



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, March 30, 2000

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Industrial Product Price Index, February 2000**

Industrial product prices continued to gain momentum in February, recording their largest year-over-year increase in more than four years. Industrial prices rose 5.9% compared with February 1999, the largest increase since October 1995.

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- **Raw Materials Price Index, February 2000**

Manufacturers paid 37.1% more for raw materials in February than they did in February 1999, the strongest year-over-year increase since the Raw Materials Price Index began in 1981. If the mineral fuels component — almost all of which is crude oil — were excluded, raw material prices would have risen only 7.2%.

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MAJOR RELEASES

Industrial Product Price Index

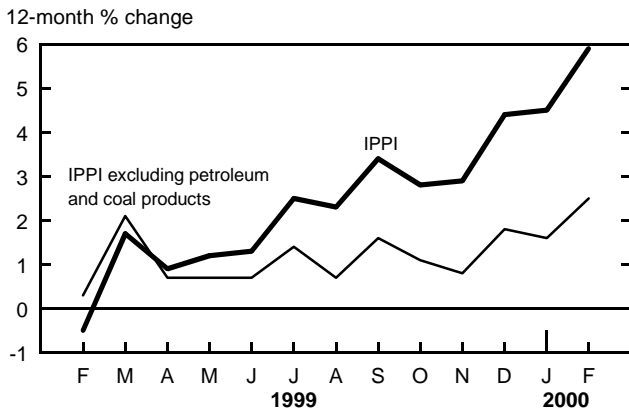
February 2000 (preliminary)

Industrial product prices continued to gain momentum in February, registering their largest year-over-year increase in more than four years. Industrial prices rose 5.9% compared with February 1999, the largest increase since October 1995.

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) stood at 125.8 (1992=100) in February, up from January's revised figure of 124.7. The pace of growth in industrial prices has accelerated during the past months, with increases of 2.9% in November, 4.4% in December and 4.5% in January.

Petroleum prices have figured prominently in the growth of the index over the past year. If petroleum and coal products had been excluded from February's IPPI, the index would have risen only 2.5%, less than half the actual increase.

Petroleum product prices push up IPPI



Rising prices for primary metal products, paper and paper products, and chemical and chemical products also helped push up the index.

On a monthly basis, prices rose 0.9% in February compared with January, the result of widespread gains. Again, petroleum prices were central to the advance, accompanied by stronger primary metal product prices, motor vehicle prices, and paper and paper product prices. The only group of commodities for which prices declined on a monthly basis were meat products.

Note to readers

The Industrial Product Price Index (IPPI) reflects the prices that producers in Canada receive as their goods leave the plant gate. It does not reflect what the consumer pays. Unlike the Consumer Price Index, 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. IPPI data are not seasonally adjusted and have a six-month revision period.

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%.

Refined petroleum prices still on rise

Prices for the refined petroleum product industry continued rising in February, as prices shot up a further 7.1% from January. Concern arose when the American Petroleum Institute reported that U.S. crude oil inventories had dropped to their lowest level in more than 20 years.

Members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) have continued their pledge to cut production. This has contributed to price hikes that left February's crude oil prices (as measured by the Raw Materials Price Index) more than 2.5 times higher than a year earlier. Reflecting these increases, prices for the refined petroleum product industry have risen 77.9% over the same 12-month period. The impact of crude oil prices was also felt at the retail level, where consumers paid 31.3% more at gas pumps in February.

The upturn in petroleum prices has had a substantial impact on the IPPI. If petroleum and coal products had been excluded, overall prices would have shown less than half (+0.4%) the actual monthly increase (+0.9%).

Climb in nickel product prices

Primary metal product prices continued to rise in February, gaining a further 1.5% compared with January. Higher nickel and aluminum product prices were responsible for these gains, which were tempered by declining prices for iron and steel products as well as copper and copper alloy products.

