



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Tuesday, September 28, 1999

For release at 8:30 a.m.

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 Industrial product prices rose 0.4% in August to stand 2.0% higher than a year earlier.
 However, excluding petroleum and coal products, the 12-month increase was only 0.7%.

 - **Raw Materials Price Index, August 1999** 6
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 was largely achieved on the strength of crude oil, and was marginally offset by lower wood
 prices.
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MAJOR RELEASES

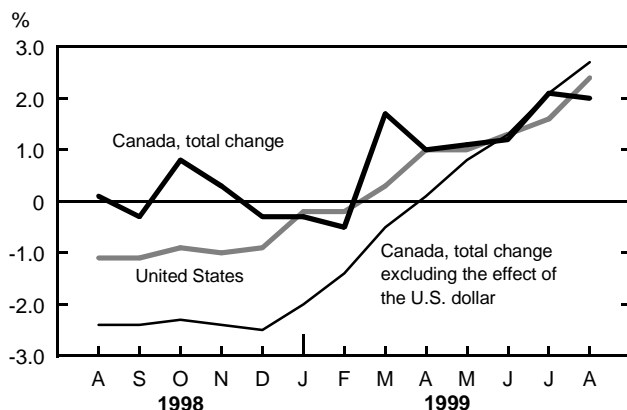
Industrial Product Price Index

August 1999 (preliminary)

Industrial product prices rose 0.4% in August to stand 2.0% higher than a year earlier. However, excluding petroleum and coal products, the 12-month increase was only 0.7%.

The Industrial Product Price Index in August was 122.5 (1992=100), up from July's revised level of 122.0.

12-month change in manufacturing prices registers 2.0%



In August, the most important price increases were in the refined petroleum products industry and for pork products. Both of these were a reflection of increases in their raw material prices. A large part of these gains were offset by lower prices for softwood lumber.

Effect of exchange rate significant on 12-month change in Canadian industrial product prices

Although the value of the U.S. dollar against the Canadian dollar was almost unchanged from mid-July to mid-August, it was down noticeably from a year earlier. It was about C\$1.48 in mid-August 1999 compared with \$1.52 in mid-August 1998.

Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers in Canada receive as the goods leave the plant gate. It does not reflect what the consumer pays. Unlike the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all the costs that occur between the time when a good leaves the plant and the time when the final user takes possession of it, including the transportation, wholesale, and retail costs.

Canadian producers export many goods. They often quote their prices in foreign currencies, particularly for motor vehicles, pulp, paper, and wood products. A rise or fall in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar therefore affects the IPPI. A 1.0% change in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar has been estimated to change the IPPI by approximately 0.3%.

12-month price changes August 1998-August 1999

	Change	Excluding exchange rate effect
	%	
Manufacturer's prices		
All goods	2.0	2.7
Intermediate goods ¹	2.2	2.8
First stage goods ²	4.0	4.7
Second stage Goods ³	1.9	2.4
Finished goods ⁴	1.7	2.6
Foods and feeds	1.7	1.7
Capital goods	0.1	1.4
Other finished goods	2.5	3.7
Other prices		
Raw material prices (RMPI)	13.1	
Retail prices (CPI)		..
Food purchased from stores	0.7	..
Goods excluding food purchased from stores	3.1	..
U.S. manufacturers' prices	2.4	..

¹ Used as inputs into industry.

² Used as inputs into basic industries.

³ Used as inputs into other industries.

⁴ Used for immediate consumption or for capital investment.

.. Not available.

If the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar had been the same this August as in August 1998, the 12-month change in prices would have been 2.7% instead of the official 2.0%. This was the eighth consecutive increase in the 12-month

change in industrial prices, excluding the effect of the exchange rate. In December 1998, it had been -2.5%.

In the United States, manufacturing industry prices rose 0.6% in August to stand 2.4% higher than a year earlier. The 12-month change in U.S. manufacturing industry prices has been following an upward trend since November 1998 when it was -1.0%.

