaced the growth of total traffic excluding intermodal shipments. Still, intermodal traffic experienced a healthy increase last year of 6.1%, compared with a 7.9% increase in the remaining types of traffic.

Intermodal rail traffic and total rail traffic excluding intermodal traffic



Available on CANSIM: matrix 1431.

Detailed data for 1997 are available in the December 1997 issue of *Railway carloadings* (52-001-XPB, \$11/\$103), which was released on February 13. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Bob Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; laroque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

OTHER RELEASES

The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada

The last two decades have witnessed an explosion in the development of technology and in the endeavors of industries to compete globally by merging and downsizing. Adult literacy is understood to be fundamental to the economic and competitive performance of industrialized nations. For an individual, the level of literacy skills he or she possesses can spell economic success or failure. Close to 50% of adults at the lowest level of literacy live in households with low income, compared with only 8% of those at the highest level of literacy. Also, 66% of those at the lowest scale were less likely to find work during 1994 and, if they did work, earned less than \$15,000.

Strong literacy skills are the key to success and to economic well-being in the information-based economy. Those with weak literacy abilities will find it increasingly difficult to achieve and to gain a foothold in the labour market. This should be of special concern to policy makers in the context of global economic restructuring.

The report released today, *The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada*, examines the relationship between literacy and low income. It details the incidence of employment by literacy level, as well as the literacy levels associated with education. Other topics are also analyzed, including opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy practices and family literacy.

The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada (89-552-MPE, no. 3, \$10) is now available. See *How to order publications*. This report is also available free for viewing and download (89-552-MIE) from the Statistics Canada website at www.statcan.ca.

For further information on this release, contact Nancy Darcovitch (613-951-4585; darcovi@statcan.ca), Special Surveys Division. ■

Railway carloadings

Seven-day period ending May 14, 1998

Carloadings of freight (excluding intermodal traffic) during the seven-day period ending May 14, 1998, decreased 6.5% to 4.6 million metric tonnes from the same period of last year. The number of cars loaded decreased 7.1%.

Intermodal (piggyback) traffic totalled 330 000 tonnes, a 6.9% decrease from the same seven-day

period of last year. The year-to-date figures show a decline of 6.1% from the 1997 period.

Total traffic (carloadings and intermodal) during the seven days decreased 6.6% compared with the 1997 period. The 1998 year-to-date total was 97.0 million tonnes, a 3.2% increase from the previous year.

All year-to-date figures have been revised.

For further information on this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; larocque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

For-hire trucking (commodity origin and destination)

Third quarter 1997, fourth quarter 1997 and annual 1997 (preliminary)

In 1997, Canada-based long-distance for-hire carriers with annual revenues of \$1 million or more transported over 223 million tonnes of freight. Note that comparison with other years is not possible due to a change in survey coverage. The For-hire Trucking Survey now measures the intercity activity of Canada-based, long-distance, for-hire trucking companies with annual revenues of \$1 million or more. Previously, the survey measured the intercity activity of all Canada-based for-hire trucking companies with annual intercity revenues of \$1 million or more.

Domestic activities accounted for 75% of the total tonnage and 80% of the total shipments. Trans-border movements generated 41% of the revenues earned and 44% of the tonne-kilometres for these carriers.

Preliminary data are now available from the For-hire Trucking (Commodity Origin and Destination) Survey for the third and fourth quarters of 1997.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 143.

Data on for-hire trucking (commodity origin and destination) for 1997 will appear in the vol. 14, no. 2 issue of *Surface and marine transport service bulletin* (50-002-XPB, \$13/\$83). See *How to order publications*.

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

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

The dairy review, January-March 1998
Catalogue number 23-001-XIB
(Canada: \$27/\$89; outside Canada: US\$27/US\$89).

The dairy review, January-March 1998
Catalogue number 23-001QXPB
(Canada: \$36/\$119; outside Canada: US\$36/US\$119).

Wholesale Trade, March 1998
Catalogue number 63-008-XIB
(Canada: \$14/\$140; outside Canada: US\$14/US\$140).

Gas utilities, February 1998
Catalogue number 55-002-XPB
(Canada: \$17/\$165; outside Canada: US\$17/US\$165).

Trusted pension funds, financial statistics, 1996
Catalogue number 74-201-XPB
(Canada: \$44; outside Canada: US\$44).

The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada, May 1998
Catalogue number 89-552-MIE
(Free).

The value of words: literacy and economic security in Canada, May 1998
Catalogue number 89-552-MPE
(Canada: \$10; outside Canada: US\$10).

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1995, each Canadian took an average of about 65 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 noticeably weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow nominal growth during the year.

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