Nickel product prices picked up momentum in February, climbing 17.7% on reports of production

shortfalls. According to the International Nickel Study Group, global nickel demand surpassed production by 44,000 tons in the first 10 months of 1999. Demand from stainless steel producers, the primary consumers of nickel, has swelled, leading to shrinking nickel inventories. This upward pressure has left prices at more than twice the level of a year earlier and at their highest level in more than 10 years.

On the heels of two monthly declines, aluminum product prices rose 2.8% in February compared with January. Aluminum prices have been generally climbing in the past year; February's prices were 20.9% higher than those in February 1999.

Prices for primary metals as a group climbed 12.0% compared with February 1999. Prices for all the subsectors advanced, but nickel product prices and aluminum product prices made the most significant gains.

Pulp prices continue upward trend

Pulp prices continued their upward trend in February, rising a further 1.1% from January.

Pulp prices have been recovering steadily. They are now 31.8% above the low point they reached in February 1999. However, despite these advances, prices remained 30.3% below November 1995 levels.

Paper product prices, which have also been climbing for the past year, edged up 0.4% in February, leaving prices 7.7% above February 1999 levels.

Newsprint paper prices did not fare as well, slipping 0.3% in February compared with January. Prices for newsprint paper, which had been floundering throughout the first eight months of last year, started to recover in September. However, the recovery was short-lived; prices started dropping again this year, leaving February's prices 13.0% below those of February 1999.

The weakness in newsprint paper prices was overshadowed by gains in the other pulp and paper categories, leaving prices for the paper and paper product category higher on both a monthly basis (+0.9%) and on a yearly basis (+8.5%).

Exchange rate supports motor vehicle prices

Motor vehicle prices edged up 0.6% in February compared with January, supported in part by a stronger American dollar. Most motor vehicles manufactured in Canada are shipped to the United States with values quoted in American dollars. Accordingly, motor vehicle prices are susceptible to exchange rate fluctuations. This is reflected in export prices for trucks and automobiles, both of which edged up 0.7% on a monthly basis.

The circumstances are different on a yearly basis, where a comparatively weaker American dollar pulled down export prices. Export prices for automobiles shrank 2.5%, while those for trucks fared somewhat better (-1.3%). These decreases helped to bring about a 1.8% drop in motor vehicle prices.

Recycled paper rises

After edging down in January, recycled paper prices climbed 9.0% in February. Because of strong demand from Asia and broadening uses for recycled paper domestically, recycled paper prices have generally risen in the past year. The index (December 1998=100) was 46.4% higher in February than in February 1999.

Exchange rate effect

Some commodities, specifically motor vehicles, lumber, pulp, newsprint and certain metals, often have their prices quoted in U.S. dollars. Consequently, exchange rate fluctuations affect their contribution to the IPPI.

From January to February, the Canadian dollar lost ground, putting upward pressure on the IPPI. If the exchange rate had not changed between the two months, the index would have advanced 0.7% instead of 0.9%.

On a yearly basis, a higher-valued Canadian dollar narrowed the increase in the IPPI. If the exchange rate had not changed between February 1999 and February 2000, the index would have risen 6.5%.

International 12-month price changes

	Month	Change %
Manufacturers' prices		
Canada	February	5.9
United States	February	4.8
Japan (domestic wholesale prices)	February	-0.1
United Kingdom (domestic manufacturing output prices)	February	2.3
Italy	January	3.8
Germany	February	2.4
France (including food and energy)	January	9.7

Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.

