



# The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 18, 1998

For release at 8:30 a.m.

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## MAJOR RELEASES

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- **Canadian international merchandise trade, April 1998**  
Exports were up 0.1% in April, continuing the moderate growth posted in the first quarter of 1998. Marked declines in exports to Japan and delays in the transportation of cars to the United States contributed to the slowdown. Imports rose 2.6% in April, primarily because of higher aircraft and steel imports.

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- **Aboriginal Business Survey, 1996**  
Aboriginal business owners believe they must improve management skills and improve productivity to make their businesses successful.

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## REGIONAL REFERENCE CENTRES

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MAJOR RELEASES

**Canadian international merchandise trade**

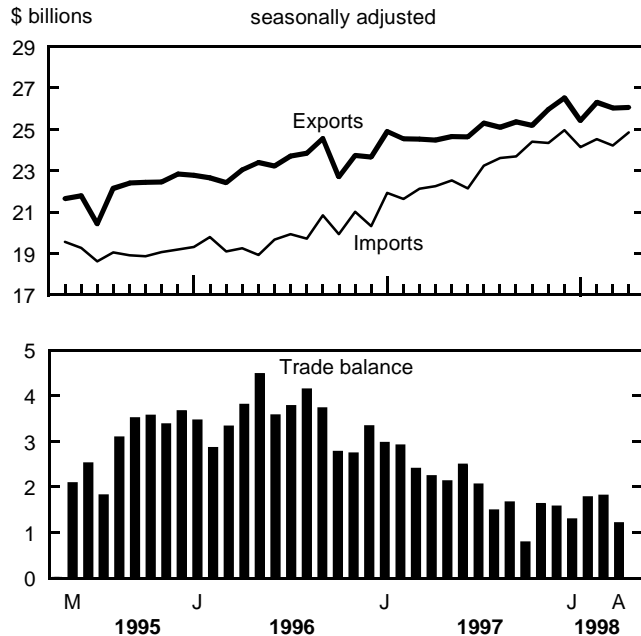
April 1998

Exports were virtually unchanged in April, continuing the trend set in the first quarter of 1998. Lower exports of passenger cars, wood pulp, precious metals and ores of all types offset higher exports of aircraft, communications equipment and other consumer goods.

Imports increased 2.6% in April, chiefly a result of higher imports of aircraft and of steel products. Auto parts imports fell slightly after four months of substantial gains.

The trade balance fell in April to \$1.2 billion, down \$600 million from March 1998.

**Exports, imports and trade balance**



**Exports held back by continued weakness in exports to Japan and other countries**

Exports to Japan have fallen 49% since January 1997. These declines have been spread across most commodity groups, with softwood lumber experiencing the largest drop. The downward trend

**Note to readers**

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

Beginning with the April data released today the following changes have been made in the international merchandise trade release:

1. The table "Merchandise trade of Canada" in The Daily now presents import and export statistics by commodity adjusted for balance-of-payments (BOP) concepts. This is being done because BOP-based data are more reliable: they include adjustments for known deficiencies in the customs-based data. As well, readers will be better served by focusing their analysis on the BOP-based data because they are consistent with the broader economic measures of the system of national accounts.

2. A BOP adjustment is now being made for non-U.S. customs documents expected but not received. This is being done to minimize the monthly revisions to non-U.S. merchandise exports and to the merchandise trade balance.

3. Data from 1994 to March 1998 are being revised in line with International Trade Division's normal historical revision policies.

If you have any questions or comments about these changes, contact the International Trade Division at 1 800 294-5583.

intensified in the first quarter of 1998: exports of coal and related products to Japan fell 83.9%. The weakness in exports has not been limited to Japan. Exports to other East Asian countries have also fallen. Substantial declines have been registered with South Korea and Taiwan. Despite the weakness with the East Asian countries, Canada's exports to the United States and to the European Union remain strong and have risen 3.5% and 5.3% respectively since November 1997.

Exports of automotive products fell 0.6% in April. Increased exports of trucks, other motor vehicles and auto parts were completely counterbalanced by a 5.9% decline in passenger car exports. Much of this decline was due to delays in the exports of passenger cars transported by rail. These delays should be corrected in the coming months, returning exports to more normal levels. In addition, higher inventories of new cars in the United States resulted in weakness for some automakers.

