



The Daily

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Canadian international merchandise trade, December 2001** 3
Exports resumed their decline in December — the eighth drop in 10 months. However, imports fell faster than exports, to their lowest since July 1999. This resulted in the strongest merchandise trade surplus since June 2001.
- **Retail trade, December 2001 and annual 2001** 6
Retailers posted their third consecutive monthly gain in December; sales reached \$25.0 billion, up 1.6% from November. Despite signs of an economic slowdown in 2001, retailers reported a 4.5% annual increase in sales from 2000.

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Canadian economic observer February 2002

The February 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 January and presents a feature article on the labour market in 2001. 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 February 2002 issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Volume 15, number 2 (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. 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 click on the banner ad for *Canadian economic observer*. For more information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.



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NEW PRODUCTS

MAJOR RELEASES

Canadian international merchandise trade

December 2001

Exports resumed their decline in December — the eighth drop in 10 months. However, imports fell faster than exports, to their lowest since July 1999. This resulted in the strongest merchandise trade surplus since June 2001.

Companies exported \$32.0 billion in merchandise in December, down 1.2% from November. Merchandise imports declined 1.8% to \$27.5 billion, their lowest since July 1999.

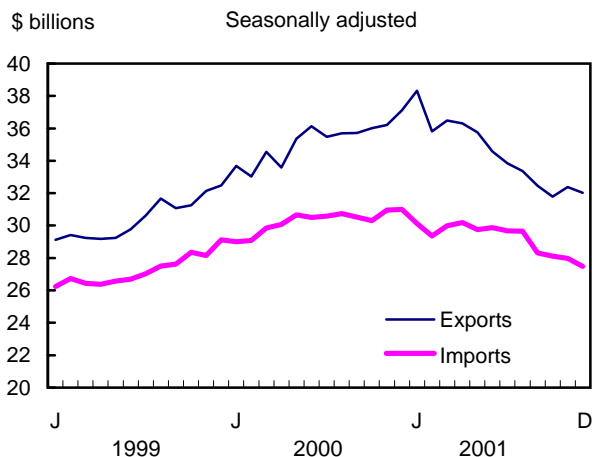
Note to readers

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 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 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.

Exports and imports



As a result, Canada's merchandise trade surplus rose \$126.4 million to \$4.5 billion in December.

Merchandise exports to the United States fell slightly to \$26.8 billion in December. Imports from Canada's largest trading partner dropped 1.6% to \$20.0 billion.

As a result, the trade surplus with the United States jumped 4.4% to nearly \$6.8 billion.

The merchandise trade deficit with trading partners other than the United States deteriorated by nearly a quarter of a billion dollars to just over \$2.2 billion in December.

In 2001, exports declined 2.2% to \$413.1 billion, the first annual decline since 1991. This was mainly the result of a year-long slide in the machinery and equipment sector and the energy sector. But with imports falling even faster (-3.5% to \$350.5 billion), the merchandise trade surplus rose 5.6% to \$62.6 billion, its highest annual level ever.

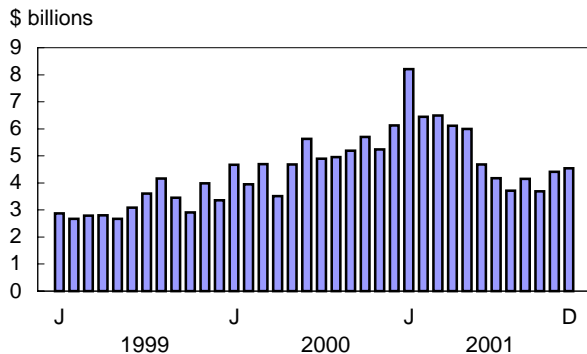
Aircraft and automotive exports lead decline

The value of merchandise exports in the three largest exporting sectors — machinery and equipment, automotive products, and industrial goods and materials — fell by a combined total of almost \$475 million in December. Exports of energy products bounced back after three straight months of decline.

Exports of machinery and equipment fell 2.5% to \$7.9 billion. Exports of aircraft, engines and parts declined 11.8% to \$2.0 billion, down from a record high in November.

Purchases of inventoried telecom equipment by countries in the southern hemisphere and Far East pushed exports of television, telecom and related equipment up 3.3% to \$926.7 million.

Trade balance



Despite buyer incentive plans in both the United States and Canada, which targeted dealer inventories and drove car sales to record highs, exports of automotive products fell 1.6% to \$7.7 billion, as manufacturing plants had extended Christmas shutdowns. Exports of passenger autos decreased 1.9% in December to just over \$3.9 billion, motor vehicle parts slid 2.1% to \$2.3 billion, and the trucks and other motor vehicles subsector slipped to \$1.5 billion.

Industrial goods and materials exports fell 2.6% to \$5.4 billion, returning to more normal levels following an unusually high result in November.