The February 2000 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available in April. 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	Feb. 1999	Jan. 2000 ^r	Feb. 2000 ^p	Feb. 1999 to Feb. 2000	Jan. to Feb. 2000
					% change	
Industrial Product Price Index	100.00	118.8	124.7	125.8	5.9	0.9
Intermediate goods¹	59.28	117.6	126.1	127.3	8.2	1.0
First-stage intermediate goods ²	7.91	112.6	135.6	138.0	22.6	1.8
Second-stage intermediate goods ³	51.37	118.4	124.6	125.7	6.2	0.9
Finished goods⁴	40.72	120.4	122.7	123.5	2.6	0.7
Finished foods and feeds	10.38	113.7	114.9	115.0	1.1	0.1
Capital equipment	10.21	125.3	124.3	124.8	-0.4	0.4
All other finished goods	20.13	121.3	125.9	127.3	4.9	1.1
Aggregation by commodities						
Meat, fish and dairy products	7.27	118.3	122.6	122.1	3.2	-0.4
Fruit, vegetable, feed, miscellaneous food products	6.72	111.0	109.2	109.4	-1.4	0.2
Beverages	2.12	115.9	117.3	117.7	1.6	0.3
Tobacco and tobacco products	0.72	135.6	140.7	140.7	3.8	0.0
Rubber, leather, plastic fabric products	3.01	112.6	116.3	116.8	3.7	0.4
Textile products	1.82	109.1	108.7	108.5	-0.5	-0.2
Knitted products and clothing	1.93	110.2	110.2	110.3	0.1	0.1
Lumber, sawmill, other wood products	5.20	140.2	146.6	147.3	5.1	0.5
Furniture and fixtures	1.46	115.5	118.2	118.5	2.6	0.3
Pulp and paper products	7.65	124.7	134.1	135.3	8.5	0.9
Printing and publishing	3.05	133.2	136.0	136.3	2.3	0.2
Primary metal products	7.58	115.5	127.5	129.4	12.0	1.5
Metal fabricated products	4.11	122.7	124.9	125.0	1.9	0.1
Machinery and equipment	4.08	114.4	115.5	115.7	1.1	0.2
Autos, trucks, other transportation equipment	18.76	132.1	129.6	130.2	-1.4	0.5
Electrical and communications products	6.03	106.9	105.5	105.6	-1.2	0.1
Non-metallic mineral products	2.12	113.4	115.9	116.0	2.3	0.1
Petroleum and coal products ⁵	6.01	86.2	142.6	152.6	77.0	7.0
Chemicals and chemical products	7.60	113.9	119.5	119.9	5.3	0.3
Miscellaneous manufactured products	2.45	118.2	119.5	120.2	1.7	0.6
Miscellaneous non-manufactured commodities	0.31	112.6	124.5	126.2	12.1	1.4

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

¹ Intermediate goods are goods used principally to produce other goods.

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

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

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

⁵ This index is estimated for the current month.

Raw Materials Price Index

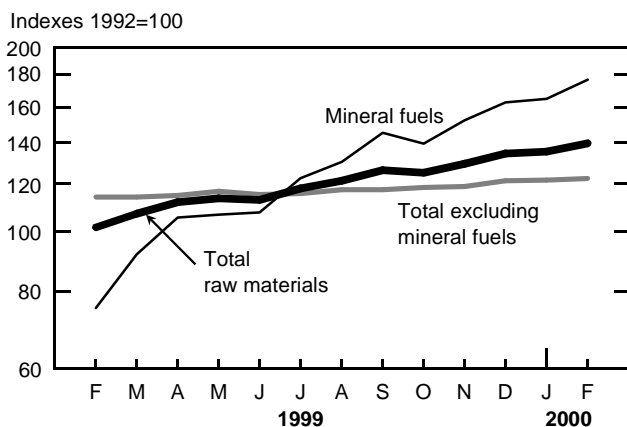
February 2000 (preliminary)

Manufacturers paid 37.1% more for raw materials in February than they did in February 1999, the strongest year-over-year increase since the Raw Materials Price Index began in 1981.

Surging oil prices were responsible. If the mineral fuels component — almost all of which is crude oil — were excluded, raw material prices would have risen only 7.2%. Crude oil prices have increased more than 2.5 times (+153.4%) since February 1999.

The Raw Materials Price Index was 139.7 in February (1992=100), up from the revised January figure of 135.4.

Crude oil prices up again in February



Prices also increased during the past 12 months for most non-ferrous metals, hogs, logs, natural gas, and iron and steel scrap. These advances were somewhat offset by lower prices for vegetable products, pulpwood, lead and radioactive concentrates.

