



The Daily

Statistics Canada

Friday, May 18, 2001
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Canadian international merchandise trade, March 2001**
Canada's merchandise exports increased 2.3% to just over \$36.0 billion in March in the wake of a modest recovery in the high-tech sector, while imports rose 1.7% to \$29.9 billion with a rebound in the automotive sector.

2
- **Wholesale trade, March 2001**
Wholesale sales, heavily influenced by the automobile sector, rose 1.7% in March to \$32.2 billion.

5

OTHER RELEASES

- Steel primary forms, week ending May 12, 2001

8
- Oils and fats, March 2001

8
- Export and import price indexes, March 2001

8

NEW PRODUCTS

- RELEASE DATES:** May 22 to 25

11
-

MAJOR RELEASES

Canadian international merchandise trade

March 2001

Canada's merchandise exports increased in March in the wake of higher exports in the machinery and equipment sector, largely high-tech and agricultural and fishing products, while imports grew at a slightly slower pace.

Canadian companies exported just over \$36.0 billion in merchandise, up 2.3% from February. Imports went up in March for the first time in four months, increasing 1.7% to \$29.9 billion on the strength of a rebound in the automotive sector.

Note to readers

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

quarter trade balance improved from \$12.3 billion in 2000 to almost \$19.0 billion in 2001.

High-tech equipment, automotive and agriculture and fishing led rise in exports

Merchandise exports rebounded in March on the strength of a modest recovery in machinery and equipment, mainly high-tech, and agricultural and fishing products.

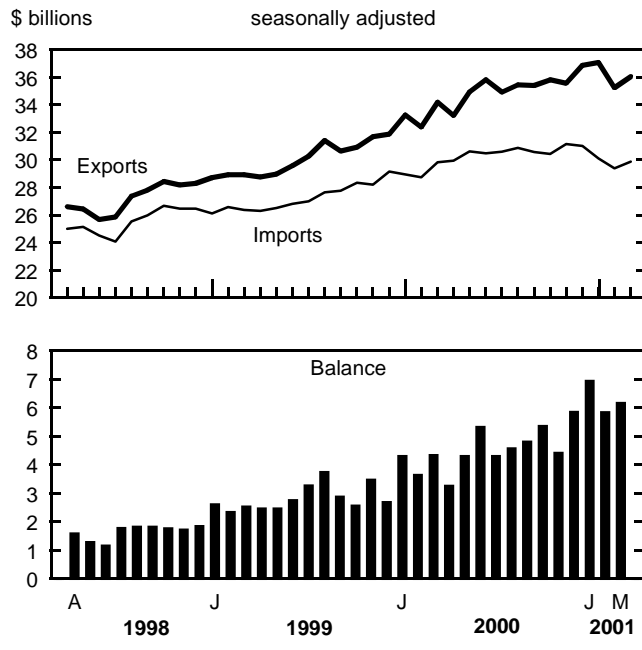
Exports of machinery and equipment, the largest export group, grew 6.4% to \$9.1 billion in March. This group accounted for one-quarter of Canada's merchandise exports.

Exports of other equipment and tools, mainly specialized high-tech equipment, rebounded 5.5% to \$2.0 billion. This followed two months of decline from the record levels seen in December 2000. On a year-over-year basis, exports from this group were 16.1% higher than in March 2000. Companies in the television and telecommunications group exported \$1.7 billion, a 5.2% increase over February. Exports of office machines and equipment, consisting mainly of wireless equipment, fibre optic products and computer parts were \$836.7 million in March, up 6.8% from February and 6.1% from March 2000.

Automotive products exports increased 2.5% to \$7.4 billion in March, mainly on the strength of gains in exports of trucks, which rose 7.5% to \$1.4 billion, and motor vehicle parts, which were up 3.5% to \$2.0 billion. Exports of passenger cars were largely unchanged from February to March, but were down 7.6% compared with March 2000.

