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MAJOR RELEASES

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NEW PRODUCTS

RELEASE DATES: May 23 to May 26

MAJOR RELEASES

Canadian international merchandise trade
March 2000

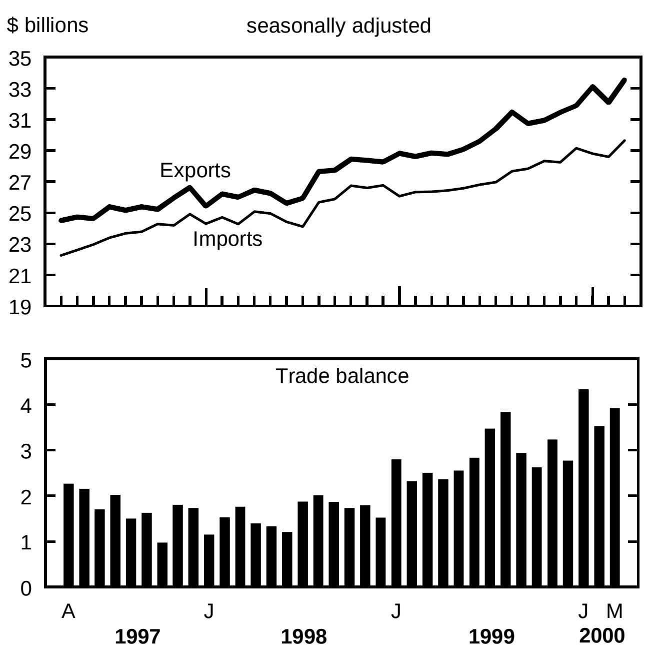
Exports and imports in March reached their highest monthly levels so far this year, rebounding sharply from February's setbacks. The growth in exports outpaced that in imports, helping to produce the second highest quarterly surplus on record.

Canadian companies exported $33.5 billion worth of goods in March, up 4.5% from February, as the crucial automotive industry recovered from a temporary slowdown in production.

Imports rose 3.7% to $29.6 billion, halting two consecutive monthly declines. The key imports were electronic products, automotive parts, tools and equipment, and energy products.

The resulting trade surplus of $3.9 billion, combined with strong balances in January and February, made for an overall surplus of $11.7 billion for the first three months of 2000. This first-quarter surplus was the second highest quarterly surplus overall, just short of the record of $12.1 billion in the second quarter of 1996.

Exports, imports and trade balance



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

Automotive industry led gains in all export sectors

All sectors reported higher exports in March; the automotive industry recorded the largest advance.

Exporters shipped nearly $8.3 billion worth of automobiles, trucks and parts out of the country in March, an increase of 8.1% over February. Production slowdowns for inventory purposes at some car plants had driven exports down 14.1% in February. Car exports alone reached almost $4.3 billion in March, up 9.6% from February.

Shipments of machinery and equipment were nearly $8.3 billion in March, an increase of 7.1%. Strong exports of aircraft to the United States and Europe accounted for about half of this gain; the rest was mainly attributable to large shipments of copper pieces and electronic equipment to the United States.

Exports of industrial commodities rose 2.3% in March. This is the sixth consecutive monthly increase, for a total advance of 11.9% over this period. Strong exports to the United States of gold, rubber and synthetic plastics, automotive hardware, and herbicides were the main reason for this increase. Exports of nickel ores, though down this month, were still 110.5% higher than in March 1999, owing mainly to a growing world demand for steel.

Strongly higher exports of wheat and barley to China and of potato preparations and beef cattle to the United States contributed to the increase of 4.4% in agricultural and fishing exports in March. The higher value of wheat exports is the result of both higher volumes and higher prices — the price of wheat has recovered for the first time since November 1999. Canola exports declined for the third consecutive month, which made for much larger Canadian reserves.

Forest products exports recovered slightly after a net decline in February. Exports of wood-fabricated products, particularly to Asia, were the main reason for the sector's increase. Strong increases in the value of exports of newsprint and other papers, owing mainly to larger export volumes, were another contributor. Lumber exports were down, as March was the last month in which yearly quotas with the United States were applied. Also, certain wood products have had difficulty penetrating overseas markets, particularly in Europe, because of tighter competition.

Imports of electronic, computer and telecommunications equipment fuel March's recovery

Stronger imports of electronic, computer and telecommunications equipment, after a net decline in February, and sharply higher imports of automotive products boosted the machinery and equipment sector. Imports of compressors also rose, in order to increase production capacity related mainly to the energy industry in certain provinces.

