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Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

(continued on page 2)

Canada's international trade in services
2001

Annual details of Canada's trade in services for 2001 are now available in *Canada's international trade in services*. This publication covers transactions in travel, transportation, and commercial and government services with Canada's trading partners. The main tables have been revised from 1998.

The breakdown of countries and country groupings has now been modified to align more closely with recent international formats and with continental boundaries. A new sub-grouping appears for the Maghreb countries along with a new memorandum item for the Caribbean Common Market area.

The 2001 issue of *Canada's international trade in services* (67-203-XIB, $30; 67-203-XPB, $40) is now available. See *How to order products*.

For more information, contact Denis Caron (613-951-1861; *caroden@statcan.ca*), Balance of Payments Division.

OTHER RELEASES – concluded

MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

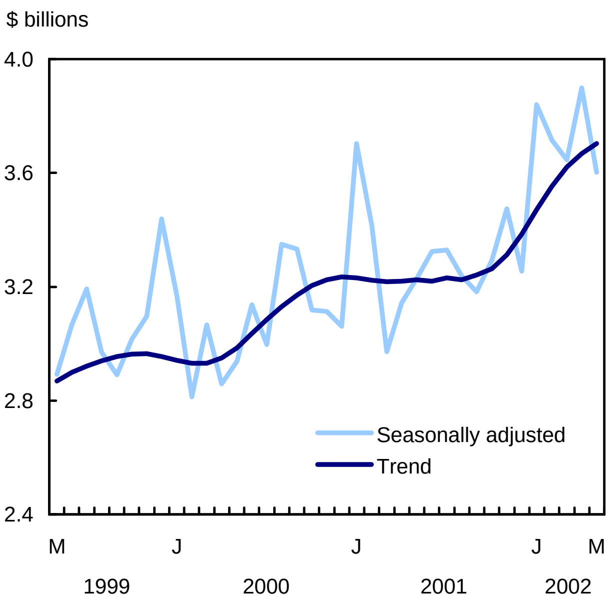
May 2002

The value of building permits issued by municipalities reached $3.6 billion in May, down 7.6% from April. Despite this decline, construction intentions remained high, with the value of permits surpassing $3.5 billion for the fifth consecutive month — a streak never observed before.

The value of residential permits dropped 12.6% to $2.3 billion, largely the result of a marked decline in multi-family permits, which had reached an unprecedented high in April. In contrast, after three consecutive monthly declines, the non-residential sector recorded a 3.3% gain in May to $1.3 billion. This advance was fuelled by a marked increase in the institutional component.

From January to May, municipalities issued $18.7 billion in permits, up 13.6% from the same period of 2001. A tremendous advance in the residential sector (+37.0%) explained this increase. Non-residential construction intentions fell 14.0% from the same period of 2001.

Total value of permits declines in May



Among the metropolitan areas, Calgary and Edmonton posted the largest advances (in dollars) for the first five months of 2002. Buoyant construction intentions for single-family dwellings helped explain the gains in both regions. Overall, 22 out of the 28 metropolitan areas posted increases on a year-to-date basis.

Note to readers

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

The Building and Demolitions Permits Monthly Survey covers 2,350 municipalities, representing 95% of the population. It provides an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 5% 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 engineering projects (e.g., waterworks, sewers or culverts) and land.

Both single- and multi-family permits pull down the residential sector

The value of multi-family permits totalled $662 million in May, a 25.8% drop from April's record high. Despite the decline, nearly 6,600 new multi-family dwelling units were authorized in May.

The value of single-family permits was down 6.0% to $1.7 billion, but over 10,200 new single units were approved. It was the first time since 1990 that more than 10,000 new single units have been authorized for five consecutive months.

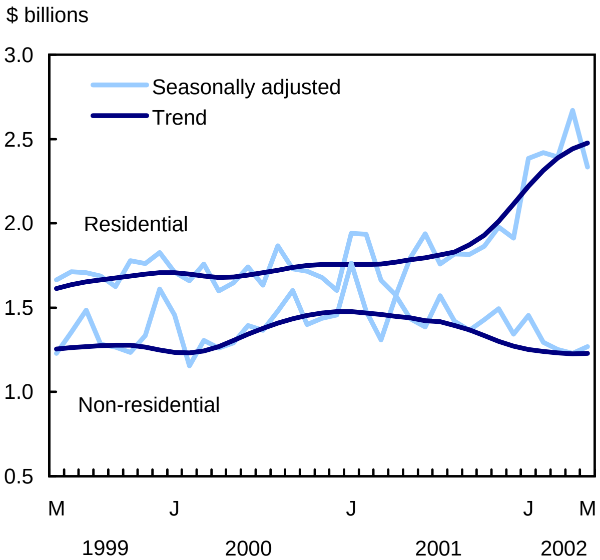
May's decline in the residential sector came in large part from Ontario (-13.8% to $1.1 billion) and British Columbia (-27.5% to $276 million), where both the single- and multi-family components retreated. Quebec recorded the largest increase in dollars (+6.0%).

