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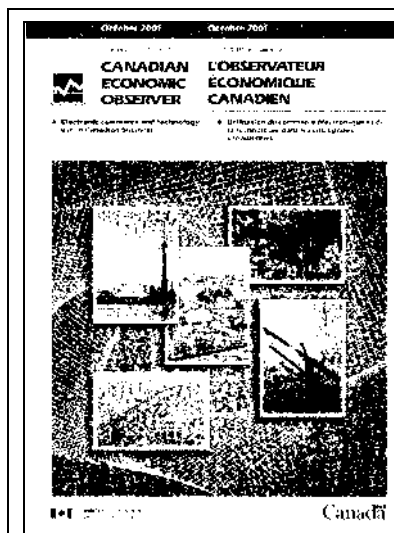
Friday, October 19, 2001

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Canadian international merchandise trade, August 2001** 3
 Canada's merchandise exports fell to their lowest level in 17 months in August; declines were seen in almost all major commodity groups. Companies exported just over \$34.1 billion worth of merchandise, down 3.4% from July.
- **Wholesale trade, August 2001** 6
 Wholesale sales rose 0.8% in August, as wholesalers continued to sell off inventories.

(continued on page 2)



Canadian economic observer October 2001

The October issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in September and presents a feature article on electronic commerce and technology use in Canadian industry. A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

The October 2001 issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Volume 14, number 10 (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. See *How to order products*. Visit the *Canadian economic observer's* page on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the *Canadian statistics* page, choose *Economic conditions*, and on that page see the banner ad for *Canadian economic observer*. For more information, contact Philip Cross (613-951-9162; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.

OTHER RELEASES

Export and import price indexes, August 2001	9
Local government enterprises, income and expenses, fiscal year ended December 31, 1999	9
Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard, August 2001	10
Aircraft movement statistics, August 2001	10

NEW PRODUCTS

RELEASE DATES: October 22 to 26	13
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MAJOR RELEASES

Canadian international merchandise trade

August 2001

Canada's merchandise exports fell to their lowest level in 17 months in August; exports declined in all major commodity groups except automotive products.

Canadian companies exported just over \$34.1 billion worth of merchandise, down 3.4% from July and the lowest level since April 2000. Exports have been generally declining since January, when they reached a record \$38.4 billion.

Exports of automotive products, the only bright spot, rose 1.9% to nearly \$8.0 billion, surpassing machinery and equipment as the top export sector.

Imports, meanwhile, declined 0.9% to \$29.7 billion; increases in the automotive, agriculture and consumer goods sectors failed to offset larger declines in all others.

As a result, Canada's trade surplus fell to just over \$4.4 billion, about one-half the record surplus of more than \$8.4 billion in January. Even so, the cumulative merchandise trade surplus for the first eight months of 2001 stood at \$48.3 billion, about \$11.3 billion higher than for the same period of 2000.

Note to readers

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

Revisions

Merchandise trade data are generally 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 tables for revised data.

Merchandise exports to the United States declined 2.7% in August to \$29.4 billion, and imports from Canada's largest trading partner were down 2.4% to \$21.4 billion. This resulted in a decrease in the trade surplus with the United States to \$8.0 billion.

Widespread declines in exports

Exports fell in every major commodity grouping in August except for the automotive industry, where manufacturers were recovering from temporary plant shutdowns and model year change-overs in July.

The value of passenger car exports climbed 3.0% to \$4.2 billion, and trucks and other motor vehicle exports rose 3.1% to \$1.5 billion. Exports of motor vehicle parts fell a slight 0.7% to just over \$2.3 billion.

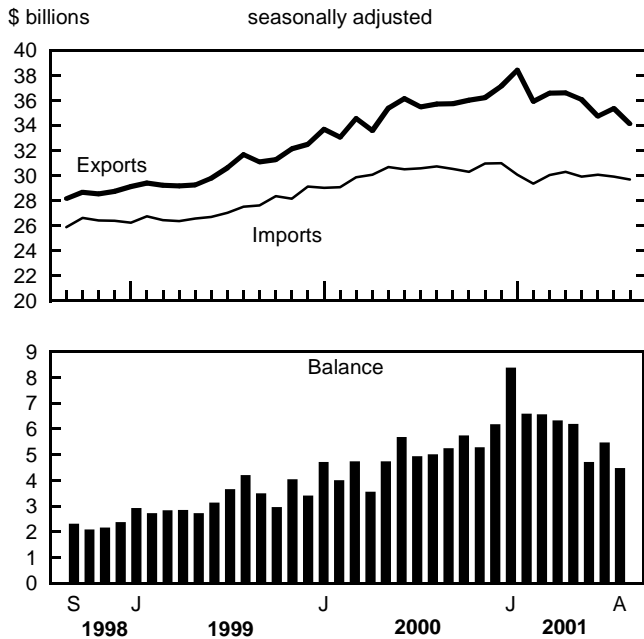
Of the major groupings, the biggest decline occurred in machinery and equipment exports, which dropped 4.2% to \$7.8 billion, the fifth straight monthly decrease. The biggest factor was weakness in the aircraft sector and the other machinery and equipment sector, which includes telecommunications equipment, office computers and other high-tech merchandise.