Exports of energy products rose 2.0% to \$2.8 billion, the second lowest point in more than two years. Crude petroleum exports increased 9.9% to just over \$1 billion, but exports of natural gas fell 2.2% to just under \$1 billion. Petroleum and coal products fell 4.5% to \$630.4 million, after November's increase, which followed declines dating back to April.

In the forestry products sector, the pace of decline slowed to 0.2% for exports of just under \$3.0 billion. Lumber and sawmill product exports rose 3.2% to \$1.4 billion, ending a string of declines dating back to July. The 19.3% countervailing duties imposed in August expired in mid-December, giving Canadian lumber producers a temporary reprieve until a negotiated settlement or final rulings from the US Trade Tribunal appear — these are expected in May. In December, lumber exports advanced 7.2% to \$924.1 million, following four straight months of decline. Newsprint and other paper and paperboard exports fell 2.6% to \$1.1 billion in the face of lower demand and commodity prices.

Agricultural and fish product exports rose 1.1% in December to \$2.7 billion, mostly because of a 9.4% jump in wheat exports to just over \$388.7 million.

Canadian imports down

Imports fell 1.8% in December, for the sixth straight month, to their lowest since July 1999. Imports fell in all major categories, except for the energy and machinery and equipment sectors, which gained slightly.

Industrial goods and materials, the third largest import sector, fell 6.8% to \$5.1 billion; all its subsectors declined. Metals and metal ores dropped 18.4% to \$1.0 billion — a 57.8% plunge in precious metals was responsible for much of the decrease. Other industrial goods and materials dropped 3.5% to \$2.1 billion, and chemicals and plastics declined 3.3% to just under \$2 billion.

Imports of machinery and equipment rose marginally in December to \$8.6 billion. Within this

sector, imports of office machines and equipment fell 1.5% to \$1.3 billion, the fourth decline in five months. Other communication and related equipment, which includes telecommunications equipment and semiconductors, edged up 0.2% to \$1.3 billion, one-half the volume reported in December 2000. In December, machinery and equipment, the largest import sector, fell \$10.2 billion, or 8.4%, from December 2000, mainly because of a year-long decline in the high technology industry in 2001.

Imports of aircraft and other transportation equipment increased 5.2% in December to \$1.3 billion. Other transportation equipment, which includes rail cars, snowmobiles and tires, jumped 13.7% to \$425.8 million.

Motor vehicle parts imports fell 2.7% to \$3.3 billion; this was the leading factor as imports of automotive products dropped 1.3% in December to \$6.0 billion. Imports of trucks and other motor vehicles declined 2.4% to \$843.7 million, but those of passenger autos rose 1.7% to \$1.9 billion.

Energy product imports rose 0.4% to \$1.1 billion. Year-end refinery inventory cuts led to lower crude petroleum imports (-5.3% to \$721.6 million). Imports of other energy products, such as coal for electricity generation, gained 12.6% to \$406.8 million.

Available on CANSIM: tables 228-0001 to 228-0003, 228-0033 to 228-0040. Available on March 7: tables 226-0001, 226-0002, 227-0001 and 227-0002.

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.

An annual review of 2001 will be included in the International Trade Division's annual publications *Exports, merchandise trade* (65-202-XPB, \$103) and *Imports, merchandise trade* (65-203-XPB, \$103), which will be available in June. See *How to order products*.

For more information on the publications, contact Jocelyne Elibani, (613-951-9647; 1-800-294-5583). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Daryl Keen (613-951-1810), International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade

