



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Monday, June 7, 1999

For release at 8:30 a.m.

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 The value of building permits for both residential and non-residential projects eased off in April following a strong performance in both sectors the month before. Municipalities issued building permits worth \$2.9 billion in April, down 8.0% from \$3.1 billion in March, which was the highest level in nine years.
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 Industries increased their use of production capacity in the first quarter. This second consecutive quarterly rise came on the heels of strong export demand and increased consumer confidence.
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MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

April 1999

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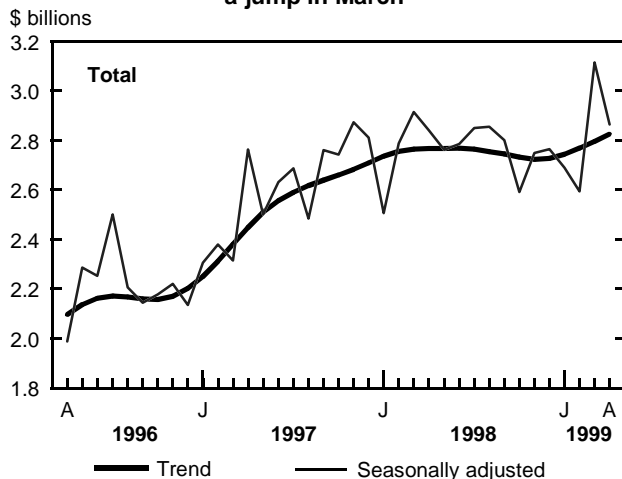
Construction intentions in the residential sector fell 8.7% in April to \$1.5 billion as a result of a decline in permits for multi-family housing. At the same time, intentions in the non-residential sector fell 7.3% to \$1.4 billion as proposed new industrial projects fell off.

From January to April, municipalities issued \$11.3 billion in building permits. This is a 1.9% increase over the same period last year and the best performance for the first four months of any year since 1990.

So far in 1999, housing intentions have edged up 0.5% to \$6.1 billion due to an increase in the value of permits for single-family dwellings.

Similarly, after a slowdown during the last quarter of 1998, non-residential construction intentions have picked up this year, increasing 3.7% over the January-to-April period of 1998 to reach \$5.2 billion. Gains in the commercial and industrial components more than offset a decline in the institutional sector.

Total value of permits drops after a jump in March



Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

The Building and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,600 municipalities representing 94% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 6% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers, culverts, etc.) and land.

Starting with the release of April 1999 data, the territory of Nunavut has been introduced, affecting at the same time the geographical coverage and data of the Northwest Territories.

Single-family dwellings moderate the decline in residential sector

Following a 12.5% gain in March, construction intentions in the housing sector fell 8.7% in April. This was the result of a decline in intentions for multi-family dwellings, which more than offset a gain in single-family permits.

The value of multi-family permits declined 29.7% to \$398 million following a 57.8% increase in March. On the other hand, the value of single-family permits rose 2.2% to \$1.1 billion, the second monthly gain in the last three months.

Historically low long-term mortgage rates, stable employment, stable selling prices for new housing, strong sales of existing homes as well as uninterrupted economic growth all point to an active housing market for the future.

