



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, March 7, 2001

For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Building permits, January 2001** 2
Municipalities issued \$3.8 billion in building permits in January, the highest monthly figure on record and an increase of 21.5% from December. Vigorous construction intentions in both the residential and non-residential sectors fuelled the gain.

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index, February 2001 5

NEW PRODUCTS 6

REGIONAL REFERENCE CENTRES 7

Labour force historical review on CD-ROM

1976 to 2000

The *Labour force historical review* on CD-ROM is an easy-to-use tool that lets you discover labour market patterns or trends in seconds. This annual product is a comprehensive database of Labour Force Survey estimates, containing thousands of cross-classified data series and spanning more than two decades from 1976 to 2000. Monthly and annual average series are available on a wide range of subjects, including labour force status by demographic, education and family characteristics, trends in the labour markets of metropolitan areas, economic regions, industry and occupation estimates and much more.

A total of 21 new tables have been added to this CD package. They include annual and monthly tables on hirings and separations, retirement age, labour force characteristics for rural and urban areas, wages of employees by job permanency and union coverage, weekly and hourly wage distributions. With the addition of these new tables, this package includes two CDs of Labour Force Survey data for the price of one.

The 2000 *Labour force historical review* (71F0004XCB, \$195) is now available. LAN and bulk prices are available on request. To order this edition, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or e-mail to order@statcan.ca.

For more information, contact Marc Lévesque (613-951-2793), or refer to Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the *Canadian statistics* page, choose *The People*, then *Labour, employment and unemployment*, then *Labour force historical review*.

MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

January 2001

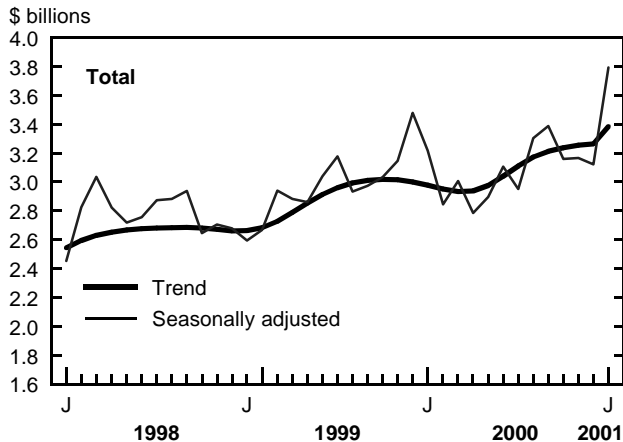
Municipalities issued \$3.8 billion in building permits in January, the highest monthly figure on record and an increase of 21.5% from December. Vigorous construction intentions in both the residential and non-residential sectors fuelled the gain.

Powered by strong demand for both single- and multi-family dwellings, builders took out \$2.0 billion worth of housing permits, up a substantial 22.0% from December. This was the best monthly performance since February 1990.

Intentions in the non-residential sector followed a similar path, rising 20.9% from December to \$1.8 billion, the highest level in 11 years. This was almost exclusively the result of a substantial increase in permits for commercial projects.

January 2001 saw a stronger start than did January 2000. The value of building permits was 17.9% higher than the construction intentions for the same month a year ago.

Total value of permits reached new peak



At the regional level, the metropolitan areas of Montréal and Toronto pulled far ahead of other regions. In both areas, every component in the residential and non-residential sectors recorded gains from January 2000.

Note to readers

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

The monthly Building and Demolitions Permits Survey covers 2,500 municipalities representing 94% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 6% of the population are very small, and their levels of building activity have little impact on the total.

The value of planned construction activities shown in this release excludes land and engineering projects (such as water works, sewers and culverts).

Increases in both single- and multi-family components

Building permits for single-family dwellings rose 16.2% to \$1.4 billion in January, following a 6.4% decline in December. Construction intentions for multi-family dwellings jumped 37.5% to \$608 million.

These results are consistent with key indicators showing a strong housing market. In January, housing starts were up 20.1%, sales of existing homes surged and prices for new housing increased at a strong rate. As well, employment levels remained high.

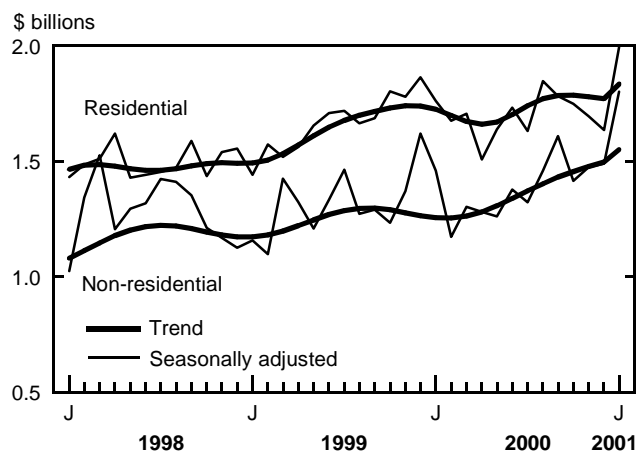
The outlook for the housing sector is positive for 2001. The latest release of Statistics Canada's Survey on Public and Private Investment showed investment in housing is expected to increase for a sixth straight year in 2001.