Exports of other machinery and equipment, mainly high-technology equipment, have declined \$1.8 billion since setting a record \$6.2 billion in December 2000. Specifically, telecom equipment dropped 9.3% to \$1.1 billion, less than half the level seen in December 2000. Office machines and equipment fell 4.1% to \$730.3 million in August.

Aircraft exports declined 12.4% in August to \$1.7 billion, but industrial and agricultural machinery exports jumped 5.4% to \$1.6 billion.

Energy exports fell 11.1% in August to \$4.7 billion—natural gas exports plunged 22.8% to

Exports, imports and trade balance



\$2.2 billion as American inventories swelled. However, electricity exports, responding to heavy northeastern U.S. demand due to unusually warm summer weather, rose 12.8% to \$254.6 million.

Canada's third largest export sector, industrial goods and materials, declined 3.3% to \$5.4 billion in August. Soft demand and commodity prices led to nearly across-the-board drops in exports of metals, alloys and ores. Metals and alloys exports declined 7.2% to \$1.6 billion, mainly nickel and zinc metals and alloys.

Exports in the chemicals, plastics and fertilizers sector rebounded to just over \$1.9 billion, up 1.2%, on the strength of increased exports of potash and synthetic rubber and plastic materials in August.

Forestry products exports fell 2.3% to \$3.2 billion in August as the U.S. Department of Commerce announced a 19.3% countervailing duty on Canadian softwood lumber. Exports of lumber, primarily softwood lumber to the United States, fell 4.8% to just under \$1 billion as news of the retroactive duty rippled through the forestry sector.

Agricultural and fishing exports fell 3.9% to \$2.6 billion. Continued strong markets for meat and meat preparations resulted in exports of \$408.3 million in August, down a slight 0.6% from July.

Imports fell as demand for machinery, equipment and energy cooled

Imports of passenger automobiles and trucks grew strongly in August, leading to an overall 2.6% increase in the sector to \$6.4 billion. Passenger auto imports rose 10.6% to \$2.3 billion, and truck imports advanced 9.4% to \$833.4 million.

Consumer goods imports increased 2.4% to \$3.7 billion. While much of the increase was spread among a variety of items, imports of house furnishings stood out with a 5.7% increase to \$552.1 million in August.

Imports of machinery and equipment fell 6.6% to \$9.3 billion in August, as the high-tech machinery

and equipment sector declined 7.5% to \$3.9 billion, the eighth monthly decrease since December 2000. Imports of office machines and equipment were off 2.8% to \$1.4 billion in August. However, aircraft, engines and parts imports jumped 56.0% to \$1.2 billion.

Energy imports fell for the third month in a row, down 6.8% to \$1.4 billion. Most of the decline was a result of the 11.0% drop in crude petroleum to \$948.3 million. August was the third consecutive month in which crude petroleum imports have fallen—a total of 25.5% over those months.

Imports of agricultural and fishing products rose 7.0% to \$1.8 billion in August. Meat and meat preparation imports jumped 15.7% to \$148.4 million, in tandem with a 16.2% increase in imports of fish and marine animals to \$164.7 million. Cotton imports rose 67.6% to \$16.4 million.

Available on CANSIM: tables 2260001, 2260002, 2270001, 2270002, 2280033 and 2280034.

This release contains a summary of the merchandise trade data to be published shortly in *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141; 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188). The publication will include tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. Current account data (which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, service transactions, investment income and transfers) are available quarterly in *Canada's balance of international payments* (67-001-XIB, \$29/\$93; 67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). See *How to order products*.