Refined petroleum product prices sharply up

From July to August, prices in the refined petroleum product industry jumped 6.4%. Prices had increased 35.7% from their low in February and were up 27.7% compared with August 1998.

In August, the industrial product price level, excluding petroleum and coal products, was virtually unchanged from its level in July. It edged up less than 0.1% to stand 0.7% higher than a year earlier.

The increase in petroleum product prices happened as crude oil prices rose a further 6.6% in August, as shown in the Raw Materials Price Index. This increase occurred as the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) maintained its output restrictions. Over the last two years, these cuts have totalled over 4 million barrels of crude oil a day. The reductions are felt to be mainly responsible for the rise in petroleum prices since February. Crude oil prices in August stood 83.0% higher than at their low in February and were 57.8% higher than a year earlier.

At the retail level, gasoline prices surged 6.3% in August, as noted in the Consumer Price Index. Compared with their low in February, retail gasoline prices in August were up 23.9% and stood 18.0% higher than a year earlier.

Pork prices jump

Pork prices jumped 21.8% in August. This followed a 1.9% recovery in July after a 3.5% setback in June. Pork prices in August recovered to just 12.5% below their peak of May 1997. Prices for hogs were also up in August (+18.5%), as shown in the Raw Materials Price Index.

Chemical prices increase

In August, the price level in the chemicals and chemical product sector was up 1.7%, with most of the increase coming from the industrial organic chemicals industry (+7.6%) and the plastic synthetic resins industry (+2.5%). Most of the increase in industrial organic chemical prices was due to the steep jump

in ethylene prices. Products in which ethylene is an important component also contributed to the increase.

For synthetic resins, most of the rise in prices was due to the polyethylene resins, which also have ethylene as a significant component. Ethylene prices in the United States have also seen a sharp increase recently.

Softwood lumber prices down

Compared with their July level, prices for softwood lumber were down 6.3% in August. Much of the decline may have been due to seasonal variations.

Across the country, overall price levels declined except on the coast of British Columbia. Some of the most severe price declines for softwood lumber were in the interior of British Columbia where prices were down 8.5% for Douglas fir and 8.8% for spruce, pine and fir. The coastal region of British Columbia benefited from steady prices for Douglas fir and slight increases for western red cedar and for the hemlock/fir group.

In Canada, domestic softwood lumber prices were down 9.2% while export prices declined 5.3% (or 5.0% in U.S. dollars). In the United States, softwood lumber prices were down 6.0%.

Seasonally adjusted housing starts in the United States edged up a further 0.4% in August. In Canada, housing starts recovered only 0.3% following their July slowdown.

Overview

In August, seasonally adjusted employment in Canada was almost unchanged as full-time employment fell by 35,000 and part-time employment rose by 29,000. In the manufacturing sector, employment fell by 19,000 after three monthly increases. Also in August, housing starts showed little change after their July decline.

August's seasonally adjusted figures showed increases in exports and wholesale and retail sales. However, manufacturing shipments edged down marginally, as normal plant shutdowns in the motor vehicle industry were longer than usual.

In the United States, Canada's major trading partner, total industrial production in August rose 0.3% as manufacturing output rose 0.4%. Seasonally adjusted housing starts also rose slightly. Also in August, unemployment edged down to 4.2% as non-farm employment rose slightly. U.S. manufacturing employment in August was down by a little more than its increase in the previous month. The decrease, however, was attributed to seasonal factors as July

had seen fewer employees taking time off and fewer scheduled plant shutdowns than expected.

In Japan, Canada's second largest national export market, industrial production fell 0.6% in July to stand 0.2% higher than a year earlier. July's decline followed a 3.2% increase in June from the May low point. The 12-month change in Japanese domestic wholesale prices rose to -1.3% in August from -1.5% in July.

The European Union (EU) is an even larger export market for Canada than Japan. The four European G7 members dominate it. In July, seasonally adjusted industrial production in the United Kingdom continued to increase. However, during the May-July period, it was still below that of a year earlier. Italian industrial production, seasonally adjusted, rose in July for a second consecutive month to stand 0.4% above its working-day adjusted level a year earlier. In Germany, industrial production was down sharply in July after a slight increase in June and stood 2.8% lower than its seasonally adjusted level a year earlier. In France,

core industrial production in June rose for a second consecutive month, reaching a level 0.7% higher than in June 1998.