	November 2001 ^r	December 2001	November to December 2001	December 2000 to December 2001	January to December 2000	January to December 2001	January–December 2000 to January–December 2001
Seasonally adjusted, \$ current							
	\$ millions		% change		\$ millions		% change
Principal trading partners							
Exports							
United States	26,834	26,803	-0.1	-15.7	359,552	351,086	-2.4
Japan	830	730	-12.0	-18.5	10,311	9,363	-9.2
European Union	2,003	1,665	-16.9	-16.4	22,109	21,908	-0.9
Other OECD countries ¹	1,070	937	-12.4	17.9	10,173	10,296	1.2
All other countries	1,650	1,878	13.8	12.9	20,415	20,459	0.2
Total	32,387	32,014	-1.2	-13.8	422,557	413,111	-2.2
Imports							
United States	20,358	20,039	-1.6	-11.2	267,675	255,085	-4.7
Japan	939	898	-4.4	-11.0	11,713	10,586	-9.6
European Union	2,887	2,919	1.1	-1.5	33,427	35,041	4.8
Other OECD countries ¹	1,503	1,423	-5.3	-13.2	18,948	18,610	-1.8
All other countries	2,287	2,195	-4.0	-21.9	31,518	31,179	-1.1
Total	27,973	27,474	-1.8	-11.4	363,281	350,503	-3.5
Balance							
United States	6,476	6,764	...	...	91,877	96,001	...
Japan	-109	-168	...	...	-1,402	-1,223	...
European Union	-884	-1,254	...	...	-11,318	-13,133	...
Other OECD countries ¹	-433	-486	...	...	-8,775	-8,314	...
All other countries	-637	-317	...	...	-11,103	-10,720	...
Total	4,413	4,539	...	...	59,276	62,608	...
Principal commodity groupings							
Exports							
Agricultural and fishing products	2,629	2,658	1.1	13.1	27,366	30,810	12.6
Energy products	2,781	2,836	2.0	-56.0	52,929	55,309	4.5
Forestry products	3,001	2,994	-0.2	-8.1	41,757	38,631	-7.5
Industrial goods and materials	5,590	5,443	-2.6	0.7	65,917	66,269	0.5
Machinery and equipment	8,071	7,872	-2.5	-18.7	106,884	98,809	-7.6
Automotive products	7,836	7,707	-1.6	3.8	97,941	92,723	-5.3
Other consumer goods	1,295	1,357	4.8	4.9	14,805	15,797	6.7
Special transactions trade ²	644	640	-0.6	-6.3	7,978	8,107	1.6
Other balance of payments adjustments	539	506	-6.1	-11.2	6,981	6,655	-4.7
Imports							
Agricultural and fishing products	1,771	1,695	-4.3	7.4	18,567	20,359	9.7
Energy products	1,123	1,128	0.4	-35.4	17,864	17,712	-0.9
Forestry products	234	226	-3.4	-12.7	3,064	2,889	-5.7
Industrial goods and materials	5,497	5,121	-6.8	-13.2	70,471	68,452	-2.9
Machinery and equipment	8,567	8,577	0.1	-19.1	122,677	112,422	-8.4
Automotive products	6,113	6,033	-1.3	-1.4	77,402	72,541	-6.3
Other consumer goods	3,598	3,584	-0.4	2.1	40,088	42,919	7.1
Special transactions trade ²	542	567	4.6	-20.7	6,622	6,845	3.4
Other balance of payments adjustments	528	542	2.7	-3.9	6,527	6,365	-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, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

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

Retail trade

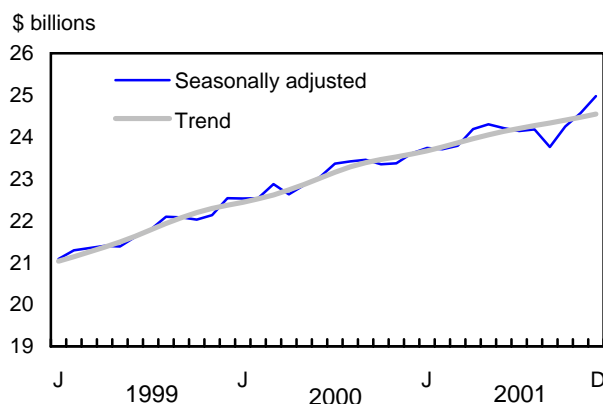
December 2001 and annual 2001 (preliminary)

Retailers posted their third consecutive monthly gain in December; sales reached \$25.0 billion, up 1.6% from November. This follows sales increases of 1.3% in November and 2.1% in October.

Retail sales remained essentially flat from April to October, except for a significant 1.7% decline in September, partly related to the events of September 11. Before the spring of 2001, retailers enjoyed rising sales since the summer of 1998, except for a pause in the second half of 2000.

Despite signs of an economic slowdown in 2001, retailers reported a 4.5% annual advance in sales from 2000, when sales increased 6.2%. In constant dollars, the 2001 sales gain was 2.7% compared with 4.4% in 2000.

Retailers ended 2001 with strong sales gains



Strong holiday season for most retailers

Consumers increased their spending in all retail sectors in December. The furniture sector led, jumping 3.9%. Sales in the furniture sector came back strongly in the last few months of 2001, after a period of essentially flat sales in the first half of the year. Retailers in sectors such as automotive (+2.0%), general merchandise (+1.8%), clothing (+1.6%) and food (+1.1%) also reported strong sales gains. However, December's increase in food store sales came mostly from higher prices of fresh vegetables and fresh fruits.

Note to readers

Estimates from the Monthly Retail Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification. At the end of every calendar year, seasonally adjusted monthly figures are revised to equal the sum of the unadjusted estimates. Revised seasonally adjusted figures are presented this month for September to November 2001. The complete revision of seasonally adjusted data for 2001 will be released in April. All annual comparisons in this release use the sum of unadjusted monthly estimates. As usual, the rest of the analysis is based on seasonally adjusted estimates.

Furniture and drug stores were top performers in 2001

Despite slow growth in the first half of 2001, sales in furniture stores were back on a strong upward trend by the end of the year. Sales in furniture stores advanced 7.9% in 2001 from 2000. Although this was weaker than the gains in the previous four years, when sales increases ranged from 8.0% to 11.0%, furniture stores led all other retailers in 2001.