At the provincial level, by far the largest January increase (in dollar terms) in the housing sector occurred in Ontario (+30.0% to \$988 million). The strong construction intentions for multi-family dwellings in the Toronto area drove this increase. Quebec also posted a notable gain (+32.2% to \$379 million). In both provinces, these levels were the highest in nine years.

Nova Scotia was the only province to post a decline in residential building permits (-1.9% to \$34 million), the province's third monthly decrease in a row for housing intentions.

The total value of residential permits was up 13.2% from January 2000, mainly because of intentions for multi-family dwellings. The provinces that posted the best start to the new year (in dollar terms) were Ontario (+15.0%) and Quebec (+37.6%).

Both residential and non-residential sectors jumped



Best start ever for non-residential sector

In January, \$1.8 billion in non-residential permits were issued, 23.5% more than in January 2000, and the best January results on record. All three components showed year-over-year increases, but the largest was posted by the industrial component (+76.1%). Among the provinces, Ontario (+65.4%) and Quebec (+112.9%) showed the best start.

Despite a fourth consecutive quarterly decline in the Conference Board of Canada's Index of Business Confidence, the outlook for the non-residential sector remains positive. Corporate operating profits reached a record high in 2000, vacancy rates for office and commercial buildings shrank in many centres and high industrial capacity utilization rates led the non-residential sector to a strong start in 2001.

Non-residential construction activity (excluding engineering) is also expected to grow in 2001, according to the Survey on Private and Public Investment.

On a monthly basis, increases in commercial construction intentions fuelled January's gain in non-residential permits. The value of commercial permits climbed 46.7% from December to \$1.0 billion; most of the gain was for offices and hotels. The largest increases in commercial permits were in Quebec (+154.0% to \$262 million) and Ontario (+48.9% to \$463 million).

The industrial component increased 2.4% to \$416 million, largely the result of projects related to utilities. Quebec posted the most significant increase in this component; industrial projects there almost quintupled (+392.9% to \$161 million) from December.

Value of building permits

	Dec. 2000 ^r	Jan. 2001 ^p	Dec. 2000 to Jan. 2001	Jan. 2000 to Jan. 2001
seasonally adjusted				
	\$ millions		% change	
St. John's	11.3	13.8	22.6	-8.2
Halifax	30.6	21.2	-30.7	-28.0
Saint John	3.5	5.0	40.9	2.5
Chicoutimi-Jonquière	4.7	6.1	30.0	-71.5
Québec	43.3	69.7	61.0	129.0
Sherbrooke	7.9	7.7	-3.0	34.6
Trois-Rivières	3.6	5.0	39.7	-14.3
Montréal	273.7	573.1	109.4	98.7
Hull	14.0	25.6	82.7	153.1
Ottawa	138.2	143.4	3.8	95.1
Oshawa	37.0	22.4	-39.5	-48.0
Toronto	845.8	990.8	17.1	38.1
Hamilton	81.5	103.0	26.4	95.3
St. Catharines-Niagara	71.0	32.3	-54.5	-4.1
Kitchener	67.8	55.3	-18.4	-28.1
London	28.3	57.6	103.7	44.4
Windsor	63.9	43.5	-31.9	-4.8
Sudbury	18.1	4.1	-77.6	219.2
Thunder Bay	8.8	8.7	-0.5	-10.9
Winnipeg	32.0	34.7	8.4	-34.7
Regina	8.8	27.7	215.8	216.2
Saskatoon	11.7	27.6	135.4	-24.0
Calgary	166.4	158.5	-4.8	-37.0
Edmonton	104.8	99.8	-4.8	-1.8
Vancouver	284.4	235.0	-17.4	-43.1
Victoria	27.1	32.9	21.7	62.7

^r Revised data.

^p Preliminary data.

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

However, intentions in the institutional component declined 6.4% to \$362 million; education showed the greatest loss. Ontario had the largest decrease in the institutional component (-17.1% to \$209 million).

Among the provinces, the outstanding results in the Montréal area led Quebec to the largest increase in the non-residential sector (+148.9% to \$486 million). Following a strong month in December, Ontario recorded the most significant decrease (-1.7% to \$854 million).