In the United Kingdom, the 12-month change in domestic manufacturing output prices was +1.3% in August. However, it was only +0.2% excluding excise taxes. In the other three countries, the most recent figures for the 12-month change in industrial prices were -0.7% in Italy (July), -0.7% in Germany (August) and -2.1% in France (June).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.

The August 1999 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of October. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. □

Industrial product price indexes (1992=100)

	Relative importance	Aug. 1998	July 1999 ^r	August 1999 ^p	Aug. 1998 to Aug. 1999	July to Aug. 1999
					% change	
Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI)	100.00	120.1	122.0	122.5	2.0	0.4
Intermediate goods¹	59.28	120.0	122.1	122.6	2.2	0.4
First-stage intermediate goods ²	7.91	119.1	121.5	123.9	4.0	2.0
Second-stage intermediate goods ³	51.37	120.2	122.2	122.5	1.9	0.2
Finished goods⁴	40.72	120.2	121.8	122.2	1.7	0.3
Finished foods and feeds	10.38	113.0	114.2	114.9	1.7	0.6
Capital equipment	10.21	124.9	125.2	125.0	0.1	-0.2
All other finished goods	20.13	121.6	124.0	124.6	2.5	0.5
Aggregation by commodities						
Meat, fish and dairy products	7.27	119.4	119.4	122.9	2.9	2.9
Fruit, vegetable, feed, miscellaneous food products	6.72	112.3	110.2	110.5	-1.6	0.3
Beverages	2.12	113.1	116.3	116.3	2.8	0.0
Tobacco and tobacco products	0.72	131.3	139.4	139.4	6.2	0.0
Rubber, leather, plastic fabric products	3.01	113.6	113.7	114.2	0.5	0.4
Textile products	1.82	110.5	108.6	108.7	-1.6	0.1
Knitted products and clothing	1.93	109.7	110.0	109.9	0.2	-0.1
Lumber, sawmill, other wood products	5.20	141.6	162.7	155.5	9.8	-4.4
Furniture and fixtures	1.46	115.4	116.5	116.4	0.9	-0.1
Pulp and paper products	7.65	131.5	125.5	125.4	-4.6	-0.1
Printing and publishing	3.05	131.6	133.8	133.8	1.7	0.0
Primary metal products	7.58	120.2	121.1	122.2	1.7	0.9
Metal fabricated products	4.11	123.6	123.0	123.1	-0.4	0.1
Machinery and equipment	4.08	113.7	114.8	114.8	1.0	0.0
Autos, trucks, other transportation equipment	18.76	132.3	131.6	131.2	-0.8	-0.3
Electrical and communications products	6.03	107.1	106.3	106.4	-0.7	0.1
Non-metallic mineral products	2.12	112.6	114.9	115.0	2.1	0.1
Petroleum and coal products ⁵	6.01	91.7	109.8	116.6	27.2	6.2
Chemicals and chemical products	7.60	113.7	115.2	117.2	3.1	1.7
Miscellaneous manufactured products	2.45	117.6	117.9	118.4	0.7	0.4
Miscellaneous non-manufactured commodities	0.31	117.0	120.8	119.9	2.5	-0.7

¹ Intermediate goods are used principally to produce other goods.

² First-stage intermediate goods are used most frequently to produce other intermediate goods.

³ Second-stage intermediate goods are most commonly used to produce final goods.

⁴ Finished goods are most commonly used for immediate consumption or for capital investment.

⁵ This index is estimated for the current month.