As in 2000, credit incentives and a strong housing market continued to stimulate sales in furniture stores in 2001. Furthermore, home electronic novelties, such as DVD players, flat-screen televisions and video games may have contributed to higher holiday sales in the fourth quarter. Also, the events of September 11 may have magnified a possible cocooning effect, stimulating home entertainment purchases.

Retail sales by sector

	2000	2001	2000 to 2001
	\$ millions		% change
Furniture	15,159	16,362	7.9
Drug	13,499	14,470	7.2
Total, all stores	277,033	289,460	4.5
Other	29,659	30,974	4.4
Food	61,090	63,753	4.4
Automotive	111,051	115,584	4.1
Clothing	15,278	15,896	4.0
General merchandise	31,297	32,421	3.6

In 2001, drug stores gained 7.2%, their strongest annual sales increase since 1993. Higher prices for medicinal and pharmaceutical products (+3.0% in 2001) contributed to the higher sales seen in drug stores. Prescription and over-the-counter drugs, as well as vitamins and herbal remedies, account for about two-thirds of all sales in drug stores. Drug store sales have increased rapidly since the spring of 2000, after rising slowly in 1998 and 1999.

Much weaker gains in remaining sectors

In 2001, most retail sectors showed annual sales increases below the 4.5% overall gain in retail trade. Retailers in sectors such as general merchandise, clothing, automotive, food and other retail reported sales increases between 3.6% and 4.4%.

Sales in food stores advanced 4.4% in 2001, the largest increase in four years. Higher prices of fresh produce in 2001, such as fruit (+11.6%), meat (+8.6%) and vegetables (+7.5%) have contributed significantly to the higher sales. These products account for about one-quarter of all sales in food stores. Food store sales are affected by a number of factors, such as prices, consumer preferences, the mixture of non-food goods sold and population growth.

Automotive sector sales advanced 4.1% in 2001, about one-half the gain seen in 2000 and the third weakest in 10 years. Within the sector, retailers of automotive parts, accessories and services (+5.4%) and motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+5.0%) posted similar advances, but sales in gasoline service stations remained flat (+0.1%).

Sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers accelerated in the fourth quarter of 2001, up 7.3% from the third. This was the largest quarterly gain in four years. Aggressive financing programs were introduced in November to stimulate sales of new motor vehicles which had remained essentially flat since April 2001. While the total number of new motor vehicles sold in 2001 was up 0.7% from 2000, until October year-to-date sales had remained below 2000 levels. In fact, cumulative sales from January to October 2001 were 1.3% lower than those in the same period of 2000.

Sales by gasoline service stations remained unchanged in 2001 (+0.1%) after increasing 24.2% in 2000. Gasoline prices at the pump remained the factor most responsible for rises and falls in sales figures. Prices fell 2.6% in 2001, after jumping 21.9% in 2000. Sales by gasoline service stations started to rise rapidly in March 1999 up to the end of 2000, but have been falling ever since.

Retailers in the clothing sector posted a 4.0% sales increase in 2001. Clothing retailers enjoyed strong sales gains in the fourth quarter of 2001 (+3.8%) after experiencing essentially flat sales for most of the year. The only exception was April's 4.2% sales jump which coincided with the opening of several new high-traffic clothing stores.

Continuing a trend observed since the early 1990s, other clothing stores led all other types of stores included in the sector. Retailers classified in other clothing stores sell a variety of women's, men's and children's clothing. Sales in these stores increased 7.5% in 2001, while they advanced 3.2% in women's clothing stores and

fell 5.6% in men's clothing stores. Shoe stores posted a weak 0.3% gain in sales.

Retailers in the general merchandise sector experienced a 3.6% sales increase in 2001, their weakest annual gain in eight years. While sales in department stores jumped 7.1%, other general merchandise stores included in the sector suffered a 0.9% decline in sales. The re-opening of several department stores at the end of 2000 partly explains the important jump seen in 2001 sales. Sales in other general merchandise stores have been falling since the start of 2001.

Retail sales growth strongest in the west and north

Advancing at twice the national rate, Alberta (+9.1%) and the Northwest Territories (+9.1%) posted the strongest sales growth of all provinces and territories in 2001.

Alberta has been leading the country in retail sales growth in 2000 and 2001. While all retail sectors posted significant gains in 2001, sales advances in furniture stores and drug stores reached levels slightly above 12.0%. Retailers in Alberta have experienced strong sales increases since the start of 1999.

Retail sales in Newfoundland and Labrador rose 8.5% in 2001, the strongest gain since 1988. Consumer spending was particularly strong in drug, automotive, food and general merchandise stores. Despite this strong annual performance by Newfoundland and Labrador retailers, sales flattened out in the second part of 2001 after advancing rapidly from January to June. Most retailers were affected by this recent slowdown in retail spending.