Imports of industrial commodities were up 5.0% in March. The recovery of automotive production led to greater imports of automotive hardware. In addition, an early spring in Canada pushed up imports of herbicides from France, Germany and the United States. Strong gold imports continued for a third consecutive month, as a result of major contracts.

After two successive monthly declines, imports of other consumer products rose 4.6% in March. The main part of this increase was in the category of medical and pharmaceutical products in individual doses. Large volumes of drugs for treating arthritis, heart problems, and the central nervous system were imported from Sweden, Ireland, Europe and the United States.

For a second consecutive month, imports of energy products experienced a strong increase, totalling 24.5% for the last two months. Some refineries replenished their stocks of petrochemicals, while a high enough water level in the Great Lakes allowed for a resumption of large shipments of coal. March also saw the first drop in prices for crude oil imports since June 1999.

Imports of automotive products were up 1.6%. Imports of automotive parts, which rose 6.4%, were the main reason for this increase. This recovery returned imports of parts to a more normal level, after the considerable decline in February related to production slowdowns at some plants. Imports of trucks, especially heavy vehicles, continued to rise, while imports of cars experienced their first decline of the year (-8.2%).

The growing Canadian economy and a mild winter helped boost construction starts to their highest level since June 1994, pushing imports of forest products, particularly wood-fabricated products, up 10.7% in March.

Revisions

In general, merchandise trade data are revised regularly for each month of the current year. Factors influencing revisions include late receipt of import and export documentation, incorrect information on customs forms, replacement of estimates with actual figures (once available), changes in classification of merchandise based on more current information, and seasonal adjustments. Consult the appropriate CANSIM matrices for revised data.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3699, 3701-3711, 3713, 3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.

This release contains a summary of the merchandise trade data to be published shortly in *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, $19/$188 or 65-001-XIB, $14/$141). The publication will include tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. Current account data (which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, service 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*.

Merchandise trade data are available by fax on the morning of release.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jocelyne Elibani, (613-951-9647; 1-800-294-5583), International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade

	Feb. 2000[r]	March 2000	Feb. to March 2000	March 1999 to March 2000	Jan. to March 1999	Jan. to March 2000	Jan.-March 1999 to Jan.-March 2000
	seasonally adjusted, $ current						
	$ millions		% change		$ millions		% change
Principal trading partners							
Exports							
United States	27,304	28,817	5.5	16.0	73,757	84,581	14.7
Japan	751	745	-0.8	1.8	2,311	2,301	-0.4
European Union	1,789	1,656	-7.4	13.8	4,334	5,055	16.6
Other OECD countries[1]	668	790	18.3	41.3	1,676	2,150	28.3
All other countries	1,567	1,520	-3.0	21.6	4,194	4,616	10.1
Total	32,080	33,528	4.5	16.3	86,272	98,704	14.4
Imports							
United States	21,518	22,112	2.8	9.3	60,768	65,293	7.4
Japan	933	938	0.5	12.3	2,440	2,755	12.9
European Union	2,413	2,869	18.9	26.8	6,620	7,909	19.5
Other OECD countries[1]	1,325	1,255	-5.3	27.9	2,976	3,865	29.9
All other countries	2,392	2,465	3.1	20.8	5,923	7,186	21.3
Total	28,580	29,639	3.7	12.5	78,726	87,007	10.5
Balance							
United States	5,786	6,705	...	...	12,989	19,288	...
Japan	-182	-193	...	...	-129	-454	...
European Union	-624	-1,213	...	...	-2,286	-2,854	...
Other OECD countries[1]	-657	-465	...	...	-1,300	-1,715	...
All other countries	-825	-945	...	...	-1,729	-2,570	...
Total	3,500	3,889	...	...	7,546	11,697	...
Principal commodity groupings							
Exports							
Agricultural and fishing products	2,155	2,249	4.4	8.6	6,295	6,583	4.6
Energy products	3,626	3,650	0.7	89.1	5,523	10,494	90.0
Forestry products	3,428	3,501	2.1	13.8	9,272	10,503	13.3
Industrial goods and materials	5,180	5,301	2.3	17.2	13,860	15,609	12.6
Machinery and equipment	7,707	8,258	7.1	20.7	20,475	23,755	16.0
Automotive products	7,645	8,267	8.1	2.0	24,003	24,814	3.4
Other consumer goods	1,164	1,165	0.1	2.9	3,423	3,489	1.9
Special transactions trade[2]	626	612	-2.2	-6.7	1,880	1,828	-2.8
Other balance of payments adjustments	551	526	-4.5	5.2	1,541	1,633	6.0
Imports							
Agricultural and fishing products	1,488	1,512	1.6	2.4	4,378	4,518	3.2
Energy products	1,355	1,472	8.6	109.4	1,955	4,009	105.1
Forestry products	237	262	10.5	17.0	656	748	14.0
Industrial goods and materials	5,586	5,867	5.0	13.9	15,083	17,002	12.7
Machinery and equipment	9,315	9,686	4.0	12.7	26,282	28,617	8.9
Automotive products	6,450	6,556	1.6	6.1	18,384	19,450	5.8
Other consumer goods	3,100	3,244	4.6	6.9	9,025	9,538	5.7
Special transactions trade[2]	527	511	-3.0	2.2	1,465	1,531	4.5
Other balance of payments adjustments	522	528	1.1	8.0	1,499	1,593	6.3