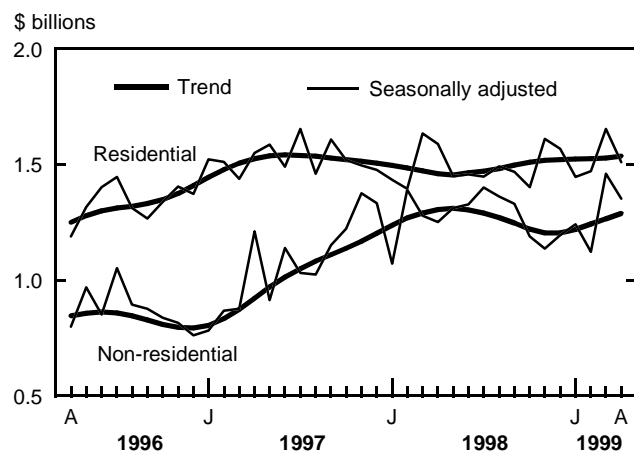
Among the provinces in April, the largest decreases in residential permits (in terms of dollar amount) occurred in Ontario (-9.0% to \$749 million), Alberta (-19.1% to \$187 million), Quebec (-6.2% to \$231 million) and British Columbia (-6.6% to \$190 million). In Ontario and British Columbia, only multi-family dwellings contributed to the decrease, while both single- and multi-family dwellings were responsible for the decline in Alberta and Quebec. Despite Ontario's overall decline in April, this province showed the most significant increase in single-family dwellings, up 8.5% to \$523 million.

Some provinces showed moderate increases (in terms of dollar amount), led by Saskatchewan (+20.3% to \$23 million) then followed by Manitoba

(+12.3% to \$33 million) and New Brunswick (+9.6% to \$24 million). Multi-family dwellings were the major factor behind the increases, except in New Brunswick, where single homes led the way.

Overall, residential building permits in the first four months of 1999 were up 0.5% over the same period in 1998. Single-family dwellings led the way with a 0.9% increase, while multi-family housing edged down 0.6%. Quebec, Ontario and Nova Scotia showed the most significant increases, reflecting gains mainly in single homes. British Columbia and Alberta had the deepest losses, in both cases reflecting large decreases in single-family dwellings. British Columbia also had a large reduction in multi-unit dwellings

Both sectors decline in April



Substantial decline in industrial intentions

The 7.3% decline in non-residential intentions in April followed an increase of almost 30% the month before. Permit values for the industrial and institutional components both declined, but these drops were moderated somewhat by an increase in commercial permits. The total value of non-residential permits for the January-to-April period was 3.7% above the same period in 1998.

Declines in all industrial building groups pushed the industrial component down 36.2% to \$255 million, the lowest value since September 1997. Despite the decline in April, industrial permits issued between

January and April this year were 7.8% above the same period in 1998.

Institutional projects fell 6.1% to \$332 million, their first decrease this year. Lower intentions for welfare and medical buildings more than offset moderate gains in school projects. Permits for institutional construction during the first four months of 1999 were 5.6% lower than for the same period in 1998.

The value of commercial permits rose 8.4% to \$766 million, the highest level since August 1998. The increase came mostly on the strength of intentions for trade, services and hotel projects. From January to April this year, permits for commercial projects were 6.2% higher than for the first four months of 1998.

The non-residential sector remains vigorous with \$5.2 billion in permits for the first four months of 1999, the best showing for the first four months of any year since 1990. Higher permit values for both commercial and industrial projects have fuelled this performance, while institutional intentions slowed.

At the provincial level, the most significant monthly decreases (in terms of dollar amount) were in Quebec (-30.0% to \$251 million), Ontario (-5.7% to \$611 million) and Alberta (-19.3% to \$132 million). Except for Ontario, where commercial projects show the largest drop, declines in industrial intentions were the main contributors.

In contrast, the most significant increases (in terms of dollar amount) were reported in Saskatchewan (+42.3% to \$56 million), Manitoba (+37.3% to \$55 million) and Nova Scotia (+127.5% to \$22 million).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3-7 and 33-48), 129, 137, 443, 989-992, 994, 995 and 4073.