Retail sales by province and territory

	2000	2001	2000 to 2001
	\$ millions		% change
Alberta	31,712	34,588	9.1
Northwest Territories	395	431	9.1
Newfoundland and Labrador	4,522	4,905	8.5
Yukon	343	363	5.9
Manitoba	9,396	9,938	5.8
British Columbia	35,821	37,865	5.7
Nunavut	185	193	4.8
Canada	277,033	289,460	4.5
Quebec	63,481	66,201	4.3
Prince Edward Island	1,230	1,277	3.8
Nova Scotia	8,485	8,743	3.0
Ontario	106,426	109,520	2.9
Saskatchewan	8,132	8,368	2.9
New Brunswick	6,905	7,070	2.4

Manitoba (+5.8%) and British Columbia (+5.7%) also posted retail sales increases above the national average in 2001. Furniture stores and drug stores were among the top performers in both provinces. Advancing at an annual rate of about 8.0%, the automotive sector was also a major contributor to Manitoba's performance

in 2001. Retail sales have been advancing since mid-1999 in Manitoba, despite two periods of flat sales. In British Columbia, retailers have been experiencing sales increases since the start of 1999, except for a period of falling sales in the summer of 2001.

Quebec retailers posted a 4.3% sales increase in 2001, just below the national average. Furniture stores (+9.0%) led all other retail activities in 2001. Strong gains in overall retail sales in the fourth quarter of 2001 offset the declines seen in the spring and summer of that year.

After advancing at a rate of about 7.0% in the previous four years, retail sales in Ontario rose 2.9% in 2001. Job losses in the manufacturing and high-technology industries contributed to the relatively weak performance by Ontario's retailers. However, after posting weak increases since the middle of 2000, retailers reported sales gains in the fourth quarter of 2001 (+2.6%).

Related indicators for January

After remaining essentially flat throughout 2001, total employment rose a significant 0.5% in January from December. Housing starts jumped 17.3% in January from December, continuing the high level of activity seen in 2001. According to sources in the automotive sector, the number of new motor vehicles sold in January fell slightly from the previous month. Higher gasoline prices at the pump returned in January (+2.5%) after three consecutive monthly declines.

Available on CANSIM: tables 080-0001 to 080-0005.

The December 2001 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XIB, \$16/\$155) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Michael Scrim (613-951-5668; michael.scrim@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. □

Retail sales

	December 2000	September 2001 ^r	October 2001 ^r	November 2001 ^r	December 2001 ^p	November to December 2001	December 2000 to December 2001
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Food	5,282	5,376	5,388	5,369	5,430	1.1	2.8
Supermarkets and grocery stores	4,903	4,973	4,982	4,965	5,022	1.1	2.4
All other food stores	379	403	406	404	407	0.8	7.4
Drug and patent medicine stores	1,148	1,211	1,225	1,238	1,242	0.3	8.2
Clothing	1,288	1,293	1,344	1,347	1,368	1.6	6.2
Shoe stores	147	147	149	152	160	5.2	8.9
Men's clothing stores	121	114	117	116	116	-0.2	-4.3
Women's clothing stores	388	385	396	397	397	0.1	2.5
Other clothing stores	632	646	681	682	695	1.9	9.9
Furniture	1,299	1,359	1,390	1,428	1,483	3.9	14.2
Household furniture and appliance stores	1,052	1,091	1,126	1,150	1,202	4.5	14.3
Household furnishings stores	247	268	265	278	281	1.2	13.7
Automotive	9,410	9,368	9,594	9,854	10,050	2.0	6.8
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	6,075	6,155	6,429	6,790	7,046	3.8	16.0
Gasoline service stations	1,989	1,893	1,756	1,660	1,610	-3.0	-19.1
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,346	1,320	1,409	1,404	1,394	-0.7	3.6
General merchandise stores	2,675	2,615	2,707	2,685	2,733	1.8	2.2
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	2,502	2,542	2,606	2,651	2,668	0.6	6.7
Other semi-durable goods stores	716	727	747	783	792	1.1	10.6
Other durable goods stores	642	617	637	635	648	2.1	0.9
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,144	1,198	1,221	1,233	1,229	-0.4	7.4
Total, retail sales	23,604	23,763	24,253	24,572	24,974	1.6	5.8
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	17,529	17,609	17,824	17,782	17,928	0.8	2.3
Provinces and territories							
Newfoundland and Labrador	379	409	423	420	414	-1.5	9.3
Prince Edward Island	105	104	108	109	108	-0.2	3.5
Nova Scotia	728	726	737	747	748	0.2	2.9
New Brunswick	582	572	598	603	605	0.3	4.0
Quebec	5,395	5,396	5,503	5,561	5,726	3.0	6.1
Ontario	9,032	8,922	9,134	9,290	9,450	1.7	4.6
Manitoba	793	828	845	860	843	-2.0	6.3
Saskatchewan	675	694	710	712	723	1.6	7.1
Alberta	2,732	2,880	2,932	2,966	2,986	0.7	9.3
British Columbia	3,102	3,149	3,180	3,216	3,284	2.1	5.9
Yukon	30	30	32	35	34	-3.5	11.3
Northwest Territories	36	36	37	37	37	-0.9	2.2
Nunavut	16	16	16	16	16	-0.3	4.0