On a monthly basis, prices for raw materials increased 3.2% between January and February. If mineral fuels had been excluded, the increase would have been just 0.6%. Crude oil prices rose 7.9% from January to February. Prices also increased for hogs, nickel concentrates, and aluminum materials. These were partly offset by lower prices for pulpwood, canola, unrefined sugar, zinc concentrates, and iron and steel scrap.

Higher crude oil prices

On a month-to-month basis, mineral fuel prices increased 7.5% in February. Higher prices were noted for crude oil (+7.9%), natural gas (+0.4) and coal (+0.3%). Compared with 12 months earlier, mineral

Note to readers

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. These indexes are not seasonally adjusted, and are subject to a six-month revision policy. Many of these prices are set in a world market. Unlike the Industrial Product Price Index, which is also not seasonally adjusted, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

fuel prices were up 135.6%. This was reflected in the higher prices for crude oil (+153.4%) and natural gas (+11.4%), and offset very marginally by lower prices for coal (-5.8%).

Crude oil prices are the benchmark for many other commodities such as gasoline, diesel fuel, aviation fuel and home heating fuels. According to the Consumer Price Index, gasoline prices rose 31.3% from February 1999, and heating oil prices climbed 63.6%.

Canadian crude oil production declined 4.9% in 1999, following weak prices in 1998. Marketable Canadian natural gas production was up 1.1%. In the same period, Canada's coal production fell 3.8% because of stiff competition in export markets and lower electric power generation by coal-fired steam plants.

Nickel prices up in February

Non-ferrous metal prices strengthened in February, up 1.3% over January. Higher prices for nickel concentrates (+19.3%), aluminum materials (+2.7%) and gold (+7.5%) were the major contributors. Lower prices for zinc and copper concentrates somewhat offset the higher metal prices.

Compared with the same period last year, non-ferrous metal prices were up 19.6%. Higher prices for aluminum materials (+36.8%) and nickel concentrates (+108.1%) were partly offset by lower prices for lead concentrates (-26.2%).

Recent significant increases in stainless steel production have added upward pressure to nickel prices. The majority of nickel production is used in the production of stainless steel.

Copper prices weakened somewhat in February. Recent record high global inventories of copper have sent signals that production of copper is outpacing demand. Lead concentrate prices have been on the decline for the last seven months.

Animal product prices increase

Animals and animal product prices increased 1.7% in February over the previous month. Higher prices for hogs (+11.8%) were somewhat offset by lower prices for cattle (-1.5%).

Compared with 12 months earlier, animals and animal product prices were up 7.1%. Higher prices for hogs (+38.2%), cattle (+6.6%) and fresh fish (+6.2%) were marginally offset by lower prices for chickens and unprocessed fluid milk.

Hog prices have recently increased due to lower hog slaughters. This has occurred at a time of increased demand from retailers, just before the spring barbecue season. Hog prices have battled back from their December 1998 low, almost tripling since that time.

Canada's cattle herd continued contracting during 1999 as increased slaughter and declining births more than offset falling exports.

Canola prices continue to fall

On a month-to-month basis, vegetable product prices were down 0.8% in February. Lower prices for canola, unrefined sugar and coffee were partly offset by higher prices for natural rubber. Compared with 12 months earlier, vegetable product prices were down 5.7%. Lower prices for canola (-22.5%), wheat (-9.0%) and unrefined sugar (-19.5%) were mainly responsible.

All grain prices were down in February. Low-cost grain has boosted export demand, and has encouraged livestock producers to use more corn and wheat as feed.

The main oilseeds produced in Canada are canola and soybeans. Canola prices have dropped 37.9% since their recent peak of November 1998. Soybean prices have declined 14.1% over the same period.

Unrefined sugar prices have been very weak over the last two years. Prices have dropped 43.3% since February 1998. Global sugar production, according to published reports, will exceed demand by 7.7 million tonnes this marketing year, which began October 1.