Advantageous mortgage rates and their positive impact on housing affordability, the low number of existing available dwellings, strong showings in employment and buoyant consumer confidence pushed up the demand for new dwellings over the last months.

On a year-to-date basis, municipalities issued $12.2 billion in residential permits, up 37.0% from the same period of 2001. More than 90% of the value in the residential sector came from permits for new dwellings. Sharp increases in the single-family (+39.0%) and multi-family (+32.1%) components demonstrate the high demand in this sector.

All 10 provinces showed very high growth rates in terms of the value of residential permits. The largest increases (in dollars) came from Ontario (+27.6%) and Quebec (+46.8%).

Value of residential permits declines from April's peak



First increase in the non-residential sector since January

After three monthly declines, the value of permits in the non-residential sector rose in May for the second time in 2002 (+3.3% to $1.3 billion). The commercial and institutional components contributed to this gain.

The value of institutional permits climbed 39.1% to $373 million. This strong gain was the result of higher construction intentions in the medical and hospital category. Government and administrative buildings was the only category to show a decrease. The greatest increase was in Ontario (+41.2% to $193 million) and the largest decrease was in Saskatchewan (-56.1% to $8 million).

Commercial building permits rose 1.1% to $651 million in May. The strongest advance was in office buildings and the largest drop occurred in the trade and services category. Ontario recorded the greatest gain (+6.9% to $247 million) and Quebec the largest decline (-6.3% to $150 million).

Industrial building intentions tumbled 22.4% to $245 million in May after jumping 62.5% in April. Following a tremendous increase in April, the utility and transportation category showed the most significant loss. The largest decline (in dollars) was in British Colombia (-73.4% to $12 million); New Brunswick recorded the largest increase (+8.4% to $7 million).

While higher vacancy rates for office buildings in several major centres may have hurt the non-residential sector, corporate operating profits rose for the first time in more than a year in the first quarter as the economy continued its recovery. Also, industries, led by the manufacturing sector, raised their rate of capacity use from January to March, halting a string of six consecutive quarterly declines.

Among the provinces, increases in the commercial and institutional components led Ontario to the largest advance in the non-residential sector (+12.3% to $562 million). However, a large drop in the Vancouver area led British Colombia to a sharp decline (-16.3% to $133 million).

Of the 28 census metropolitan areas, 18 recorded monthly increases in the value of non-residential permits. The largest rise occurred in the Toronto area, because of proposed construction projects for office buildings and hotels and restaurants.

Despite May's growth, the year-to-date value of non-residential building permits ($6.5 billion) was still 14.0% lower than the total for the first five months of 2001. Permits for industrial construction totalled $1.3 billion, down 17.4%. Commercial permits stood at $3.4 billion, down 18.8%. The institutional component, at $1.8 billion, was virtually unchanged (+0.2%).

On a year-to-date basis, Quebec recorded the largest decrease (-22.3% to $1.4 billion), and Manitoba the largest growth (+19.7% to $191 million). Only New Brunswick, Manitoba and Nunavut showed gains on a year-to-date basis.

Available on CANSIM: tables 026-0001 to 026-0008, 026-0010 and 026-0015.

The May 2002 issue of *Building permits* (64-001-XIE, $14/$145) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

The June 2002 building permit estimate will be released on August 7.