r *Revised figures.*
... *Figures not appropriate or not applicable.*
1 *Includes Australia, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Poland, South Korea, Hungary and the Czech Republic.*
2 *These are mainly low-valued transactions, value of repairs to equipment, and goods returned to country of origin.*

■

OTHER RELEASES

Household Internet use

1999

Canadians are logging onto the Internet in growing numbers. In 1999, the proportion of households that contained at least one regular user jumped to 41.8% from 35.9% in 1998. Internet use, measured by household, was higher from both homes and schools, according to data from the 1999 Household Internet Use Survey, while personal Internet use at work decreased slightly and in public libraries remained unchanged.

For the first time, home was the most popular location for Internet use at 28.7% of households in 1999, up from 22.6% of households in 1998. This might reflect expansion of Internet services offered to households and lower connection costs.

Regular household Internet use from work dropped into second place at 21.9% in 1999 from 23.3% in 1998. This could be due in part to the development of workplace policies limiting personal Internet use.

The third most popular location, school, rose to 14.9% from 12.1% in 1998. Internet use from public libraries was steady at 4.5% in 1999.

Other locations, such as the homes of friends, neighbours and relatives as well as Internet cafés, saw an increase to 4.1% in 1999, up from 2.6% the previous year.

Alberta continued to lead with the highest proportion of households with regular Internet users, from any location, at 50.8% in 1999, up from 45.1% in 1998. British Columbia was a close second at 48.1% in 1999, compared with 42.0% in 1998. The province with the highest proportion of regular home Internet use was British Columbia (35.8%), just ahead of Alberta (34.1%) in 1999.

For the first time, among urban areas, Calgary had the highest proportion of households with regular Internet users at 60.1% in 1999. Close behind were Ottawa (56.7%), Victoria (56.4%) and Halifax (52.4%). Victoria and Halifax swapped positions from 1998 to 1999.

Households in top 15 Census Metropolitan Areas with at least one regular user

	All locations		
	1997	1998	1999
	% of households		
Canada	**29.4**	**35.9**	**41.8**
Calgary	41.1	52.8	60.1
Ottawa[1]	55.6(1)	55.4(1)	56.7(2)
Victoria	40.1	48.5	56.4
Halifax	39.2	50.3	52.4
Vancouver	35.9	45.7	49.7
Edmonton	35.9	43.9	48.8
Toronto	38.0	42.0	48.5
London	31.8	41.2	45.9
Kitchener	34.9	42.4	43.7
Hamilton	30.4	41.2	43.1
Winnipeg	33.1	37.8	42.1
Montréal	24.3	31.6	39.1
St. Catharines-Niagara	26.1	29.3	34.4
Québec	23.9	28.6	33.9
Windsor	25.7	26.8	33.6

1 *Ontario portion only of the Ottawa-Hull Census Metropolitan Area.*
2 *Includes the Hull component of the Ottawa-Hull Census Metropolitan Area.*

Note: The 1999 Household Internet Use Survey (HIUS) was conducted in November as a subsample of the Labour Force Survey (LFS). The LFS is a monthly household survey whose sample is representative of the civilian, non-institutionalized population 15 years of age or older in Canada's 10 provinces. The HIUS collected information on the household as a whole. In total, 43,034 households were eligible for the HIUS and 36,241 or 84.2% responded.