Log prices up

Wood prices showed little change in February (-0.5%), as the small increase in log prices was more than offset by lower pulpwood prices. Compared with February 1999, log prices have increased 10.2%, whereas pulpwood prices declined 3.2% over the same period.

Log prices have risen 14.3% since October 1998. Pulpwood prices have gone in the other direction, dropping 7.1% over the same period. The strengthening housing construction sector in North America and the economic recovery in Asia have greatly helped push up log prices.

Iron and steel scrap prices turn down

Iron and steel scrap prices turned down in February (-3.2%), after rising for nine successive months. Over that nine-month period, iron and steel scrap prices increased 23.8%. However, non-ferrous metal scrap continued to edge up in February. Compared with February 1999, aluminum and alloy scrap prices have increased 30.2%, and copper and copper alloy scrap 16.0%.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1879.

The February 2000 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available in April. 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. □

Raw materials price indexes
(1992=100)

	Relative importance	Feb. 1999	Jan. 2000 ^r	Feb. 2000 ^p	Feb. 1999 to Feb. 2000 % change	Jan. to Feb. 2000
Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI)	100.00	101.9	135.4	139.7	37.1	3.2
Mineral fuels	31.47	75.3	165.1	177.4	135.6	7.5
Vegetable products	9.41	117.7	111.9	111.0	-5.7	-0.8
Animals and animal products	24.41	108.9	114.6	116.6	7.1	1.7
Wood	14.88	131.5	141.6	140.9	7.1	-0.5
Ferrous materials	3.17	117.9	125.9	123.8	5.0	-1.7
Non-ferrous metals	13.81	101.0	119.2	120.8	19.6	1.3
Non-metallic minerals	2.85	117.5	118.7	118.7	1.0	0.0
RMPI excluding mineral fuels	68.53	114.2	121.7	122.4	7.2	0.6

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.



OTHER RELEASES

Courts: Resources, expenditures and personnel

1998/99

Governments spent \$925 million, or just over \$30 for every person in Canada, operating the judicial system in the 1998/99 fiscal year.

This represented a 7% increase since 1996/97 when data were last collected. However, after adjusting for inflation, the increase was 5% over the two-year period.

A total of 11,934 people were employed in provincial, territorial and federal courts in 1998/99, down 2.8% from 1996/97. Of this total, 9,940 (83%) were court staff and 1,994 (17%) were judges.

Just over half of these judges, or 1,000, were appointed by the federal government. About 41% worked in superior courts, 6% in appeal courts and 3% in federal courts.

Employee salaries and benefits accounted for \$760 million, or 82% of the total. Salaries and benefits paid to the judiciary totalled \$341 million. The judiciary, although accounting for only 17% of total personnel, received 45% of total salaries.

Average annual salaries including benefits ranged from \$42,056 for court employees to \$146,705 for provincial/territorial judges and \$194,853 for all federally-appointed court judges.

Since 1996/97, these averages have increased 4% for provincial/territorial judges, 7% for court employees and 18% for federally-appointed court judges. Taking inflation into account, the increases were 2.1%, 4.5% and 14.8% respectively.

Note: This report provides personnel and expenditure information on the judicial system for the 1998/99 fiscal year, as well as some comparisons between current results and findings from the previous survey of 1996/97. This report also includes data from the provincial and territorial courts, and the federal courts, which include the Supreme Court of Canada, the Federal Court of Canada, the Tax Court of Canada, and the Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs. The source of this information is the Courts Resources, Expenditures, and Personnel Survey, administered biennially by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. This report is the first in a series of biennial reports that will be repeated in 2002 for the 2000/01 fiscal year.