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

Retail sales

	December 2000	November 2001 ^r	December 2001 ^p	December 2000 to December 2001
Unadjusted				
	\$ millions			% change
Food	5,838	5,313	5,896	1.0
Supermarkets and grocery stores	5,361	4,926	5,393	0.6
All other food stores	477	387	503	5.4
Drug and patent medicine stores	1,415	1,257	1,520	7.4
Clothing	2,134	1,526	2,238	4.9
Shoe stores	196	167	208	6.2
Men's clothing stores	245	144	230	-6.0
Women's clothing stores	622	437	629	1.0
Other clothing stores	1,070	779	1,171	9.4
Furniture	1,874	1,593	2,155	15.0
Household furniture and appliance stores	1,572	1,265	1,807	15.0
Household furnishings stores	302	328	347	14.9
Automotive	8,487	9,622	8,989	5.9
Motor and recreational vehicle dealers	5,045	6,401	5,917	17.3
Gasoline service stations	1,970	1,642	1,562	-20.7
Automotive parts, accessories and services	1,472	1,579	1,509	2.6
General merchandise stores	4,422	3,235	4,572	3.4
Retail stores not elsewhere classified	3,888	2,687	4,084	5.0
Other semi-durable goods stores	1,085	839	1,199	10.5
Other durable goods stores	1,190	625	1,207	1.4
All other retail stores not elsewhere classified	1,614	1,223	1,678	4.0
Total, retail sales	28,058	25,233	29,454	5.0
Total excluding motor and recreational vehicle dealers	23,013	18,832	23,537	2.3
Provinces and territories				
Newfoundland and Labrador	450	451	472	5.0
Prince Edward Island	125	108	128	2.5
Nova Scotia	886	790	895	1.1
New Brunswick	686	627	710	3.5
Quebec	6,022	5,606	6,306	4.7
Ontario	10,967	9,696	11,416	4.1
Manitoba	966	890	1,013	4.8
Saskatchewan	808	732	864	7.0
Alberta	3,319	3,049	3,614	8.9
British Columbia	3,738	3,201	3,938	5.3
Yukon	33	32	38	16.1
Northwest Territories	42	35	43	1.6
Nunavut	19	16	19	2.2

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.



OTHER RELEASES

Employment Insurance

December 2001 (preliminary)

The estimated number of Canadians (adjusted for seasonality) who received regular Employment Insurance benefits in December remained virtually unchanged from November at 557,180. This follows 13 months of almost steady rises. Decreases in Ontario (-2.1%), Newfoundland and Labrador (-1.4%) and New Brunswick (-1.4%) were offset by increases in most other provinces and territories. At the national level, the number of regular beneficiaries remains much higher than in December 2000 (+16.9%).

Number of beneficiaries receiving regular benefits

	Dec. 2001 ^P	Nov. to Dec. 2001	Dec. 2000 to Dec. 2001
Seasonally adjusted			
		% change	
Canada	557,180	0.0	16.9
Newfoundland and Labrador	35,900	-1.4	1.8
Prince Edward Island	8,190	1.7	-1.4
Nova Scotia	29,250	0.1	-0.8
New Brunswick	35,000	-1.4	6.8
Quebec	190,340	1.0	14.3
Ontario	139,770	-2.1	39.5
Manitoba	13,530	0.0	10.4
Saskatchewan	11,330	1.6	-1.0
Alberta	28,270	3.4	7.4
British Columbia	66,100	1.7	23.6
Yukon	810	8.0	-10.0
Northwest Territories and Nunavut	990	2.1	-8.3
Not seasonally adjusted			
Northwest Territories	780	18.2	-6.0
Nunavut	300	11.1	-9.1

^P Preliminary figures.

Regular benefit payments fell 0.2% from November to \$748.2 million, but are 26.6% higher than in December 2000. The number of initial and renewal claims received dropped 3.6% to an estimated 239,790 in December, 6.2% higher than in December 2000.