Custom tabulations are available upon request. The 1999 HIUS public use microdata file and research papers highlighting how Canadian households use the Internet will be available in the summer.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of the 1999 HIUS, contact Jonathan Ellison (613-951-5882; *jonathan.ellison@statcan.ca*), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division. □

Households with at least one regular user, by point of use

	Home 1997	Home 1999	Work 1997	Work 1999	School 1997	School 1999	Public library 1997	Public library 1999	Other 1997	Other 1999	Any location 1997	Any location 1999
	% of households											
All provinces	**16.0**	**28.7**	**19.9**	**21.9**	**9.4**	**14.9**	**3.7**	**4.5**	**2.8**	**4.1**	**29.4**	**41.8**
Newfoundland	12.4	18.1	15.7	14.2	12.9	18.0	4.3	5.5	- -	4.0	26.6	35.2
Prince Edward Island	10.5	20.1	16.6	19.7	11.4	19.0	2.0	3.6[1]	2.2	3.4[1]	26.0	40.5
Nova Scotia	14.3	26.7	20.7	19.7	14.3	14.5	5.0	3.8	3.1	5.0	32.2	41.1
New Brunswick	12.1	23.6	18.0	19.2	10.7	13.1	2.6	2.4	4.9	4.1	29.1	38.0
Quebec	10.2	21.2	13.1	17.2	5.6	11.2	2.1	3.4	1.8	3.4	20.1	33.1
Ontario	19.3	32.0	23.3	24.2	10.6	16.0	4.4	4.9	3.1	3.5	33.2	44.5
Manitoba	13.7	24.7	20.4	20.2	9.4	14.4	3.3	2.8	3.1	4.1	29.3	38.3
Saskatchewan	12.3	23.6	18.2	19.3	8.9	16.6	2.8	4.1	3.3	5.2	27.2	39.9
Alberta	18.7	34.1	25.8	27.6	11.8	21.2	4.3	5.0	3.4	4.9	34.5	50.8
British Columbia	19.9	35.8	21.2	23.6	9.6	14.6	4.5	6.3	3.1	6.5	33.6	48.1

[1] *Low reliability estimate due to sample size.*
- - *Not included due to unreliable estimate.*

■

Export and import price indexes
March 2000

Current- and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1992=100) on a balance of payments basis are now available. Price indexes are listed from January 1992 to March 2000 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. Price indexes are listed from January 1992 to March 2000. Included with the U.S. commodity indexes are the 10 all-countries and U.S.-only standard international trade classification 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, 8430-8435, and 8438-8447.

The March 2000 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, $19/$188, 65-001-XIB, $14/$141) will be available soon. See *How to order publications*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647; 1-800-294-5583), International Trade Division. ■

Monthly railway carloadings
March 2000

Freight loaded by railways in February totalled 23.1 million metric tonnes (excluding intermodal traffic). This was 12.3% more than was loaded in March 1999. The intermodal tonnage, represented by "containers-on-flat-cars" and "trailers-on-flat-cars", was 2.3 million metric tonnes, an increase of 16.9% compared with the same period in 1999.

The March 2000 issue of *Railway carloadings* (52-001-XIE, $8/$77) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1430.

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

NEW PRODUCTS

Infomat — A weekly review, May 19, 2000
Catalogue number 11-002-XIE ($3/$109).

Infomat — A weekly review, May 19, 2000
Catalogue number 11-002-XPE ($4/$145).

Livestock statistics updates, issue 2000-001
Catalogue number 23-603-UPE ($45/$149).

Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, March 2000
Catalogue number 31-001-XPB ($20/$196).

Railway carloadings, March 2000
Catalogue number 52-001-XIE ($8/$77).

All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude sales tax. Additional shipping charges apply for delivery outside Canada.

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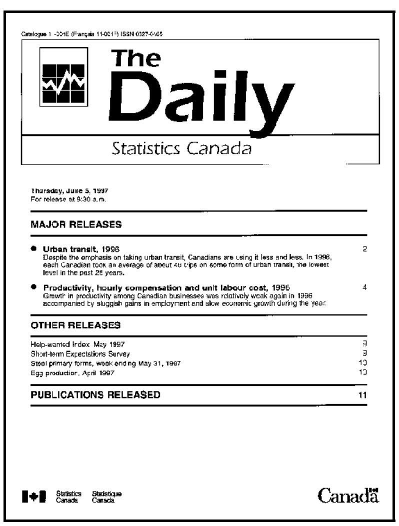

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Thursday, June 5, 1997
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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 45 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 relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

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Editor: Tom Vradenburg (613-951-1103, vradtom@statcan.ca)
Head of Official Release: John Flanders (613-951-8292), flanjoh@statcan.ca

RELEASE DATES: MAY 23 TO MAY 26

May 23 to May 26

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
24	**Composite Index**	April 2000
24	**Education quarterly review**	
25	**Canada's international transactions in securities**	March 2000
25	**Net farm income**	1999
25	**Farm cash receipts**	First quarter 2000
26	**Industrial Product Price Index**	April 2000
26	**Raw Materials Price Index**	April 2000