The report *Courts resources, expenditures and personnel, 1998/99* (85-403-XIE, \$22) is now available. A print-on-demand version (\$44) is also available. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact CCJS Information and Client Services (613-951-9023 or 800-387-2231). ■

Social transfers, earnings and low-income intensity among Canadian children

1981 to 1996

Analysts have long used the low-income rate — the proportion of people below a given low-income cutoff — as the principal means of tracking low-income trends and assessing the direct effects of changes in employment earnings and transfer payments on these trends.

A new research paper, *Social transfers, earnings and low-income intensity among Canadian children, 1981-96: Highlighting recent developments in low-income measurement*, analyzes low-income trends among Canadian children between 1981 and 1996. It concludes that the low-income rate provides valuable information, but when it is used alone, it can miss some important trends. The reason for this is that the low-income rate measures only the number (or proportion) of people with low-income; it says nothing about changes in their income levels.

Recently, economists have developed a measure called "low-income intensity." This new research paper suggests that this measure be considered since it makes use of both the low-income rate and adds information on the low-income gap, which measures how far below the low-income cutoff a family's income is. Information on the low-income gap is published, but it is often less prominently featured than the low-income rate. With the additional information on the low-income gap, the measure can detect changes in income levels of low-income families. The paper shows that the intensity measure and the commonly-used low-income rate may lead to quite different conclusions about low-income trends among children and about the direct role of changes in earnings and transfers in determining those trends.

The analytical paper, *Social transfers, earnings and low-income intensity among Canadian children, 1981-96: Highlighting recent developments in low-income measurement* (11F0019MPE, no. 144), is now available free on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). As well, it can be ordered by contacting H el ene Lamadeleine (613-951-5231).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Garnett Picot (613-951-8214), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division. ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending March 25, 2000 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending March 25, totalled 331 318 tonnes, down 0.1% from the week-earlier 331 527 tonnes and up 4.3% from the year-earlier 317 529 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 3 980 675 tonnes, a 10.1% increase compared with 3 614 445 tonnes for the same period in 1999.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-7093; milsomg@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Light bulbs and tubes

February 2000

Light bulb and tube manufacturers sold 21.4 million light bulbs and tubes in February, an 8.2% decrease from the 23.3 million sold in February 1999.

Year-to-date sales at the end of February totalled 47.2 million (revised) light bulbs and tubes, an increase of 5.1% from the 44.9 million sold a year earlier.

The February issue of *Electric lamps, light bulbs and tubes* (43-009-XIB, \$5/\$47) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

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

Russell Kowaluk (613-951-0600; kowarus@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Asphalt roofing

February 2000

Production of asphalt shingles totalled 3 567 866 metric bundles in February, a 24.8% increase from 2 857 801 metric bundles produced in February 1999.

Year-to-date production amounted to 6 814 716 metric bundles, a 21.4% increase from 5 615 541 metric bundles produced during the same period in 1999.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 32 and 122 (series 27).

The February issue of *Asphalt roofing* (45-001-XIB, \$5/\$47) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, and data quality of this release, contact Gilles Simard (613-951-3516; simales@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Heritage institutions

1997-98

Data for heritage institutions for 1997-98 are now available.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality for this release, contact Fidelis Ifedi (613-951-1569; fax: 613-951-9040), Culture Statistics Program, Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Gross domestic product by industry, December 1999
Catalogue number 15-001-XPB
(Canada: \$15/\$145; outside Canada: US\$15/US\$145).

VISTA on the agri-food industry and the farm community, March 2000
Catalogue number 21-004-XIE
(Free).

Electric lamps, February 2000
Catalogue number 43-009-XIB
(Canada: \$5/\$47).

Asphalt roofing, February 2000
Catalogue number 45-001-XIB
(Canada: \$5/\$47).

Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises, fourth quarter 1999
Catalogue number 61-008-XPB
(Canada: \$35/\$114; outside Canada: US\$35/US\$114).

Courts: Resources, expenditures and personnel, 1998-99
Catalogue number 85-403-XIE
(Canada: \$22).

All prices exclude sales tax.

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Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.



MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are taking it less and less. In 1996, about 1.5 billion trips were taken 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 relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001E.

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