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, (1-800-294-5583; 613-951-9647) or Daryl Keen (613-951-1810), International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade

	July 2001 ^r	August 2001	July 2001 to August 2001	August 2000 to August 2001	January to August 2000	January to. August 2001	January–August 2000 to January–August 2001
Seasonally adjusted, \$ current							
	\$ millions		% change		\$ millions		% change
Principal trading partners							
Exports							
United States	30,279	29,457	-2.7	-2.9	235,285	245,824	4.5
Japan	778	698	-10.3	-16.3	6,794	6,468	-4.8
European Union	1,772	1,531	-13.6	-22.0	14,737	14,786	0.3
Other OECD countries ¹	675	822	21.8	-1.2	6,934	6,657	-4.0
All other countries	1,844	1,621	-12.1	-6.6	13,761	13,998	1.7
Total	35,347	34,129	-3.4	-4.4	277,510	287,737	3.7
Imports							
United States	21,960	21,429	-2.4	-4.9	177,904	174,984	-1.6
Japan	945	1,024	8.4	1.4	7,815	7,092	-9.3
European Union	2,745	2,818	2.7	0.2	21,695	23,057	6.3
Other OECD countries ¹	1,584	1,633	3.1	-2.5	12,455	12,655	1.6
All other countries	2,688	2,792	3.9	3.4	20,634	21,605	4.7
Total	29,922	29,696	-0.8	-3.4	240,504	239,393	-0.5
Balance							
United States	8,319	8,028	...	...	57,381	70,840	...
Japan	-167	-326	...	...	-1,021	-624	...
European Union	-973	-1,287	...	...	-6,958	-8,271	...
Other OECD countries ¹	-909	-811	...	...	-5,521	-5,998	...
All other countries	-844	-1,171	...	...	-6,873	-7,607	...
Total	5,425	4,433	...	...	37,006	48,344	...
Principal commodity groupings							
Exports							
Agricultural and fishing products	2,678	2,575	-3.8	10.2	18,180	20,459	12.5
Energy products	5,309	4,722	-11.1	4.3	32,027	45,692	42.7
Forestry products	3,319	3,241	-2.4	-3.8	28,148	26,476	-5.9
Industrial goods and materials	5,572	5,391	-3.2	-2.6	43,845	44,350	1.2
Machinery and equipment	8,103	7,761	-4.2	-15.8	69,728	67,590	-3.1
Automotive products	7,824	7,975	1.9	-2.3	66,017	62,474	-5.4
Other consumer goods	1,308	1,283	-1.9	4.6	9,668	10,554	9.2
Special transactions trade ²	686	651	-5.1	-12.4	5,250	5,597	6.6
Other balance of payments adjustments	548	529	-3.5	-7.7	4,650	4,541	-2.3
Imports							
Agricultural and fishing products	1,643	1,758	7.0	10.6	12,165	13,422	10.3
Energy products	1,487	1,385	-6.9	-11.8	11,470	12,877	12.3
Forestry products	239	237	-0.8	-9.2	2,027	1,953	-3.7
Industrial goods and materials	5,545	5,689	2.6	-2.0	46,827	46,586	-0.5
Machinery and equipment	10,006	9,347	-6.6	-10.5	80,649	78,242	-3.0
Automotive products	6,277	6,440	2.6	-2.8	52,574	48,641	-7.5
Other consumer goods	3,590	3,676	2.4	9.0	26,199	28,560	9.0
Special transactions trade ²	609	642	5.4	19.3	4,261	4,887	14.7
Other balance of payments adjustments	525	522	-0.6	-3.0	4,335	4,226	-2.5

^r Revised figures

... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

¹ Includes Australia, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Poland, South Korea, Hungary, Czech Republic and new member Slovakia (a new member since January 2001).

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

Wholesale trade

August 2001 (preliminary)

Wholesale sales rose 0.8% in August, as wholesalers continued to sell off inventories. Sales gains were widespread—just 3 of the 11 wholesale sectors reported declines. So far in 2001, wholesale sales have been generally climbing, after levelling out during the latter half of 2000.

Wholesalers sold \$33.2 billion worth of goods and services in August. Leading the way were wholesalers of industrial machinery and equipment (+3.8%). Notable increases were also reported in the wholesaling of automotive products (+3.4%) and of beverage, drug and tobacco products (+2.5%). Food product wholesalers reported their fifth consecutive monthly gain (+0.9%).

However, wholesale sales in the other products category fell 3.9%, largely as a result of lower sales in agricultural chemicals and other farm supplies. August also saw the small July gain in computers and electronics erased—sales fell 2.0%. As a result, this sector slipped back to July 1998 levels. Rounding out the declines, wholesaling of metals and hardware fell 1.1%.