Employment Insurance statistics

	Dec. 2000	Nov. 2001	Dec. 2001	Nov. to Dec. 2001	Dec. 2000 to Dec. 2001
Seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
Regular beneficiaries	476,630	557,070 ^P	557,180 ^P	0.0	16.9
Regular benefits paid (\$ millions)	590.9	749.5	748.2	-0.2	26.6
Claims received ('000)	225.9	248.8	239.8	-3.6	6.2
Not seasonally adjusted					
				% change	
All beneficiaries ('000)	687.5	766.1 ^P	874.8 ^P	14.2	27.2
Regular beneficiaries ('000)	503.9	494.7 ^P	587.8 ^P	18.8	16.7
Claims received ('000)	284.3	316.3	318.3	0.6	12.0
Payments (\$ millions)	891.9	1,064.1	1,330.0	25.0	49.1
Year-to-date (January to December)					
	2000	2001		2000 to 2001	% change
Claims received ('000)			2,592.8	2,942.4	13.5
Payments (\$ millions)			11,154.4	13,001.9	16.6

^P Preliminary figures.

Note: All beneficiaries includes all claimants receiving regular benefits (e.g., due to layoff) or special benefits (e.g., due to illness).

Note: Employment Insurance Statistics Program data are produced from an administrative data source and may from time to time be affected by changes to the *Employment Insurance Act*. For example, in May 2001 the act was amended to eliminate the intensity rule, to adjust the benefit repayment provision and the re-entrant rules for parents returning to the workforce, and to align the EI fishing regulations with the enhanced maternity and parental benefits. Please note that, due to adjustments provided by Human Resources Development Canada, a revision to job creation, training and self-employment benefit payments occurred for April 2001 to October 2001. Disqualifications and disentitlements data for the Yukon for May and June 2001 were also amended.

The number of beneficiaries is a measure of all persons who were in receipt of EI benefits for the week containing the fifteenth day of the month. The regular benefit payments series measures the total of all monies individuals received for the entire month. These different reference periods must be taken into

consideration when comparisons are done between the series.

The act allows each province or administrative region of Human Resources Development Canada to have certain autonomy in applying administrative procedures regarding renewal claims. Data users must note that month-to-month changes in levels may be affected by different administrative procedures for renewal claims between one province or region and another.

Available on CANSIM: tables 276-0001 to 276-0006, 276-0009, 276-0012, 276-0015 and 276-0016.

To order data, or for general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-866-873-8788; 613-951-4090; labour@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gilles Groleau (613-951-4091) or Dominique Pérusse (613-951-4064), Labour Statistics Division. ■

Wholesale trade: erratum

December 2001 and annual 2001

Contrary to the statement in the note to readers in the February 20 wholesale trade release, all annual comparisons did not use the sum of unadjusted data. The annual growth rates reported for 2000, in fact, used the sum of seasonally adjusted data. Growth rates that use unadjusted data appear in the table below.

Annual variations in wholesale sales

	1999 to 2000 % change	2000 to 2001 % change
Sales, all trade groups	6.4	2.3
Food products	5.9	8.0
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	9.3	12.6
Apparel and dry goods	-1.4	7.8
Household goods	4.8	2.1
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6.2	-1.2
Metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	4.4	-3.5
Lumber and building materials	0.6	1.2
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	-2.0	8.4
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	12.3	2.1
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	-0.5	-7.1
Other products	11.8	4.0

In addition, the annual variation for Ontario, reported as 6.5% for 2000, should have been 6.7%. The annual

growth in 2001 for Newfoundland and Labrador should have read 3.4%, not 3.3%.

For more information, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; haysale@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending February 16, 2002 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending February 16 totalled 317 495 metric tonnes, up 5.0% from 302 256 tonnes a week earlier and up 18.3% from 268 441 tonnes in the same week of 2001. The year-to-date total at the end of the reference week was 2 069 509 tonnes, up 12.9% compared with 1 832 481 tonnes in the same period of 2001.

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods, or data quality of this release, contact Misbah Subhani (951-4924; misbah.subhani@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Construction Union Wage Rate Index

January 2002

The Construction Union Wage Rate Index (including supplements) was unchanged in January compared to the revised December level of 120.1 (1992=100). The composite index rose 2.0% compared with January 2001.

Union wage rates are published for 16 trades in 20 metropolitan areas for both the basic rates and rates including selected supplementary payments. Indexes (1992=100) are calculated for the same metropolitan areas and are published for those where a majority of trades are covered by current collective agreements.

Available on CANSIM: tables 327-0003 and 327-0004.

The first quarter 2002 issue of *Capital expenditure price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in June. See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Susie Boyd (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. ■

Export and Import Price Indexes

December 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 (December 2001) for the five commodity sections and the major commodity groups (62 exports and 61 imports).

Current- and fixed-weighted US price indexes (1997=100) are also available on a customs basis. Price indexes are listed from January 1997 to the current month. Included with the US commodity indexes are the 10 all-countries and US-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 228-0001 to 228-0003 and 228-0033 to 228-0040.

The December 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. ■

Shipments of rolled steel

December 2001

Rolled steel shipments totalled 944 513 metric tonnes in December, down 21.2% from 1 198 104 tonnes in November and down 5.0% from 994 223 tonnes in December 2000.

Year-to-date shipments to the end of December totalled 14 203 587 tonnes, down 4.8% from 14 919 853 tonnes in the same period of 2000.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0010.