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

The January 2001 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

The February 2001 building permit estimate will be released on April 5.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Vere Clarke (613-951-6556; clarver@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; saineti@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Value of building permits

	December 2000 ^r	January 2001 ^p	December 2000 to January 2001	January 2000 to January 2001
	seasonally adjusted			
	\$ millions		% change	
Canada	3,122.9	3,793.0	21.5	17.9
Residential	1,633.5	1,992.8	22.0	13.2
Non-residential	1,489.4	1,800.3	20.9	23.5
Newfoundland	20.9	23.5	12.8	12.8
Residential	10.5	19.5	86.5	27.1
Non-residential	10.4	4.0	-61.4	-27.1
Prince Edward Island	5.6	11.3	101.5	65.6
Residential	4.1	5.2	26.5	3.9
Non-residential	1.5	6.1	313.1	240.4
Nova Scotia	60.0	55.8	-7.0	1.1
Residential	34.4	33.7	-1.9	-21.6
Non-residential	25.6	22.1	-13.8	81.7
New Brunswick	28.3	35.5	25.6	-3.8
Residential	21.8	22.7	4.2	-20.1
Non-residential	6.4	12.8	98.2	51.1
Quebec	482.2	865.5	79.5	71.7
Residential	286.9	379.2	32.2	37.5
Non-residential	195.4	486.3	148.9	112.9
Ontario	1,628.6	1,841.5	13.1	33.9
Residential	759.7	987.6	30.0	15.0
Non-residential	868.9	853.9	-1.7	65.4
Manitoba	52.1	56.5	8.3	-38.3
Residential	24.9	30.2	21.3	-14.3
Non-residential	27.2	26.3	-3.5	-53.4
Saskatchewan	31.5	74.6	137.2	5.9
Residential	15.4	17.6	14.0	-26.0
Non-residential	16.0	57.0	255.9	22.1
Alberta	401.8	414.1	3.1	-15.6
Residential	230.0	242.5	5.4	-11.5
Non-residential	171.9	171.7	-0.1	-20.8
British Columbia	409.9	409.6	-0.1	-26.7
Residential	245.1	250.6	2.2	27.5
Non-residential	164.8	159.0	-3.5	-56.1
Yukon	2.0	3.8	88.0	85.1
Residential	0.8	3.3	321.2	115.1
Non-residential	1.2	0.5	-61.7	-6.7
Northwest Territories	0.1	1.1	1,781.7	3.7
Residential	0.0	0.5	2,729.4	218.5
Non-residential	0.0	0.6	1,407.0	-30.9
Nunavut	0.0	0.2	...	-96.2
Residential	0.0	0.2	...	-94.0
Non-residential	0.0	0.0	...	-100.0

^r Revised data.

^p Preliminary data.

... Figures not applicable.

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

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index

February 2001

In February, the Help-wanted Index (1996=100) decreased by 3.4% to 171. This is the second consecutive monthly decline. With the exception of decreases in April and August 2000, the index has remained positive since early 1996.

Help-wanted Index

(1996=100)

	Feb.	Jan.	Feb.	Feb.	Jan.
	2000	2001	2001	2000	to
seasonally adjusted and smoothed					
					Feb.
					2001
					% change
Canada	170	177	171	0.6	-3.4
Newfoundland	178	202	200	12.4	-1.0
Prince Edward Island	206	254	245	18.9	-3.5
Nova Scotia	169	162	161	-4.7	-0.6
New Brunswick	193	194	185	-4.1	-4.6
Quebec	159	169	165	3.8	-2.4
Ontario	188	196	192	2.1	-2.0
Manitoba	166	178	176	6.0	-1.1
Saskatchewan	136	138	138	1.5	0.0
Alberta	156	177	175	12.2	-1.1
British Columbia	146	145	137	-6.2	-5.5

In February, the indexes for all provinces decreased or remained at their January level; British Columbia (-5.5%) and New Brunswick (-4.6%) registered the largest declines.

Note: The Help-wanted Index is compiled from the number of help-wanted ads published in 22 newspapers in 20 major metropolitan areas. The index is an indicator of labour demand, which measures companies' intentions to hire new workers. These indices have been seasonally adjusted and smoothed to ease month-to-month comparisons.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 105 (levels 8, 9 and 10).

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

NEW PRODUCTS

Labour force historical review, 2000
Catalogue number 71F0004XCB (\$195).

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

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB are electronic versions on diskette and -XCD are electronic versions on compact disc.

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Discusses the attitudes on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about six 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 noticeably weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Help-wanted index, May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expectations Survey** 2
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, April 1997** 12

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11



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