Note to readers

Estimates from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification. Wholesale trade estimates for September will be released November 21.

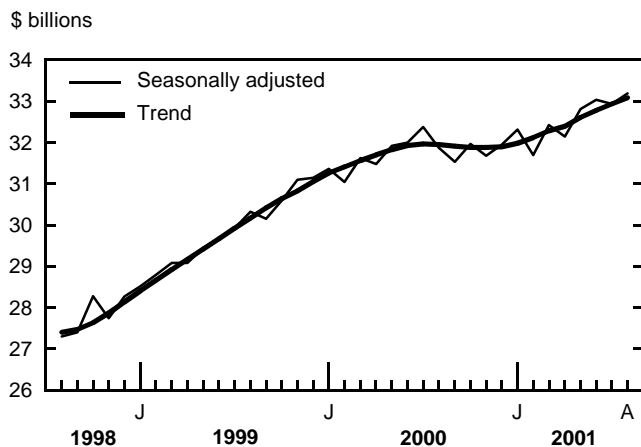
Industrial machinery and automotive products recovered some lost ground

Wholesalers of both industrial machinery (+3.8%) and automotive products (+3.4%) reported strong sales in August.

The rise for wholesalers of industrial machinery and equipment in August nearly offset the effects of the declines the previous two months. However, despite the progress in August and a slight recovery early in 2001, wholesale sales in this sector have been generally stagnant since mid-2000.

August's rise for automotive products also recovered some lost ground for wholesalers in this sector. Despite July's drop, wholesale sales of automotive products are still recovering from a general decline in the latter half of 2000.

Wholesale sales have been rising in 2001



Inventories continued slide

Wholesale inventories continued to fall in August, down 0.5% to \$43.5 billion. Early 2001 saw wholesale inventories values generally plateau. Over the summer, wholesale inventory levels fell 1.1%. Prior to 2001, inventories were generally climbing.

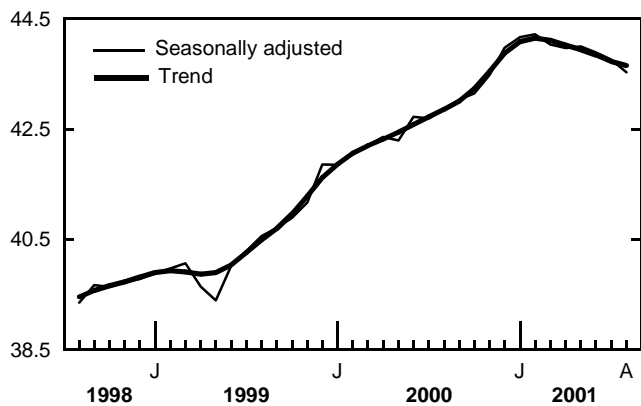
Only 3 of the 11 wholesale sectors reported inventory increases: computers and electronics (+1.8%), apparel (+0.8%), and lumber and building materials (+0.3%).

Wholesalers of household goods reported their third consecutive monthly decline (-3.1%). Wholesalers of metals and hardware posted their ninth consecutive monthly decline (-0.9%). Many wholesalers reported purposely reducing their inventories in August.

The inventory-to-sales ratio fell from 1.33 in July to 1.31 in August. After falling for most of 2001, the ratio is now at its lowest point in recent times.

Wholesalers continued to sell off their inventories

\$ billions



Available on CANSIM: tables 810001 and 810002.

The August 2001 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, \$14/\$140) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

For data or general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; haysale@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. □