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

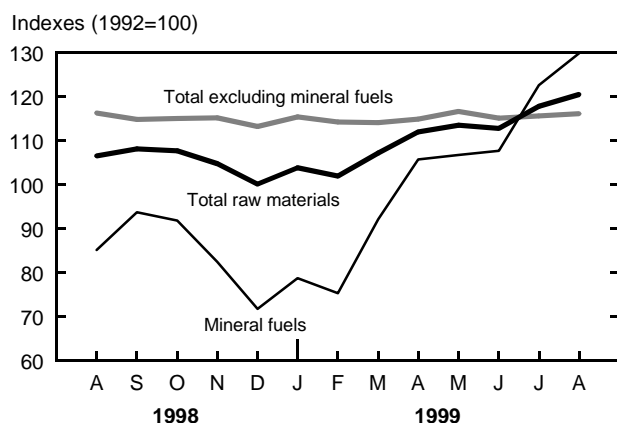
Raw Materials Price Index

August 1999 (preliminary)

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) continued its upward trend in August, rising 2.3%. This increase was largely achieved on the strength of crude oil and was marginally offset by lower wood prices. The index stood at 120.5 (1992=100), up from July's revised figure of 117.8.

The index stood 13.1% higher than in August 1998, the largest yearly advance in over four years. As with the monthly picture, crude oil was responsible for the bulk of these gains.

Crude oil prices again up sharply



Crude oil prices continue to climb

Crude oil prices continued to climb in August (+6.6%) as the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) maintained their output restrictions. OPEC and other producers have approached their goal of a 7% supply decrease worldwide. Members appear committed to sustaining production cuts until at least early next year.

As a group, mineral fuels gained 6.0% on the strength of crude oil prices, which were tempered somewhat by lower prices for coal (-2.4%) and natural gas (-0.4%).

On a yearly basis, the increases were even more dramatic. August's crude oil prices rocketed 57.8% higher than a year ago, when prices were lurking at long-time lows. This represents the largest yearly increase in close to nine years.

Note to readers

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects the prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in a world market. Also, unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

Reflecting strong crude oil prices, mineral fuel prices jumped 52.6% in August compared with the same period last year. Gains for prices of coal (+3.1%) and natural gas (+4.6%) were more modest.

By virtue of its importance in the RMPI, the mineral fuels category (90% of which is crude oil) exerts considerable influence over total prices. If mineral fuels were excluded, raw material prices for August would have risen only 0.4%. The impact of mineral fuels was even more pronounced on a 12-month basis. If mineral fuels were excluded, the RMPI would have dropped 0.2% rather than rising 13.1% on a yearly basis.

Animal product prices gain ground

Following two months of declines, animal product prices rose 3.3% in August. This advance was largely achieved on the strength of hog prices, but higher cattle, calf and milk prices also contributed.

Hog prices jumped 18.5% as U.S. meat packers stepped up purchases after July's heat wave, which kept farmers from transporting hogs. News of expected pork shipments to Russia from the European Union and the United States also put upward pressure on prices.

On a yearly basis, animal product prices were up 1.2% since August 1998. Cattle prices figured prominently, gaining 7.0%. Hog prices were up 3.9%, whereas chicken (-3.8%) and milk (-2.6%) prices both lost ground.

Wood prices fall

Following six months of increases, wood prices fell 3.3% in August. This was mainly due to the 4.0% drop in log prices. As the building season begins to wind down, log sales generally tend to taper off and prices fall accordingly. Pulpwood prices were more stable, slipping 0.6%.

In general, log prices had been on the upswing, largely due to a solid U.S. housing market. Builders are the biggest lumber users and demand from this source has been growing; during the first eight months of this year, there were 5% more housing starts compared with the same period in 1998. Reflecting this trend, log prices stood 7.2% above their levels of a year earlier.

Pulpwood prices dropped 5.4% on a yearly basis. This moderated the price increase for logs. As a result, the wood price index rose 4.2% over the year.

Non-ferrous metal prices edge up

As a group, non-ferrous metal prices edged up 0.4% in August, as higher nickel, zinc concentrate and gold prices were partly offset by lower copper concentrate prices.

While most non-ferrous metal prices remained relatively stable in August, nickel prices were the exception, climbing 12.2% to their highest level in over two years. Nickel's price jump was sparked by strong demand from stainless steel producers (a major consumer of nickel) and speculation. In general, nickel prices have been on the upswing for most of 1999 and August's price was 55.0% higher than a year earlier.