After declining slightly in March, machinery and equipment exports rose 3.4% in April. Record-setting exports of aircraft and steady growth in the exports of railway equipment and television and communications equipment were responsible for much of the increase.

Energy product exports were almost unchanged in April, following a 6.3% drop the previous month. Small gains in natural gas and crude oil exports failed to offset a decrease in exports of petroleum and coal products, primarily to Japan. Electricity exports continued their upward trend in April.

After two months of growth, exports of forest products dipped slightly in April; an 8.9% drop in wood pulp exports dragged the entire sector down.

April saw a decline in industrial goods exports, which since the beginning of the year have failed to equal the record level set in November 1997. Exports of metals and minerals suffered the largest decrease. The dominant factor was lower exports of precious metals, especially gold. Anemic demand in Asia and depressed prices for the major metals and minerals also played a role. Exports of aluminum, other non-ferrous metals and nickel recovered slightly.

#### **Aircraft and steel lead growth in imports**

Following a steep decline in March, machinery and equipment imports jumped 4.9% in April. Half this gain was due to an appreciable increase in aircraft imports from France. In addition, more railway equipment was imported from the United States.

After three months of weakness, the industrial goods sector rebounded in April, mainly because of a substantial advance in steel imports. The latter gain was attributable to stronger North American demand for high value-added steel products, as well as to the low price at which some countries were selling their steel in order to attract new buyers outside their traditional Asian markets.

After remaining virtually immobile for three months, imports of agricultural and fishing products edged upward in April. An exceptionally mild spring led to early imports of fresh vegetables, fruits and berries, especially strawberries.

Energy product imports continued their downward trend for a fourth consecutive month in April. Weakness in crude oil prices, associated with a wide availability on the North American market, pushed the energy sector down despite solid growth for a second consecutive month in the imports of coal and other related products.

Following two months of growth, automotive product imports declined slightly in April. A solid performance by imports of cars, trucks and other motor vehicles was outweighed by the force of auto parts imports, which fell sharply after four consecutive monthly advances.

#### **Revisions**

Data on a balance-of-payments basis have been revised from 1992 to the current month, following the seasonal adjustment of group 701, "undistributed balance-of-payments adjustments", for the first time. In general, merchandise trade data are revised on a continuing basis for every month of the current year. Factors that create the need for revisions include late import and export documentation, incorrect information on customs documents, replacement of estimated figures with actual values, changes in classification of merchandise based on more current information, and updated seasonal adjustments. Revised data can be obtained by consulting the appropriate CANSIM matrices.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.**

This release contains a summary of the merchandise trade data to be published shortly in the April 1998 issue of *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 quarterly in *Canada's balance of international payments* (67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). See *How to order publications*.

For readers who need the information on a more timely basis, merchandise trade data are also available by fax on the morning of release.