Agricultural and fishing exports rose 3.6% in March to a record high of \$2.5 billion. There were various factors behind this development. Export shipments of meat and meat products have increased for five straight months on the strength of higher exports of Canadian pork to Asia. Wheat exports rose 23.7% to \$305.2 million. While exports of canola were up 29.0% to \$155.4 million due to large exports to China. This is the result of short supplies of canola from China's traditional sources in Europe and Australia.

Exports, imports and trade balance



As a result, the merchandise trade surplus increased to \$6.2 billion in March from \$5.8 billion in February. A slight decline in the trade surplus with the United States was offset by an improved trade balance with other trading partners.

Exports were up 8.5% in the first quarter of 2001 compared with the first quarter of 2000, while imports were 2.1% higher. As a result, the first

As well, exports of forestry products posted a small increase of 0.4% to \$3.2 billion. Newsprint, paper and paperboard exports were up 2.1% to \$1.2 billion on strong demand from the United States, while exports of lumber and sawmill products fell 1.7% to \$1.3 billion in March, the final month of the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement. In March, Canadian lumber exports were down 3.8% from February and 21.9% from March 2000, and 31.1% lower than the record high set in July 1999.

Rebound in auto imports

Automotive imports rebounded in March with a 7.6% increase to \$5.9 billion, after two consecutive monthly declines. Imports of passenger cars rose 16.7% to \$1.6 billion, as dealers pared down inventories through manufacturers' sales promotions and incentives. Imports of motor vehicle parts increased only 1.8% to \$3.4 billion in March, as inventory levels of parts continued to decline.

Canada imported \$10.0 billion worth of machinery and equipment, up 1.7% from February. These shipments accounted for 33.6% of all merchandise imported into Canada in March. A push to increase electricity generation capacity led to record high imports of engines and turbines, worth \$309.0 million. Imports of high-tech equipment hit a record high of \$2.7 billion, up 3.3%.

Imports of consumer goods were up 3.4% to \$3.6 billion, mainly on the strength of record levels of imports of house furnishings, which rose 3.8% to \$524.6 million.

Energy imports increased 6.9% to \$1.7 billion driven by a 14.0% rise in the value of crude petroleum imports in March. Imports of the other energy products subgroup, of which coal is a major part, fell 10.6% to \$403.8 million.

Revisions

In general, merchandise trade data are regularly revised 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 which actual figures (once available), changes in classification of merchandise based on more current information, and seasonal adjustments. Consult the appropriate CANSIM tables and matrices for revised data.

Available on CANSIM: tables 2260001, 2260002, 2270001, 2270002 and 2280001-2280009 and matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3699, 3701-3711, 3713, 3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

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), International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade

	February 2001 ^r	March 2001	February to March 2001	March to 2000 to March 2001	January to March 2000	January to March 2001	January-March 2000 to January-March 2001
Seasonally adjusted, \$ current							
	\$ millions		% change		\$ millions		% change
Principal trading partners							
Exports							
United States	30,641	30,786	0.5	5.5	85,320	93,469	9.6
Japan	845	864	2.2	3.5	2,454	2,562	4.4
European Union	1,820	1,980	8.8	14.8	5,113	5,659	10.7
Other OECD countries ¹	558	806	44.4	-1.2	2,138	2,091	-2.2
All other countries	1,356	1,600	18.0	-1.0	4,785	4,522	-5.5
Total	35,220	36,037	2.3	5.5	99,809	108,303	8.5
Imports							
United States	21,591	21,817	1.0	-2.0	65,504	65,081	-0.6
Japan	901	807	-10.4	-15.8	2,779	2,588	-6.9
European Union	2,888	2,962	2.6	2.8	7,967	8,973	12.6
Other OECD countries ¹	1,595	1,609	0.9	27.0	4,054	4,833	19.2
All other countries	2,408	2,678	11.2	8.7	7,228	7,887	9.1
Total	29,383	29,873	1.7	0.1	87,531	89,362	2.1
Balance							
United States	9,050	8,969	...	...	19,816	28,388	...
Japan	-56	57	...	...	-325	-26	...
European Union	-1,068	-982	...	...	-2,854	-3,314	...
Other OECD countries ¹	-1,037	-803	...	...	-1,916	-2,742	...
All other countries	-1,052	-1,078	...	...	-2,443	-3,365	...
Total	5,837	6,164	...	...	12,278	18,941	...
Principal commodity groupings							
Exports							
Agricultural and fishing products	2,402	2,488	3.6	9.3	6,628	7,307	10.2
Energy products	5,803	5,842	0.7	55.3	10,655	18,065	69.5
Forestry products	3,219	3,231	0.4	-7.4	10,518	9,779	-7.0
Industrial goods and materials	5,413	5,413	0.0	-0.2	15,676	16,413	4.7
Machinery and equipment	8,520	9,068	6.4	6.3	24,258	26,879	10.8
Automotive products	7,230	7,410	2.5	-10.9	24,987	22,063	-11.7
Other consumer goods	1,325	1,354	2.2	15.9	3,488	3,980	14.1
Special transactions trade ²	730	673	-7.8	7.7	1,847	2,114	14.5
Other balance of payments adjustments	578	558	-3.5	-3.5	1,753	1,704	-2.8
Imports							
Agricultural and fishing products	1,627	1,646	1.2	8.4	4,526	4,922	8.7
Energy products	1,628	1,740	6.9	25.0	3,948	5,177	31.1
Forestry products	247	251	1.6	-3.8	745	754	1.2
Industrial goods and materials	6,032	5,665	-6.1	-4.5	17,115	17,632	3.0
Machinery and equipment	9,852	10,024	1.7	2.6	28,754	30,282	5.3
Automotive products	5,460	5,873	7.6	-11.4	19,657	16,868	-14.2
Other consumer goods	3,463	3,582	3.4	10.0	9,573	10,540	10.1
Special transactions trade ²	558	568	1.8	7.6	1,577	1,632	3.5
Other balance of payments adjustments	517	524	1.4	-4.2	1,637	1,556	-4.9

^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.

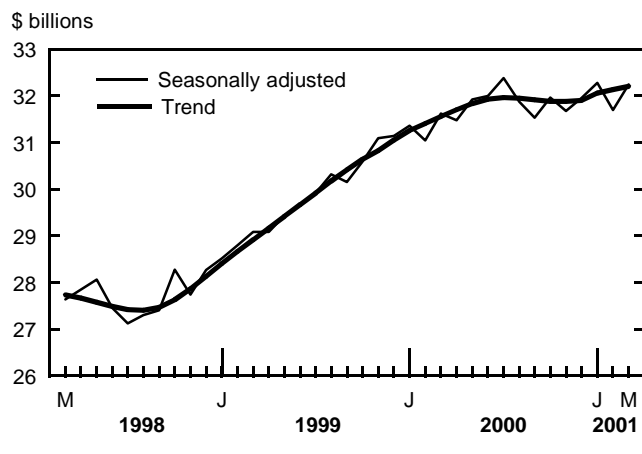
Wholesale trade

March 2001 (preliminary)

Wholesale sales, heavily influenced by the automobile sector, rose 1.7% in March to \$32.2 billion. This gain almost completely offset February's drop of 1.8%, which was also attributed to the automobile sector. This sector accounts for approximately 17% of total wholesale sales. March saw wholesale sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories climb 10.8% to more than offset February's drop of 9.9%. Had it not been for the large fluctuations in the automobile sector in these two months, wholesale sales would have been relatively unchanged.

Wholesalers have seen their sales level off since mid-2000, after a period of generally rising sales starting in mid-1998. However, since the start of the year, wholesale sales have started to edge higher. Sales in the first quarter of 2001 were up 0.7% over the fourth quarter of 2000.