In contrast, copper concentrate prices fell 2.7% amid signs that workers at Canada's largest copper mine were prepared to accept a wage proposal, enabling its re-opening. This mine had closed in May, but the recent recovery in prices has made the re-opening of the mine feasible.

After several months of significant losses, gold prices recovered 2.1% in August. This is partly explained by the 20-year low prices that sparked demand from jewellers in Asia and Europe. Gold prices were 11.1% lower on a yearly basis as big sell-offs by countries such as Britain have crippled prices for most of the year.

Vegetable products firm up

As a group, vegetable product prices increased 1.0% in August, the result of fairly widespread increases. Prices remained 11.1% lower on a 12-month basis.

Soybean prices jumped 10.6% as a result of concern that continued dry weather in the United

States would worsen damage incurred in the late July heat wave. Corn prices, which were similarly affected, rose 3.4%. These increases were tempered somewhat by canola prices, which dropped 4.2% in August.

In general, both soybean and canola prices have recently been under downward pressure. Soybean prices remained 41.9% below their peak of April 1997 and 8.8% lower than a year earlier. Canola prices dropped even more dramatically over the past year, shrinking 23.1%.

Unrefined sugar prices gained 8.4% amid speculation that demand from Russia will rebound despite recent duties that were imposed. Supply was also put into question as Brazil is expected to use more sugar domestically for making alcohol-based motor fuel. Despite this upturn, prices remained 28.0% below their level of a year earlier.

Ferrous material prices increase

In August, ferrous material prices increased 1.2% as a 2.3% advance in iron and steel scrap was somewhat offset by a 0.3% decrease in iron ore prices.

On a yearly basis, however, prices appeared more sluggish. Iron ore prices were down 10.8%, while iron and steel scrap prices dropped 13.7%, bringing about a 12.4% decline in ferrous material prices.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

The August 1999 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of October. See *How to order publications*.

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Raw materials price indexes (1992=100)

	Relative importance	Aug. 1998	July 1999 ^r	Aug. 1999 ^p	Aug. 1998 to Aug. 1999	July to Aug. 1999
					% change	
Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI)	100.00	106.5	117.8	120.5	13.1	2.3
Mineral fuels	31.47	85.1	122.6	129.9	52.6	6.0
Vegetable products	9.41	125.4	110.4	111.5	-11.1	1.0
Animals and animal products	24.41	107.6	105.4	108.9	1.2	3.3
Wood	14.88	128.5	138.5	133.9	4.2	-3.3
Ferrous materials	3.17	134.2	116.1	117.5	-12.4	1.2
Non-ferrous metals	13.81	108.7	111.7	112.1	3.1	0.4
Non-metallic minerals	2.85	115.6	119.2	119.2	3.1	0.0
RMPI excluding mineral fuels	68.53	116.3	115.6	116.1	-0.2	0.4

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.



OTHER RELEASES

Employment Insurance

July 1999 (preliminary)

The estimated number of Canadians who received regular Employment Insurance (EI) benefits in July fell 3.0% to 496,920. Six provinces and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut recorded declines while the Atlantic provinces and the Yukon posted increases. The number of regular beneficiaries in July was 13.6% lower compared with the same month a year earlier.

Regular benefit payments increased 3.9% in July to \$629.3 million while claims received advanced 9.7% to 224,900.

**Number of beneficiaries receiving regular benefits
July 1999**

	July 1999 ^P	June to July 1999	July 1998 to July 1999
seasonally adjusted			
		% change	
Canada	496,920	-3.0	-13.6
Newfoundland	35,210	1.6	5.0
Prince Edward Island	8,490	1.8	-8.9
Nova Scotia	27,170	1.1	-12.0
New Brunswick	35,110	1.7	-7.1
Quebec	168,840	-4.0	-16.7
Ontario	96,170	-7.6	-26.1
Manitoba	12,300	-3.6	-6.9
Saskatchewan	12,680	-3.1	9.5
Alberta	35,010	-6.4	10.9
British Columbia	60,820	-4.8	-12.2
Yukon Territory	1,040	1.4	-21.0
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	1,230	-2.5	2.8

^P Preliminary figures.