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

## Merchandise trade of Canada

	Feb. 1998	March 1998	April 1998	Feb. to March 1998	March to April 1998	Jan.-April 1997	Jan.-April 1998	Jan.-April 1997 to Jan.-April 1998	April 1997 to April 1998
seasonally adjusted, \$ current									
	\$ millions		% change		\$ millions		% change		
<b>Principal trading partners</b>									
<b>Exports</b>									
United States	21,593	21,530	21,853	-0.3	1.5	78,783	85,861	9.0	11.3
Japan	889	791	609	-11.0	-23.0	4,590	3,045	-33.7	-42.8
European Union	1,528	1,431	1,413	-6.3	-1.3	5,355	5,856	9.4	3.2
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	514	694	643	35.0	-7.3	2,653	2,442	-8.0	2.5
All other countries	1,767	1,577	1,526	-10.8	-3.2	7,050	6,578	-6.7	-14.2
Total	26,291	26,023	26,045	-1.0	0.1	98,431	103,782	5.4	6.4
<b>Imports</b>									
United States	18,817	18,557	18,916	-1.4	1.9	66,648	75,018	12.6	12.8
Japan	798	822	772	3.0	-6.1	2,652	3,172	19.6	20.1
European Union	2,145	2,015	2,231	-6.1	10.7	7,792	8,251	5.9	5.6
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	937	968	919	3.3	-5.1	3,760	3,738	-0.6	-5.8
All other countries	1,825	1,854	2,005	1.6	8.1	7,084	7,542	6.5	14.7
Total	24,523	24,216	24,843	-1.3	2.6	87,935	97,721	11.1	11.7
<b>Balance</b>									
United States	2,776	2,973	2,937	...	...	12,135	10,843	...	...
Japan	91	-31	-163	...	...	1,938	-127	...	...
European Union	-617	-584	-818	...	...	-2,437	-2,395	...	...
Other OECD countries <sup>1</sup>	-423	-274	-276	...	...	-1,107	-1,296	...	...
All other countries	-58	-277	-479	...	...	-34	-964	...	...
Total	1,768	1,807	1,202	...	...	10,496	6,061	...	...
<b>Principal commodity groupings</b>									
<b>Exports</b>									
Agricultural and fishing products	2,195	2,050	2,077	-6.6	1.3	7,916	8,394	6.0	1.6
Energy products	1,919	1,799	1,791	-6.3	-0.4	9,221	7,398	-19.8	-11.4
Forestry products	2,993	2,924	2,870	-2.3	-1.9	11,692	11,674	-0.2	-1.4
Industrial goods and materials	4,750	4,795	4,667	0.9	-2.7	18,195	18,989	4.4	1.1
Machinery and equipment	6,347	6,268	6,478	-1.3	3.4	21,615	24,948	15.4	17.0
Automotive products	6,194	6,330	6,291	2.2	-0.6	23,101	24,993	8.2	11.5
Other consumer goods	963	965	1,000	0.2	3.6	3,367	3,847	14.2	16.7
Special transactions trade <sup>2</sup>	360	370	362	2.7	-2.0	1,282	1,451	13.2	8.3
Other balance-of-payments (BOP) adjustments	570	523	509	-8.2	-2.8	2,042	2,088	2.2	0.6
<b>Imports</b>									
Agricultural and fishing products	1,373	1,373	1,412	0.0	2.9	4,977	5,534	11.2	12.0
Energy products	807	737	728	-8.7	-1.2	3,701	3,097	-16.3	-16.5
Forestry products	201	198	197	-1.2	-0.8	768	796	3.6	-2.0
Industrial goods and materials	4,812	4,828	5,028	0.3	4.1	17,336	19,592	13.0	15.3
Machinery and equipment	8,113	7,834	8,217	-3.4	4.9	28,657	32,133	12.1	11.1
Automotive products	5,495	5,577	5,523	1.5	-1.0	18,955	21,870	15.4	16.0
Other consumer goods	2,693	2,688	2,714	-0.2	1.0	9,323	10,717	14.9	13.8
Special transactions trade <sup>2</sup>	537	493	544	-8.1	10.4	2,425	2,034	-16.1	-5.7
Other BOP adjustments	492	487	480	-1.1	-1.5	1,792	1,947	8.7	11.5

... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

<sup>1</sup> Includes Australia, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Poland, South Korea, Hungary and the Czech Republic.

<sup>2</sup> These are mainly low-valued transactions, value of repairs to equipment, and goods returned to country of origin.