The April 1999 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

The May 1999 building permits estimate will be released on July 7. For more information, or to enquire about the methods, concepts or data quality of this release, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; burejoa@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Pierre Després (613-951-9691; desppie@statcan.ca) Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Value of building permits

	March 1999 ^r	April 1999 ^p	March to April 1999	April 1998 to April 1999
	seasonally adjusted			
	\$ millions		% change	
Canada	3,114.3	2,864.2	-8.0	0.9
Residential	1,654.8	1,511.4	-8.7	-4.9
Non-residential	1,459.6	1,352.8	-7.3	8.2
Newfoundland	27.9	25.9	-7.2	64.6
Residential	25.7	15.3	-40.4	38.2
Non-residential	2.2	10.6	382.5	127.4
Prince Edward Island	7.6	12.9	70.7	31.6
Residential	5.5	6.5	18.1	55.1
Non-residential	2.0	6.4	214.7	13.9
Nova Scotia	55.7	67.6	21.3	61.4
Residential	46.2	45.9	-0.6	95.7
Non-residential	9.5	21.7	127.5	17.9
New Brunswick	37.6	48.1	27.7	29.0
Residential	22.2	24.3	9.6	18.8
Non-residential	15.4	23.7	53.7	41.5
Quebec	604.3	481.4	-20.3	10.9
Residential	246.0	230.6	-6.2	8.2
Non-residential	358.3	250.8	-30.0	13.5
Ontario	1471.7	1360.8	-7.5	13.2
Residential	823.7	749.4	-9.0	0.9
Non-residential	648.1	611.4	-5.7	32.9
Manitoba	69.7	88.3	26.7	-11.9
Residential	29.4	33.0	12.3	-7.9
Non-residential	40.3	55.3	37.3	-14.1
Saskatchewan	58.7	79.3	35.1	17.4
Residential	19.3	23.2	20.3	14.0
Non-residential	39.5	56.1	42.3	18.8
Alberta	394.4	318.8	-19.2	-37.5
Residential	231.2	187.1	-19.1	-24.1
Non-residential	163.2	131.7	-19.3	-50.0
British Columbia	376.0	368.9	-1.9	-11.2
Residential	203.8	190.5	-6.6	-28.8
Non-residential	172.1	178.4	3.6	20.6
Yukon	3.0	6.9	126.1	174.5
Residential	1.1	1.2	2.9	-12.2
Non-residential	1.9	5.7	199.5	385.5
Northwest Territories	7.7	0.7	-91.0	-75.6
Residential	0.7	0.2	-73.1	-93.2
Non-residential	7.1	0.5	-92.6	82.9
Nunavut	...	4.7
Residential	...	4.2
Non-residential	...	0.5

^p Preliminary Data

^r Revised Data

... figures not appropriate or not applicable

Note: Data may not add to totals due to rounding.

Industrial capacity utilization rates

First quarter 1999

Industries increased their use of production capacity in the first quarter. This second consecutive quarterly rise came on the heels of strong export demand and increased consumer confidence. In the first quarter of 1999, firms operated at 83.1 % of capacity, up half a percentage point from the last quarter of 1998. (The rates of capacity use have been revised back to the first quarter of 1997 to incorporate revisions in source data.)

Manufacturers benefited from the vigorous U.S. economy and, as a result, were among the main contributors to the growth in capacity use. As well, according to the latest Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers appear likely to continue to step up production during the next three months.

Also contributing to the first quarter's growth was increased residential construction, a reflection of greater consumer confidence. Home building led to a rise in the output of the construction industries. The value of building permits issued during the first four months of 1999 indicates that construction activity will probably continue to increase over the next several months, although the strength may come more from non-residential projects.

Note to readers

An industry's capacity use is the ratio of its actual output to its estimated potential output. Statistics Canada derives estimates of an industry's potential output from measures of its capital stock. In addition, since 1987, Statistics Canada has been surveying companies for their estimates of annual capacity use, in order to produce survey-based industry measures.

A company's measure of its level of operation, as a percentage of potential, takes into account changes in the obsolescence of facilities, capital-to-labour ratios and other characteristics of production techniques. The surveyed rates anchor the calculated quarterly series and ensure they reflect such changes.

Wage settlements have increased slightly over the past two years but still remain moderate. This has been reflected in the stability of unit labour costs over the same period. From the consumer's point of view, the Consumer Price Index for April increased 1.7% over April 1998 (the highest year-over-year change since August 1997), although much of this rise came from transportation-related items, including higher fuel costs. The core index, which excludes energy and food items, rose only 1.4%, still at the low end of the Bank of Canada's target rate.