Wholesale merchants' sales and inventories

	August 2000	May 2001 ^r	June 2001 ^r	July 2001 ^r	August 2001 ^p	July to August 2001	August 2000 to August 2001
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Sales, all trade groups	31,871	32,807	33,031	32,932	33,183	0.8	4.1
Food products	5,024	5,315	5,345	5,419	5,466	0.9	8.8
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,117	2,231	2,273	2,271	2,327	2.5	9.9
Apparel and dry goods	506	576	586	616	617	0.2	21.9
Household goods	845	897	909	874	874	0.0	3.4
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,032	6,094	6,443	6,177	6,388	3.4	5.9
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	2,030	2,021	1,997	2,021	1,999	-1.1	-1.5
Lumber and building materials	2,332	2,437	2,443	2,413	2,423	0.4	3.9
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	649	665	690	670	673	0.4	3.6
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	5,016	5,153	5,036	4,960	5,146	3.8	2.6
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,907	2,746	2,632	2,657	2,603	-2.0	-10.5
Other products	4,411	4,673	4,678	4,855	4,666	-3.9	5.8
Sales by province and territory							
Newfoundland	225	213	213	215	215	0.1	-4.6
Prince Edward Island	55	64	59	57	54	-5.4	-1.1
Nova Scotia	582	572	579	602	622	3.4	6.9
New Brunswick	407	427	421	418	418	0.2	2.7
Quebec	6,551	6,656	6,664	6,634	6,701	1.0	2.3
Ontario	15,904	16,201	16,372	16,157	16,490	2.1	3.7
Manitoba	911	956	956	945	966	2.2	6.0
Saskatchewan	904	1,197	1,148	1,302	995	-23.6	10.1
Alberta	3,083	3,277	3,373	3,404	3,453	1.4	12.0
British Columbia	3,221	3,216	3,218	3,171	3,242	2.2	0.6
Yukon	11	11	11	10	11	7.1	-0.4
Northwest Territories	13	15	15	16	14	-11.5	4.9
Nunavut	2	3	2	2	2	-21.8	-32.3
Inventories, all trade groups	42,857	44,001	43,889	43,765	43,530	-0.5	1.6
Food products	2,884	3,152	3,228	3,243	3,227	-0.5	11.9
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,628	2,794	2,796	2,800	2,787	-0.5	6.1
Apparel and dry goods	1,094	1,187	1,182	1,245	1,255	0.8	14.8
Household goods	1,582	1,690	1,639	1,617	1,568	-3.1	-0.9
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,535	6,458	6,518	6,529	6,493	-0.6	-0.6
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	4,046	3,761	3,722	3,667	3,633	-0.9	-10.2
Lumber and building materials	3,993	4,054	4,114	4,107	4,121	0.3	3.2
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	1,934	1,879	1,851	1,882	1,866	-0.8	-3.5
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	10,575	11,138	11,021	10,945	10,933	-0.1	3.4
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,345	2,144	2,007	1,864	1,898	1.8	-19.1
Other products	5,242	5,743	5,812	5,866	5,748	-2.0	9.7

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

OTHER RELEASES

Export and import price indexes

August 2001

Current- and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1997=100) on a balance of payments basis are now available. Price indexes are listed from January 1997 to the current month (August 2001) for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups (62 exports and 61 imports).

Current- and fixed-weighted U.S. price indexes (1997=100) are also available on a customs basis. Price indexes are listed from January 1997 to August 2001. 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: tables 2280033-2280040.

The August 2001 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141; 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

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

Local government enterprises, income and expenses

Fiscal year ended December 31, 1999

After-tax profits of local government enterprises reached \$424.5 million in 1999, up 14.3% or \$53.2 million from 1998. Three out of the four sectors surveyed were responsible for the increase in profits—the electricity, transit systems, and gas distribution sectors.

In 1999, local electric utilities recorded the largest profit, \$331.9 million, up 10.2% from 1998. In comparison, provincial electric utilities earned \$2.8 billion, an increase of 47.4% (\$0.9 billion). Ontario and Alberta accounted for approximately 75% of the \$424.5 million earned by local government enterprises.

Income and expenses of local government enterprises by industry

	1999		1998	
	Income	Expenses	Net income	Net income
\$ millions				
Total	12,642.2	12,217.4	424.5	371.3
Electricity	9,345.7	9,013.8	331.9	301.1
Transit systems	3,021.1	2,989.9	31.2	21.6
Gas distribution	188.6	149.0	39.6	26.9
Telephone	86.8	64.6	21.9	21.6

Note: Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Total income for all sectors reached \$12.6 billion in 1999, of which \$1.4 billion was subsidies to public transit systems. If subsidies to the four sectors were removed from income, only two provinces, Alberta (\$30.3 million) and Saskatchewan (\$2.9 million) would have generated profits.

Data are drawn from Statistics Canada surveys, provincial departments of municipal affairs, financial statements of local enterprises, provincial statistical agencies and other government agencies. They cover all local government entities operating in the public transit, power utilities, telephone and gas distribution industries. Local governments are also involved in other commercial activities such as campgrounds and golf courses. The consolidation of these data with those of the municipalities prevents identifying them separately.