## Aboriginal Business Survey

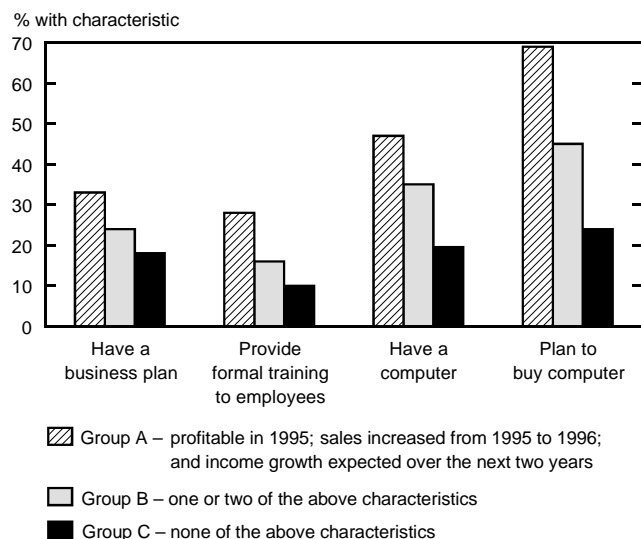
1996

Aboriginal business owners believe they must improve management skills and improve productivity to make their businesses successful, according to new research now available. A survey of 723 Aboriginal business owners showed that 83% identified improving management skills and 73% identified improving productivity as priorities for achieving business success. Sixty-seven percent cited financing as a priority, followed closely by innovation, at 64%.

Thirty-one percent of successful business owners have taken advanced business training, compared with 24% of Aboriginal businesses overall. Successful firms tended to be more innovative as well. Half of the successful firms had introduced new products in the last three years, compared with 33% of all firms. (Successful firms were defined as those meeting all three of the following criteria for success: they must have been profitable in 1995, their sales must have increased from 1995 to 1996, and they must have expected income growth in the coming two years.)

Successful firms were more likely to use a computer and were more likely to be planning to purchase a computer. Forty-seven percent of firms satisfying all three criteria for success used a computer, compared with only 35% of firms meeting one or two of the success characteristics and only 19.5% of unsuccessful firms.

### Success characteristics of Aboriginal businesses



Only one-third of Aboriginal businesses had a computer, but 42% of those without a computer were planning to buy one. Half of the businesses without a computer did not plan to acquire one; a lack of financial resources was cited as the primary reason.

The 1996 Aboriginal Business Survey (ABS) is an innovative research project that Statistics Canada developed in partnership with Aboriginal Business Canada (Industry Canada), in order to provide a rich base of data on the characteristics of Aboriginal entrepreneurs and their businesses. A follow-up telephone survey to more than 1,000 current and previous entrepreneurs from the 1991 Post-censal Aboriginal Peoples Survey, the ABS looked at the characteristics, behaviours, and attitudes of Aboriginal entrepreneurs in Canada.

### Aboriginal businesses tend to be small

Forty-six percent of Aboriginal businesses had at least one full-time employee in addition to the owner, compared with only 40% of all Canadian businesses. Only 1.1% of businesses employed 20 or more full-time employees; however, these firms accounted for 17.1% of all full-time employment by Aboriginal businesses.

### Full-time employment by Aboriginal businesses

Size of business <sup>1</sup>	% of Aboriginal businesses	% of the <sup>2</sup> full-time employment in Aboriginal businesses
Sole proprietor (no full-time employees)	53.8	20.9
1 full-time employee	21.7	16.9
2-4 full-time employees	15.9	23.0
5-9 full-time employees	6.7	19.0
10-19 full-time employees	0.7	3.2
20+ full-time employees	1.1	17.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> The number of employees does not include the business owner.

<sup>2</sup> The business owner is included in total of full-time employment.

Approximately 62% of the Aboriginal businesses surveyed reported a net profit before taxes in 1995. A further 27.6% reported losses of less than \$10,000.

**Profitability of Aboriginal firms  
1995**

Profit before taxes	% of Aboriginal businesses
Less than \$10,000	24.5
\$10,000 to \$29,999	18.4
\$30,000 to \$49,999	9.4
\$50,000 to \$69,999	2.8
\$70,000 to \$89,999	1.8
\$90,000 or more	4.7
<b>Profitable firms, total</b>	<b>61.5</b>

In July, Industry Canada's Research Publications Program will be releasing a working paper entitled "Aboriginal businesses: Characteristics and strategies for growth", which was prepared for Aboriginal Business Canada by the Management Consulting Centre of Industry Canada. To obtain a copy, contact Someshwar Rao (613-941-8187) or Aboriginal Business Canada

(613-954-5814). The paper will also be available on the Internet at <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca>.