Exports boost manufacturing

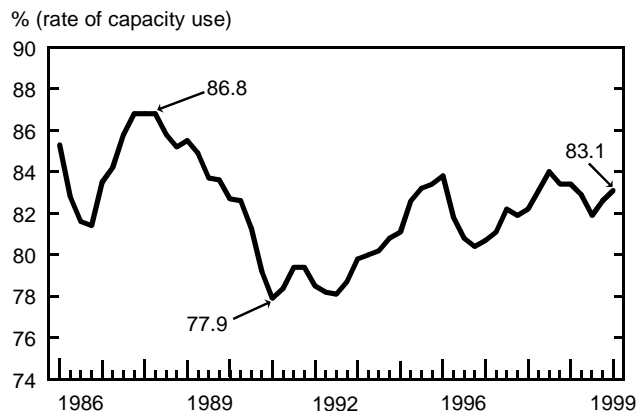
Manufacturers posted a second consecutive increase in their rate of capacity use with a rise of 1.0 percentage points in the first quarter, increasing the rate to 85.7%. This brings the rate for manufacturing to less than half a percentage point below the most recent peak of 86.1% in the first quarter of 1995. Fourteen of the 22 industry groups in manufacturing raised their rates of capacity use.

Responding to strong demand from the United States, producers of telecommunications equipment boosted output in the first quarter. This led to a rise of 5.6 percentage points in the rate of capacity use in the electrical and electronic products group of industries.

Steel mills were mainly responsible for the surge in output in the primary metals industries where the rate of capacity use grew 6.1 percentage points.

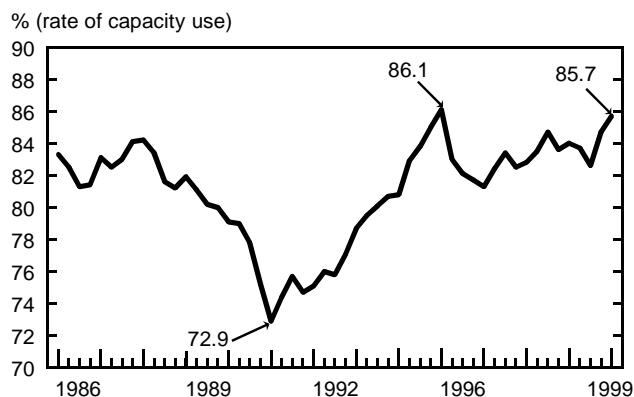
Refineries continued to push their production capacity in the first quarter. Firms in the refined petroleum and coal group of industries operated at 97.9%, a historic peak.

Capacity use up another notch



Signs of inflation still appear to be in abeyance for the most part, despite high rates of capacity use. In April, industrial prices remained unchanged from March and the increase from April 1998 was 0.8%. Industrial prices have been quite stable for some time — since January 1996, year-over-year changes have ranged from -0.9 to +1.9% and there were only eight months in which increases equalled or exceeded 1%.

Manufacturing nears peak



Wood industries held their rate of capacity use from the fourth quarter of 1998, at 86.4%. Quota restrictions on exports of softwood lumber to the United States forced many sawmills to shut down during the quarter.

In machinery industries, the rate of capacity use fell 2.8 percentage points in the first quarter of 1999, to 71.9%. This is 19.5 percentage points below the most recent peak of 91.4% in the third quarter of 1997. The drop reflects a succession of quarterly declines in the output of this group of industries, the result of slumping domestic and foreign demand. Sales to the United States may pick up as manufacturers there begin to recover from a period of stagnation brought about by slow demand from Asia.

Mixed pattern in non-manufacturing

Residential construction activity was responsible for growth in the output of construction industries during the first quarter. As a result, capacity use rose 0.5 percentage points.