Wholesale sales recover in March



Besides the 10.8% rise in wholesale sales reported in the automobile sector, notable increases were also reported in beverage, drug and tobacco products (+2.2%), industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies (+1.4%), and farm machinery, equipment and supplies (+1.0%). In total, 6 of the 11 trade groups reported increases.

A notable decline was reported by wholesalers in the other products category (-1.7%), which includes newsprint, toys and novelties, and waste material. Wholesalers of lumber and building materials (-1.4%), and food products (-0.9%) also saw declines.

Wholesale sales in the automobile sector rallied

Wholesale sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories rose 10.8% to \$5.8 billion in March. This increase offset February's slump. March also saw manufacturing shipments of motor vehicles and motor vehicle parts bounce back. Imports and exports of auto products also rose in March. Recent volatility is evident in this sector, as wholesalers react to unpredictability in demand, falling production, and fluctuating inventories. Wholesalers of motor vehicles, parts and accessories reported a 3.9% drop in their inventories in March.

Wholesale sales in the automobile sector were down 1.2% in the first quarter of 2001 compared with the fourth quarter of 2000, the third consecutive quarterly decline. Wholesalers of motor vehicles, parts and accessories have seen their sales generally decline since the spring of 2000.

Strength in the automobile sector helped most provinces

Wholesalers in Ontario reported an increase of 3.2% in March. Strong wholesale sales in the automobile sector, the industrial and other machinery sector, and the computer and electronics sector contributed to the rise. Ontario wholesalers have seen their sales improve since the start of the year. Prior to 2001, sales had weakened since the spring of 2000, following a period of generally rising sales starting in mid-1998.

British Columbia wholesalers continued their comeback in March with a 0.8% rise, the third consecutive monthly increase. Besides reporting strong wholesale sales in the automotive sector, wholesalers in British Columbia also reported healthy sales in industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies, and in metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies.

All provinces and territories reported a positive first quarter, except Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia. The leading provinces in first quarter growth were Alberta (+3.1%), Manitoba (+2.8%), and Saskatchewan (+2.3%).

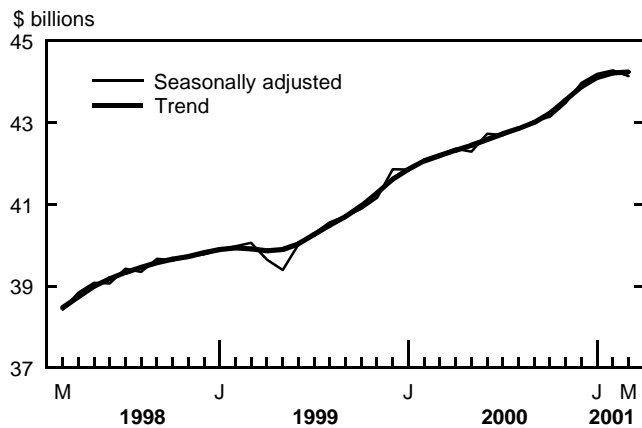
Wholesale inventories slipped

Wholesale inventories fell 0.3% to \$44.1 billion in March. Declines were reported in 5 of the 11 trade groups. In contrast, wholesale inventories of computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery climbed 5.2%. A large part of this build-up was reported to meet firm orders with an April shipping date.

Total wholesale inventories have been generally rising over the last several years. However, the pace of the rise has slackened since the start of 2001.

The inventory-to-sales ratio fell from 1.40 in February to 1.37 in March. The ratio has generally stabilized over the last few months at about 1.38. Prior to this, the ratio had been on the rise since mid-2000.

Wholesale inventories weaken in the first quarter



Available on CANSIM: tables 810001 and 810002 and matrices 59, 61, 648 and 649.

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

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

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

Wholesale trade estimates for April will be released June 20.