Note: The number of beneficiaries is a measure of all persons who received EI benefits for the week containing the 15th day of the month. The regular benefit payments series measures the total of all monies received by individuals for the entire month. These different reference periods must be considered when comparisons are done between the series. The *Employment Insurance Act* allows each province or administrative region of Human Resource Development Canada to have some autonomy in the application of administrative procedures regarding renewal claims. Data users must take into consideration

that movements in levels from month-to-month may be affected by different administrative procedures regarding renewal claims from one province or region to another.

Employment Insurance statistics

	July 1998	June 1999	July 1999	June to July 1999	July 1998 to July 1999
seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
Regular beneficiaries	575,160	512,050 ^P	496,920 ^P	-3.0	-13.6
Regular benefits paid (\$ millions)	667.2	605.8	629.3	3.9	-5.7
Claims received ('000)	259.6	204.9	224.9	9.7	-13.4
seasonally unadjusted					
				% change	
All beneficiaries ('000)	675.2	566.5 ^P	592.2 ^P	4.5	-12.3
Regular beneficiaries ('000)	513.4	402.2 ^P	435.4 ^P	8.3	-15.2
Claims received ('000)	298.1	175.9	256.6	45.9	-13.9
Payments (\$ millions)	774.8	752.0	683.1	-9.2	-11.8
year-to-date (January to July)					
				1998	1999 to 1999
				% change	
Claims received ('000)			1,560.4	1,468.0	-5.9
Payments (\$ millions)			7,368.5	7,042.8	-4.4

^P Preliminary figures.

Note: All beneficiaries includes all claimants receiving regular benefits (e.g., due to layoff) or special benefits (e.g., due to illness).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5717, 5735 and 5736.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Gilles Groleau or Rob Keay (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division. ■

Railway carloadings

Seven-day period ending September 7, 1999

Non-intermodal traffic loaded during the seven-day period ending September 7, 1999, increased 5.8% to 4.6 million tonnes compared with the same period last year. The number of cars loaded decreased 1.9%.

Intermodal traffic tonnage totalled 357 000 tonnes, a 14.1% advance from the same period last year. The year-to-date figures jumped 13.3%.

Total traffic increased 6.4% during the period. This brought the year-to-date total to 172.4 million tonnes, down 1.3% from 1998.

All year-to-date figures have been revised.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; laroque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Stocks of frozen meat products

September 1999

Total frozen meat in cold storage at the opening of the first business day of September totalled 61,146 tonnes compared with 59,151 tonnes last month and 49,742 tonnes a year ago.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 87 and 9518-9525.

Data for stocks of frozen meat (23-009-XIE) are available free on the Internet at www.statcan.ca. The menu path is *Products and services* then *Downloadable publications (free)*.

For more information, call 1 800 216-2299. To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jamie Duffy (613-951-6356) or Robert Plourde (613-951-8716; duffjam@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

Civil aviation operating statistics

June 1999

In June, Air Canada reported no change in its total operations (seasonally adjusted passenger-kilometres) for the fifth consecutive month. Canadian Airlines reported a 2% increase in their international passenger-kilometres flown.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 385 (series 1 to 6).

The June 1999 data on civil aviation (operational data) for Air Canada and Canadian Airlines will appear in the September issue of *Aviation service bulletin* (51-004-XIB, \$8/\$82). A print-on-demand service is also available at a different price. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Robert Lund (613-951-0125), Aviation Statistics Centre, Transportation Division. ■

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Thursday, June 3, 1997
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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, most Canadians took an average of about 20 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was initially weak again in 1995, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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- **Egg production, April 1997** 12

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Editor: Dan Smythe (613-951-1103, smytdan@statcan.ca)

Head of Official Release: Chantal Prévost (613-951-1088), prevcha@statcan.ca

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