Analysis conducted by the Native Investment and Trade Association (NITA) is available on-line at the Spirit of Aboriginal Enterprise web site. Entitled "The road less travelled: Aboriginal entrepreneurs building economic independence for the new millennium", the report looks at innovation, youth entrepreneurship, predictors of growth in Aboriginal firms and other topics. To obtain a copy, contact NITA at 1 800 337-7743. The report can also be found on-line at <http://sae.ca/research/nita>.

For further information on this release, contact Tony Labilloy (613-951-1478; [labiton@statcan.ca](mailto:labiton@statcan.ca)), Small Business and Special Surveys Division, or Jay Illingworth (613-954-5814; [Illingworth.Jay@ic.gc.ca](mailto:Illingworth.Jay@ic.gc.ca)), Aboriginal Business Canada. ■

## OTHER RELEASES

### Export and import price indexes

April 1998

Current- and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1992=100) on a balance-of-payments basis are now available. Indexes are listed from January 1992 to April 1998 for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups (62 exports and 61 imports).

Current- and fixed-weighted U.S. price indexes (1992=100) are also available on a customs basis. Indexes are listed from January 1992 to April 1998. 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 3618-3619, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.**

The April 1998 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 Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647 or 1 800 294-5583), Marketing and Client Services Section, International Trade Division. ■

### Demographic statistics

First quarter 1998 (preliminary)

Preliminary post-censal population estimates as of April 1, 1998, are now available for Canada, the provinces and the territories.

### Canada's population<sup>1</sup>

	Oct. 1, 1997 <sup>r</sup>	Jan. 1, 1998 <sup>p</sup>	April 1, 1998 <sup>p</sup>	Jan. to March 1998
				% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>30,378,386</b>	<b>30,425,304</b>	<b>30,488,906</b>	<b>0.2</b>
Newfoundland	559,034	557,739	554,652	-0.6
Prince Edward Island	137,191	136,895	136,672	-0.2
Nova Scotia	946,799	946,860	946,196	-0.1
New Brunswick	760,858	760,761	760,187	-0.1
Quebec	7,438,641	7,443,546	7,449,225	0.1
Ontario	11,473,783	11,493,170	11,527,274	0.3
Manitoba	1,141,637	1,141,691	1,142,527	0.1
Saskatchewan	1,021,529	1,022,480	1,022,622	0.0
Alberta	2,859,811	2,872,705	2,892,507	0.7
British Columbia	3,940,322	3,950,692	3,958,722	0.2
Yukon	31,395	31,443	31,205	-0.8
Northwest Territories	67,386	67,322	67,117	-0.3

<sup>1</sup> These estimates do not take into account the 1996 Census results.

<sup>r</sup> Updated post-censal estimates.

<sup>p</sup> Preliminary post-censal estimates.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 1-6, 397, 5731, 6470, 6471, 6516 and 6981; tables 00010102, 00020104 and 00040102.**

These estimates will appear in *Quarterly demographic statistics* (91-002-XPB, \$10/\$33), which will be released shortly. See *How to order publications*. The publication (91-002-XIB, \$8/\$25) will also be available on the Internet. See [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca).

To obtain these data, contact Lise Champagne (613-951-2320; fax: 613-951-2307; [chamlis@statcan.ca](mailto:chamlis@statcan.ca)), Demography Division or your nearest Regional Reference Centre.

For information on methodology, contact Daniel Larrivée (613-951-0694; fax: 613-951-2307; [lardani@statcan.ca](mailto:lardani@statcan.ca)), Demography Division.

For information on births deaths and marriages, contact François Nault (613-951-1764; [naulfra@statcan.ca](mailto:naulfra@statcan.ca)), Health Statistics Division. ■

### Natural gas sales

April 1998 (preliminary)

Natural gas sales totalled 5 552 million cubic metres in April, down 8.6% from April 1997. Unusually warm weather throughout Canada resulted in sharply lowers sales to the residential (-28.6%) and commercial

(-34.7%) sectors. Sales to the industrial sector (including direct sales) increased 11.2%.

Year-to-date sales to the end of April declined 6.2% from the same period in 1997. Sales to the residential (-17.1%) and commercial (-22.2%) sectors decreased due to milder weather in the first four months of 1998. Year-to-date sales to the industrial sector (including direct sales) maintained their strong growth, posting 8.5% growth from the same period last year. The growth was largely due to increased use of natural gas by electric utilities, mines and the chemical industry.