Buoyed by activity in mining services and increased diamond production, mining and quarrying industries increased their rate of capacity use by 3.5 percentage points. However, producers of crude petroleum and natural gas cut production, resulting in a downturn of 3.4 percentage points. This left the rate for the mining sector as a whole down 1.0 percentage points in the first quarter.

Record snowfalls in British Columbia impeded logging activity in the first quarter. Also, there was reduced demand as a result of the sawmill shutdowns. This drop in production led to a 1.9 percentage point decline in the rate of capacity use in logging and forestry, after two successive quarterly increases.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 3140.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, and data quality of this release, contact Susanna Wood (613-951-0655) or Richard Landry (613-951-2579), Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Industrial capacity utilization rates

	First quarter 1998	Fourth quarter 1998	First quarter 1999	First quarter 1998 to first quarter 1999	Fourth quarter 1998 to first quarter 1999
	% point change				
Total non-farm goods-producing industries	83.4	82.6	83.1	-0.3	0.5
Logging and forestry	85.0	86.3	84.4	-0.6	-1.9
Mining (including milling), quarrying and oil wells	80.8	73.4	72.4	-8.4	-1.0
Mining (including milling) and quarrying	85.0	73.7	77.2	-7.8	3.5
Crude petroleum and natural gas	78.4	73.3	69.9	-8.5	-3.4
Manufacturing	84.0	84.7	85.7	1.7	1.0
Durable goods	84.2	84.8	86.4	2.2	1.6
Wood	82.9	86.4	86.4	3.5	0.0
Furniture and fixture	89.2	83.0	82.3	-6.9	-0.7
Primary metal	92.1	86.0	92.1	0.0	6.1
Fabricated metal products	80.6	81.2	82.7	2.1	1.5
Machinery	89.5	74.7	71.9	-17.6	-2.8
Transportation equipment	84.8	90.0	90.2	5.4	0.2
Electrical and electronic products	79.2	82.6	88.2	9.0	5.6
Non-metallic mineral products	86.4	89.7	93.6	7.2	3.9
Other manufacturing	79.1	82.4	83.6	4.5	1.2
Non-durable goods	83.9	84.6	84.9	1.0	0.3
Food	80.8	83.1	82.6	1.8	-0.5
Beverage	86.7	89.3	91.1	4.4	1.8
Tobacco products	83.1	80.2	77.1	-6.0	-3.1
Rubber products	94.6	96.5	95.8	1.2	-0.7
Plastic products	80.0	83.5	85.0	5.0	1.5
Leather and allied products	79.4	72.7	73.0	-6.4	0.3
Primary textile	84.4	79.3	81.9	-2.5	2.6
Textile products	74.4	76.9	79.9	5.5	3.0
Clothing	86.3	88.2	89.2	2.9	1.0
Paper and allied products	87.4	87.6	90.6	3.2	3.0
Printing, publishing and allied	82.6	83.4	82.9	0.3	-0.5
Refined petroleum and coal products	93.3	96.6	97.9	4.6	1.3
Chemical and chemical products	85.5	83.1	82.0	-3.5	-1.1
Construction	84.3	82.7	83.2	-1.1	0.5
Electric power and gas distribution systems	80.8	81.4	82.4	1.6	1.0
Electric power	82.1	83.0	83.6	1.5	0.6
Gas distribution	71.9	70.5	74.1	2.2	3.6

OTHER RELEASES

Youth custody and community services 1997-98

A new report available today provides information for the first time on young offender admissions into correctional institutions or some form of community supervision.

Youth custody and community services in Canada, 1997-98 analyzes data on the characteristics of admissions and releases of young offenders from the youth correctional system. This report focuses on the number of admissions of young offenders, aged 12-17, who are held temporarily in remand before appearing in court, the number ordered to serve a sentence in secure or open custody, and the number sentenced to a community-based program such as probation.