The December 2001 issue of *Primary iron and steel*, Vol. 56, no. 12 (41-001-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). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Dragos Ifrim (613-951-3527; dragos.ifrim@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Steel primary forms

December 2001

Steel primary forms production totalled 1 289 457 metric tonnes in December, up 16.5% from 1 106 248 tonnes in December 2000.

Year-to-date production to the end of December reached 15 178 896 tonnes, down 8.0% from 16 496 339 tonnes in the same period of 2000.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0010.

The December 2001 issue of *Primary iron and steel*, Vol. 56, no. 12 (41-001-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). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Dragos Ifrim (613-951-3527; dragos.ifrim@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Construction type plywood

December 2001

Canadian firms produced 139 143 cubic metres of construction-type plywood in December, down 6.2% from 148 310 cubic metres in December 2000.

Year-to-date production to the end of December totalled 2 026 437 cubic metres, up 4.3% from 1 943 734 cubic metres in the same period of 2000.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0005.

The December 2001 issue of *Construction type plywood*, Vol. 49, no. 12 (35-001-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 or data quality of this release, contact Gilles Simard (613-951-3516; simales@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Residential Telephone Service Survey

November 2001

A microdata file from the November Residential Telephone Service Survey is now available. Information in this file (56M0001XCB) refers to telephone service penetration rates in Canada's 10 provinces.

For more information on related products and services, or to enquire about the concepts, methods

or data quality of this release, contact Client Services (1-888-297-7355; 613-951-7355; fax 613-951-3012; ssd@statcan.ca), Special Surveys Division. ■

For-hire motor carriers of freight, all carriers

Third quarter 2001

There were an estimated 2,975 for-hire trucking companies based in Canada with annual revenues of \$1 million or more in the third quarter, compared with 2,700 carriers in the third quarter of 2000. Their third quarter 2001 operating revenues totalled \$5.4 billion, and their operating expenses reached almost \$5.0 billion, both up almost 8% from the third quarter of 2000.

Both average operating revenues and expenses fell a slight 2% in the third quarter compared with the third quarter of 2000. Average expenses were at \$1.68 million, down from \$1.72 million in the third quarter of 2000. The decline was driven by lower salaries and wages combined with lower payments to owner-operators. However, average costs per carrier were higher for maintenance expenses (+5%), depreciation (+4%) and other expenses (+9% — this includes insurance and freight claims). The operating ratio (operating expenses divided by operating revenues) remained at 0.93.

By revenue group, the medium-sized for-hire carriers (those with annual revenues of \$2 million

to \$12 million) garnered a significantly larger share of total revenues from international movements in the third quarter (up 25% on a per-carrier basis from the third quarter of 2000). Such increases were seen in the first (+3%) and second (+11%) quarters of 2001 compared with the same quarter a year before.

Available on CANSIM: table 403-0002.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gilles Paré (613-951-2517; fax: 613-951-0579; paregil@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

Annual Survey of Water Carriers 1999

In 1999, 119 for-hire water carriers reported revenues of \$500,000 and over, to give this segment of the water transportation industry slightly more than \$2.0 billion in total revenues and \$1.89 billion in total expenses. As a result, the operating ratio improved slightly from 0.96 in 1998 to 0.94 in 1999, as revenues grew 3.4% and expenses grew 1.3%.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, please contact Jean-Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; laroque@statcan.ca) or François Mainville (613-951-3504; fax: 613-951-0009; mainfra@statcan.ca), Transportation Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Canadian economic observer, Vol. 15, no. 2,
February 2002
Catalogue number **11-010-XPB** (\$23/\$227).

Construction type plywood, Vol. 49, no. 12,
December 2001
Catalogue number **35-001-XIB** (\$5/\$47).

Primary iron and steel, Vol. 56, no. 12, December 2001
Catalogue number **41-001-XIB** (\$5/\$47).

Residential Telephone Service Survey,
November 2001
Catalogue number **56M0001XCB** (\$500).

Wholesale trade, Vol. 64, no. 12, December 2001
Catalogue number **63-008-XIB** (\$14/\$140).

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

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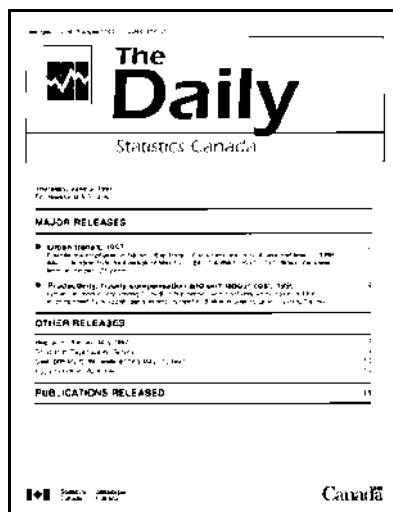
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