Income and expenses of local government enterprises by province and territory

	1999		1998	
	Income	Expenses	Net income	Net income
\$ millions				
Canada	12,642.2	12,217.4	424.5	
Newfoundland	8.2	8.2	0.0	
Prince Edward Island	9.4	9.5	0.0	
Nova Scotia	26.7	26.7	0.0	
New Brunswick	99.4	98.0	1.4	
Quebec	1,084.1	1,036.6	47.5	
Ontario	8,615.6	8,483.5	131.7	
Manitoba	217.6	187.1	30.5	
Saskatchewan	125.4	104.7	20.7	
Alberta	1,963.1	1,777.7	185.4	
British Columbia	490.6	483.4	7.3	
Yukon	2.0	2.0	0.0	
Northwest Territories	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Note: Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

Available on CANSIM: table 3850015.

Data are available through custom and special tabulation. They are presented by province and territory and by industry at the Canada total for the period 1995 to 1999. For more information, or general inquiries on the products or services of

the Public Institutions Division, contact Joanne Rice (613-951-0767; ricejoa@statcan.ca)

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean-Marc de Beaumont (613-951-1829; debejea@statcan.ca) or Jean Énard at (613-951-1847; emarjea@statcan.ca) Public Institutions Division. ■

Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard

August 2001

Oriented strandboard production in August totalled 638 947 cubic metres, up 2.2% from 625 437 cubic metres in August 2000. Particleboard production reached 232 644 cubic metres, an increase of 12.3% from 207 213 cubic metres in August 2000. Fibreboard production totalled 81 293 cubic metres, up 2.6% from 79 270 cubic metres in August 2000.

Year-to-date oriented strandboard production to the end of August totalled 5 204 355 cubic metres, up 0.8% from 5 163 841 cubic metres in the same period of 2000. Particleboard production reached 1 918 441 cubic metres, up 15.0% from 1 668 270 cubic metres produced during the same period of 2000. Year-to-date fibreboard production reached 681 567 cubic metres, down 3.2% from 704 403 cubic metres in the same period of 2000.

Available on CANSIM: table 3030002.

The August 2001 issue of *Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard*, Vol. 37, no. 8 (36-003-XIB, \$5/\$47), is now available. See *How to order products*.

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods, and data quality of this release, contact Sara Breen (613-951-3521; sara.breen@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Aircraft movement statistics

August 2001 (preliminary)

There were 480,253 take-offs and landings recorded at the 43 Canadian airports with Nav Canada air traffic control towers in August, an increase of 2.7% from August 2000.

Statistics for the 55 Canadian airports with Nav Canada flight service stations are also available for August.

The August 2001 preliminary monthly report is available on the Transport Canada's Web site at this URL: (<http://www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/report/TP1496/tp1496.htm>).

For more information concerning this Web site, contact Michel Villeneuve (613-990-3825; villenm@tc.gc.ca) or Sheila Rajani (613-993-9822; rajanis@tc.gc.ca), Transport Canada.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of these statistics, contact Kathie Davidson (613-951-0141; fax: 613-951-0010; aviationstatistics@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Infomat—A weekly review, October 19, 2001
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Catalogue number 11-002-XPE (\$4/\$145).

Canadian economic observer, Vol. 14, no. 10,
October 2001
Catalogue number 11-010-XPB (\$23/\$227).

Particleboard, oriented strandboard and fibreboard,
Vol. 37, no. 8, August 2001
Catalogue number 36-003-XIB (\$5/\$47).

Quarterly demographic statistics, April–June 2001,
Vol. 15, no. 2
Catalogue number 91-002-XIB (\$8/\$25).

Quarterly demographic statistics, April–June 2001,
Vol. 15, no. 2
Catalogue number 91-002-XPB (\$10/\$33).

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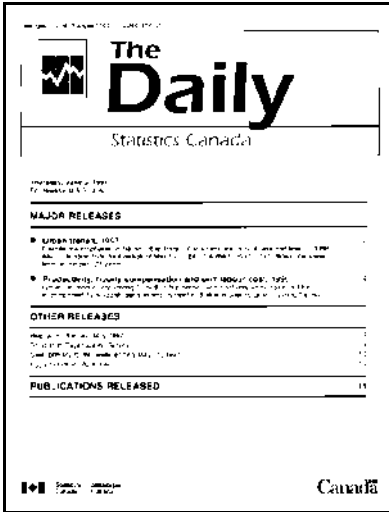
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Release date	Title	Reference period
22	Retail trade	August 2001
23	E-commerce: Household shopping on the Internet	2000
23	Television viewing	Fall 2000
24	Composite Index	September 2001
24	Canada's international transactions in securities	August 2001
25	Employment Insurance	August 2001
25	Workplace and Employee Survey: Job vacancies	1999
26	After the layoff	1993–1998