A national picture, with the exception of Saskatchewan, has begun to emerge. Even though the *Young Offenders Act* (YOA) is federal legislation, it is up to the provinces to decide on how to implement the YOA. As a result, significant differences exist between the provinces in terms of youth corrections.

Admission rates for youth custody 1997-98

Province/Territory	Total custody	Remand	Secure custody	Open custody
Rates per 10,000 youth				
Total¹	182	108	38	36
Newfoundland	122	38	44	39
Prince Edward Island	113	31	40	42
Nova Scotia	96	42	7	47
New Brunswick	144	61	51	33
Quebec	82	37	23	22
Ontario	257	160	51	46
Manitoba	261	186	29	46
Alberta	203	130	41	31
British Columbia	136	86	27	24
Yukon	814	457	200	157
Northwest Territories	490	116	138	235

¹ Saskatchewan was unable to participate in the Youth Custody and Community Services Survey.

In the fiscal year 1997-98, there were about 42,600 admissions into youth custody across Canada (excluding Saskatchewan). About 60% of these admissions were in remand custody (held temporarily before a court hearing), while the remaining 40% were split evenly between secure and open-custody admissions. (Some individuals may have been placed into custody more than once during the year.) Nationally, this level was equivalent

to a rate of 182 admissions for every 10,000 youth aged 12 to 17. Among the provinces, Manitoba had the highest rate (261), while Quebec had the lowest (82).

Regionally, the admission rates by type of youth custody differed widely. Among the provinces, Manitoba reported the highest rate for admissions of young offenders who were remanded into custody in 1997-98. Manitoba's rate for remands was six times as high as the rate in Prince Edward Island. A youth can be held in remand to protect society or to ensure that the youth appears in court.

The way that secure- and open-custody facilities are used varies significantly across the country. Custody facilities range from boot camps to group homes in the community, thus making comparisons between the provinces difficult to interpret. Nova Scotia had the lowest secure-custody admission rate, less than one-fifth the national average. However, it had one of the highest open-custody admission rates.

Probation was by far the most common form of supervision imposed on young offenders. Excluding Manitoba and Saskatchewan, the number of admissions to probation (37,444) was more than double the number of admissions to both secure and open custody (16,521). Nearly one-half (46%) of all probation admissions took place in Ontario.

Note: An admission to youth corrections takes place every time a young offender goes from one level of supervision to another within the same fiscal year. For example, a young offender may be held in remand and then sentenced to open custody and probation. This would count as three admissions into youth corrections.

The report, *Youth custody and community services in Canada, 1997-98* (85-546-XIE, \$26), is now available. See *How to order publications*. The report also provides information on the age and sex of young offender admissions into custody and community supervision, type of offence, sentence length, and Aboriginal identity.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, or to order a copy of the report, contact Information and Client Services (613-951-9023 or 1-800-387-2231), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. ■

Oil pipeline transport

March 1999

Net receipts of crude oil and equivalent hydrocarbons totalled 12 332 653 cubic metres in March, down 8.8% from March 1998. Year-to-date receipts to the end of March (35 946 922 cubic metres) were down 8.4% over the same period in 1998. Net receipts of liquefied petroleum gases and refined petroleum products in March (6 268 040 cubic metres) decreased 6.8% from the previous year. Year-to-date receipts decreased 1.6% to 19 473 609 cubic metres.

Pipeline exports of crude oil (4 959 415 cubic metres) decreased 16.3% from March 1998, and pipeline imports (1 621 954 cubic metres) increased 1.6%. Year-to-date exports (15 180 328 cubic metres) were down 16.3% from 1998. Year-to-date imports (4 563 211 cubic metres) decreased 0.3 %.

March deliveries of crude oil by pipeline to Canadian refineries totalled 5 927 144 cubic metres, a 1.9% increase from 1998. March deliveries of liquefied petroleum gases and refined petroleum products increased 9.8% to 603 171 cubic metres. Year-to-date deliveries of crude oil to refineries at the end of March totalled 17 254 354 cubic metres, up 1.8% from the same period in 1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 181 and 591-595.