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

	March 2000	December 2000	January 2001 ^r	February 2001 ^r	March 2001 ^p	February to March 2001	March 2000 to March 2001
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Sales, all trade groups	31,621	31,951	32,274	31,696	32,241	1.7	2.0
Food products	4,763	5,282	5,135	5,179	5,131	-0.9	7.7
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	1,958	2,195	2,140	2,251	2,300	2.2	17.5
Apparel and dry goods	545	552	573	557	548	-1.6	0.6
Household goods	850	866	886	890	896	0.6	5.4
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,205	5,642	5,860	5,279	5,849	10.8	-5.7
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	2,088	2,037	2,025	2,036	2,031	-0.2	-2.7
Lumber and building materials	2,529	2,307	2,314	2,317	2,285	-1.4	-9.6
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	635	583	594	616	622	1.0	-2.0
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,880	4,942	5,039	5,111	5,184	1.4	6.2
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,812	3,035	3,060	2,933	2,944	0.4	4.7
Other products	4,357	4,510	4,648	4,529	4,450	-1.7	2.1
Sales by province and territory							
Newfoundland	220	229	232	225	232	3.2	5.6
Prince Edward Island	53	51	51	49	48	-2.7	-10.0
Nova Scotia	578	586	568	553	546	-1.2	-5.5
New Brunswick	402	390	379	405	401	-1.0	-0.4
Quebec	6,435	6,720	6,736	6,670	6,624	-0.7	2.9
Ontario	15,754	15,838	15,988	15,499	15,999	3.2	1.6
Manitoba	868	940	962	919	949	3.2	9.4
Saskatchewan	950	923	969	936	955	2.0	0.5
Alberta	3,019	3,111	3,184	3,205	3,232	0.8	7.1
British Columbia	3,317	3,133	3,176	3,199	3,225	0.8	-2.8
Yukon	10	10	11	13	9	-31.0	-7.3
Northwest Territories	12	15	16	20	17	-12.9	37.3
Nunavut	2	3	3	3	3	13.9	45.9
Inventories, all trade groups	42,209	43,977	44,191	44,276	44,140	-0.3	4.6
Food products	2,855	2,944	3,044	3,079	3,117	1.2	9.2
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,421	2,694	2,688	2,744	2,811	2.4	16.1
Apparel and dry goods	1,101	1,143	1,131	1,152	1,161	0.8	5.5
Household goods	1,490	1,667	1,669	1,698	1,680	-1.0	12.8
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,494	6,803	6,843	6,891	6,619	-3.9	1.9
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	3,882	4,029	4,001	3,930	3,853	-2.0	-0.8
Lumber and building materials	4,066	4,108	4,059	4,016	4,030	0.4	-0.9
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	2,010	1,872	1,879	1,896	1,853	-2.3	-7.9
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	10,306	11,074	11,076	11,161	11,139	-0.2	8.1
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,441	2,179	2,249	2,181	2,295	5.2	-6.0
Other products	5,142	5,465	5,553	5,529	5,583	1.0	8.6

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

OTHER RELEASES

Steel primary forms

Week ending May 12, 2001 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending May 12 totalled 299 015 metric tonnes, up 8.6% from 275 336 tonnes a week earlier and down 6.5 % from 319 730 tonnes in the same week of 2000. The year-to-date total at the end of the reference week was 5 286 297 tonnes, a 12.4 % decrease compared with 6 034 840 tonnes produced in the same period of 2000.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Julie Mayer (613-951-5370; julie.mayer@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Oils and fats

March 2001

Production of all types of deodorized oils in March totalled 94 399 metric tonnes, an increase of 8.6% from 86 915 tonnes in February. Year-to-date production to the end of March was 277 111 tonnes, down 5.8% compared with 294 318 tonnes in the same period of 2000.

Domestic sales of deodorized margarine oil totalled 8 737 tonnes; deodorized shortening oil sales were 27 550 tonnes; and deodorized salad oil sales were 27 488 tonnes in March.

Available on CANSIM: table 3030012 and matrix 185.