### Natural gas sales

	April 1998 <sup>P</sup>	April 1997	April 1997 to April 1998 %
	thousands of cubic metres		change
<b>Natural gas sales</b>	<b>5 551 505</b>	<b>6 076 730</b>	<b>-8.6</b>
Residential	1 180 903	1 654 065	-28.6
Commercial	776 967	1 189 975	-34.7
Industrial	1 881 022	2 082 580	11.2
Direct	1 712 613	1 150 110	

	Year-to-date		
	1998 <sup>P</sup>	1997	1997 to 1998 %
	thousands of cubic metres		change
<b>Natural gas sales</b>	<b>27 422 120</b>	<b>29 226 679</b>	<b>-6.2</b>
Residential	7 516 716	9 063 313	-17.1
Commercial	4 971 565	6 393 785	-22.2
Industrial	7 872 064	8 736 680	8.5
Direct	7 061 775	5 032 901	

<sup>P</sup> Preliminary figures.

### Available on CANSIM: matrices 1052-1055.

The April 1998 issue of *Gas utilities* (55-002-XPB, \$17/\$165) will be available in July. See *How to order publications*.

For further information on this release, contact Gary Smallbridge (613-951-3567; [smalgar@statcan.ca](mailto:smalgar@statcan.ca)) or Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; [talewis@statcan.ca](mailto:talewis@statcan.ca)), Energy Section, Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

### Steel primary forms

Week ending June 13, 1998 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending June 13, 1998 totalled 322 717 metric tonnes, up 2.7% from 314 345 tonnes a week earlier and up 3.5% from 311 932 tonnes a year earlier.

The year-to-date total at the end of the week was 7 388 407 tonnes, a 6.2% increase compared with 6 959 939 tonnes for the same period in 1997.

For further information on this release, contact Huguette Montcalm (613-951-9827; [monthug@statcan.ca](mailto:monthug@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

### Railway carloadings

Ten-day period ending May 31, 1998

Carloadings of freight (excluding intermodal traffic) during the 10-day period ending May 31, 1998, decreased 13.8% to 6.0 million metric tonnes from the same period of last year. The number of cars loaded decreased 13.5%.

Intermodal (piggyback) traffic totalled 492 000 tonnes, an 8.7% decline from the same 10-day period of last year. The year-to-date figures show a decline of 6.9% from the 1997 period.

Total traffic (carloadings of freight and intermodal) during the 10 days decreased 13.4% from the same period in 1997. The 1998 year-to-date total was 107.1 million tonnes, an increase of 1.2% from the previous year.

All year-to-date figures have been revised.

For further information on this release, contact Robert Laroque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; [laroque@statcan.ca](mailto:laroque@statcan.ca)), Transportation Division. ■



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## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

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**Canadian economic observer**, June 1998  
**Catalogue number 11-010-XPB**  
(Canada: \$23/\$227; outside Canada: US\$ 23/US\$227).

**Refined petroleum products**, March 1998  
**Catalogue number 45-004-XPB**  
(Canada: \$21/\$206; outside Canada: US\$ 21/US\$206).

**Railway carloadings**, April 1998  
**Catalogue number 52-001-XPB**  
(Canada: \$11/\$103; outside Canada: US\$ 11/US\$103).

**The Consumer Price Index**, May 1998  
**Catalogue number 62-001-XPB**  
(Canada: \$11/\$103; outside Canada: US\$ 11/US\$103).  
**Available at 7:00 a.m. on June 19 in print and on-line at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca).**

**Touriscope: International travel, advance information**, Vol. 14, no. 4, April 1998  
**Catalogue number 66-001-PPB**  
(Canada: \$8/\$73; outside Canada: US\$ 8/US\$73).

**All prices exclude sales tax.**

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Thursday, June 18, 1998  
For release at 8:30 a.m.



**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 60 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 notably weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow nominal growth during the year.

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- **EGG predictor, April 1997** 12

**PUBLICATIONS RELEASED** 11

**Statistics Canada's official release bulletin**

Catalogue 11-001E.

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