The March 1999 issue of *Oil pipeline transport* (55-001-XPB, \$12/\$114) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Eleonore Harding (613-951-5708; hardele@statcan.ca), Energy Section, Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Canadian international air travel under Open Skies

1996

Air travel between Canada and other countries has increased substantially in recent years. In 1996, a record 21.2 million passengers travelled between Canada and a foreign country on scheduled services, up 40% or 6.1 million passengers since 1992. In 1996, 12.6 million (or 60%) of these passengers were making trips between Canada and the United States, while the remaining 8.6 million (40%) were travelling between Canada and some country other than the United States.

The signing of the Canada-U.S. Open Skies Agreement in February 1995 and the subsequent introduction of new services has undoubtedly allowed for increased travel between the two countries. At the same time, these new services have also made it easier for Canadian international air travellers to access international services operating out of the United States. However, as of the end of 1996, there has been very little increase in the overall proportion of Canadian international air trips via the United States.

In 1996, 1.0 million travellers used international air services out of the United States in their journeys between Canada and some other country, up 39.0% from the 0.7 million in 1994. From 1994 to 1996, however, the proportion of these travellers rose from 10.2% to 11.7% of the total number of Canadian international air travellers.

When Canadian international air travellers are grouped according to the world area to or from which they travelled, the combined figures show very little increase in the use of services out of the United States after Open Skies except for trips made between Canada and the area comprised of Mexico, the Caribbean and Central and South America. For these trips, the use of international services operating out of the United States increased from a rate of 23.6% in 1992 to 29.0% in 1994. By 1996, one year after Open Skies, the rate had increased to 37.6%.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Carol Gudz (613-951-0124), Aviation Statistics Centre, Transportation Division. ■

Sugar sales

First quarter 1999

Refiners' sales totalled 259 819 metric tonnes for all types of sugar in the first quarter of 1999, a 4.3% increase from the 249 066 metric tonnes sold in the first quarter of 1998.

The total for the first quarter of 1999 comprised 256 535 metric tonnes in domestic sales and 3 284 metric tonnes in export sales. For the first quarter of 1998, 245 742 metric tonnes were domestic sales and 3 324 metric tonnes were export sales.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 141.

The first quarter 1999 issue of *The Sugar situation* (32-013QXIB, \$6/\$19) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, and data quality of this

release, contact Peter Zylstra (613-951-3511; zylspet@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction, and Energy Division. ■

Egg production

April 1999 (preliminary)

Preliminary egg production estimates for April are now available.

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

Data are available in *Production of eggs* (23-003-XPB, \$110). To order, contact Julie Gordon (613-951-5039), Agriculture Division.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality for this release, contact Sandy Gielfeldt (613-951-2505), Livestock and Animal Product Section, Agriculture Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Oil pipeline transport, March 1999

Catalogue number 55-001-XPB

(Canada: \$12/\$114; outside Canada: US\$12/US\$114).

Youth custody and community services in Canada, 1997-98

Catalogue number 85-546-XIE

(Canada: \$26).

All prices exclude sales tax.

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote a paper version.

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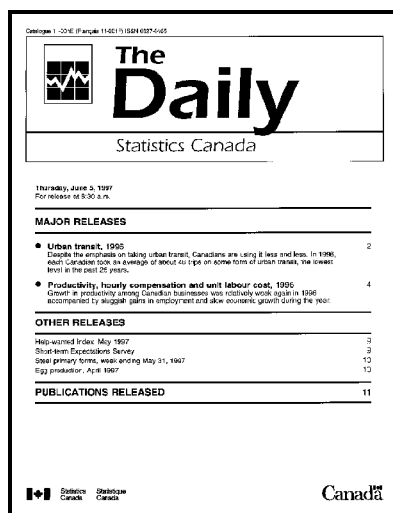
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