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

The March 2001 issue of *Oils and fats*, Vol. 52, no. 3 (32-006-XIB, \$5/\$47) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Peter Zylstra (613-951-3511; zylspet@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Export and import price indexes

March 2001

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 2001 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 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 2280001-2280009 and matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685, 8430-8435, and 8438-8447.

With the release of CANSIM II, users can now obtain the same data as in CANSIM, but in a table format that is easier to use and more clearly presented.

The March 2001 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141 or 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188) will be available shortly. 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. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Infomat — A weekly review, May 18, 2001
Catalogue number **11-002-XIE** (\$3/\$109).

Infomat — A weekly review, May 18, 2001
Catalogue number **11-002-XPE** (\$4/\$145).

Livestock statistics updates, First quarter 2001
Catalogue number **23-603-UPE** (\$45/\$149).

Oils and fats, Vol. 52, no. 3, March 2001
Catalogue number **32-006-XIB** (\$5/\$47).

Sawmills and planing mills, Vol. 55, no. 3, March 2001
Catalogue number **35-003-XIB** (\$9/\$86).

Primary iron and steel, Vol. 56, no. 3, March 2001
Catalogue number **41-001-XIB** (\$5/\$47).

Corporations Returns Act, 1998
Catalogue number **61-220-XPB** (\$40).

Science statistics, Vol. 25, no. 3
Catalogue number **88-001-XIB** (\$6/\$59).

Science statistics, Vol. 25, No. 4
Catalogue number **88-001-XIB** (\$6/\$59).

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.

How to order products

Order products by phone:

Please refer to the • Title • Catalogue number • Volume number • Issue number • Your VISA or MasterCard number.

In Canada and the United States call:

1-800-267-6677

From other countries call:

1-613-951-7277

To fax your order:

1-877-287-4369

Address changes or account inquiries:


1-800-700-1033

To order a product by mail write: Statistics Canada, Circulation Management, Dissemination Division, Ottawa, K1A 0T6. Include a cheque or money order payable to **Receiver General of Canada/Publications**. Canadian customers add 7% GST and applicable PST.

To order by Internet: write to order@statcan.ca or download an electronic version by accessing Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca) under the headings *Products and services* and *Fee publications* (\$).

Authorized agents and bookstores also carry Statistics Canada's catalogued publications.

Catalogue 11-001E of 11-001E (11-001E) 11-001E



Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 7, 1997
For release at 9:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES



- **Urban Unemployment**, 1996
Despite the outbreak of falling urban unemployment, Canadians are long of long unemployers. In 1996, each Canadian town an average of about 100 jobs on 600,000 of urban population. The unemployment rate in the first 27 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and real labour cost**, 1996
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was reduced by 20% in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Unemployment**, May 1997
- **Statistical Calendar**, 1997
- **Statistical Yearbook**, 1997
- **Statistical Yearbook**, 1997

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

11

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001E.

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-H, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

To access *The Daily* on the Internet, visit our site at <http://www.statcan.ca>. To receive *The Daily* each morning by E-mail, send an E-mail message to listproc@statcan.ca. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type "subscribe daily firstname lastname".

Editor: Tom Vradenburg (613-951-1103, tom.vradenburg@statcan.ca)

Head of Official Release: Madeleine Simard (613-951-1088), madeleine.simard@statcan.ca

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada. © Minister of Industry, 2001. Citation in newsprint, magazine, radio, and television reporting is permitted subject to the requirement that Statistics Canada is acknowledged as the source. Any other reproduction is permitted subject to the requirement that Statistics Canada is acknowledged as the source on all copies as follows: Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, catalogue 11-001E, along with date and page references.

The Daily, May 18, 2001

RELEASE DATES: MAY 22 TO 25

(Release dates are subject to change.)

Release date	Title	Reference period
22	Retail trade	March 2001
24	Employment Insurance	March 2001
24	Composite Index	April 2001
24	Canada's international transactions in securities	March 2001
25	Deposit-accepting intermediaries: Activities and economic performance	1999