To obtain data, contact Vere Clarke (1-800-579-8533; 613-951-6556; *clarver@statcan.ca*). For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; *saineti@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Value of building permits

Census metropolitan area	April 2002[r]	May 2002[p]	April to May 2002	January to May 2001	January to May 2002	January–May 2001 to January–May 2002
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
St. John's	25.9	24.5	-5.6	70.1	102.4	46.1
Halifax	34.7	30.7	-11.3	130.2	175.7	34.9
Saint John	8.4	7.6	-9.6	32.1	36.5	13.5
Chicoutimi–Jonquière	10.8	11.0	1.8	84.6	49.9	-41.0
Québec	50.3	69.7	38.5	320.0	276.7	-13.5
Sherbrooke	17.7	16.9	-4.4	61.9	96.7	56.1
Trois-Rivières	19.2	6.2	-67.7	48.7	58.2	19.3
Montréal	344.3	355.7	3.3	1,818.1	1,890.1	4.0
Hull	21.1	34.2	62.5	158.2	168.7	6.7
Ottawa	183.0	183.2	0.1	699.4	680.4	-2.7
Kingston	45.3	52.4	15.6	85.0	129.8	52.7
Oshawa	40.7	68.2	67.5	197.6	265.7	34.5
Toronto	854.1	732.2	-14.3	3,560.3	3,656.1	2.7
Hamilton	71.4	81.0	13.4	345.6	473.7	37.1
St. Catharines–Niagara	53.6	24.2	-54.8	152.7	246.7	61.5
Kitchener	82.0	89.7	9.4	347.3	424.8	22.3
London	62.1	63.3	1.8	327.3	279.1	-14.7
Windsor	61.1	52.0	-14.9	197.4	302.5	53.2
Sudbury	14.9	6.2	-58.3	28.9	32.2	11.3
Thunder Bay	3.9	6.0	52.0	38.6	89.1	130.7
Winnipeg	33.8	38.7	14.6	177.4	189.4	6.7
Regina	12.2	12.9	5.6	90.3	59.2	-34.5
Saskatoon	22.8	18.1	-20.5	118.2	132.2	11.8
Calgary	268.3	219.4	-18.2	905.3	1,117.9	23.5
Edmonton	119.9	103.7	-13.5	527.6	659.8	25.1
Abbotsford	11.3	11.3	0.4	68.7	67.0	-2.5
Vancouver	395.8	243.6	-38.5	1,391.5	1,430.7	2.8
Victoria	28.1	40.4	43.8	136.4	194.0	42.3

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
Note: *Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.*

Value of building permits

	April 2002[r]	May 2002[p]	April to May 2002	January to May 2001	January to May 2002	January–May 2001 to January–May 2002
	Seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	**3,898.1**	**3,601.8**	**-7.6**	**16,461.6**	**18,700.3**	**13.6**
Residential	2,669.6	2,332.4	-12.6	8,907.5	12,202.7	37.0
Non-residential	1,228.5	1,269.4	3.3	7,554.1	6,497.5	-14.0
Newfoundland and Labrador	34.2	38.6	13.0	114.2	145.9	27.8
Residential	26.5	22.9	-13.6	68.0	102.3	50.4
Non-residential	7.7	15.8	104.0	46.1	43.6	-5.5
Prince Edward Island	8.0	16.4	106.5	35.4	51.2	44.5
Residential	5.8	12.0	107.4	21.1	39.3	86.8
Non-residential	2.2	4.4	104.1	14.3	11.8	-17.5
Nova Scotia	72.2	62.1	-14.1	270.1	341.6	26.5
Residential	48.8	49.2	0.9	163.8	257.3	57.1
Non-residential	23.5	12.8	-45.4	106.3	84.3	-20.7
New Brunswick	74.6	50.2	-32.7	197.1	283.5	43.9
Residential	34.0	22.5	-33.7	102.9	183.1	77.9
Non-residential	40.6	27.7	-31.8	94.1	100.5	6.7
Quebec	651.2	670.8	3.0	3,277.7	3,535.1	7.9
Residential	380.7	403.5	6.0	1,431.0	2,100.8	46.8
Non-residential	270.5	267.3	-1.2	1,846.7	1,434.3	-22.3
Ontario	1,823.9	1,702.1	-6.7	7,474.2	8,528.9	14.1
Residential	1,323.8	1,140.5	-13.8	4,437.0	5,660.2	27.6
Non-residential	500.1	561.6	12.3	3,037.2	2,868.7	-5.5
Manitoba	68.1	78.1	14.7	287.5	383.3	33.3
Residential	37.3	49.2	32.1	128.2	192.6	50.2
Non-residential	30.9	28.9	-6.2	159.3	190.7	19.7
Saskatchewan	63.1	50.0	-20.7	302.2	290.8	-3.8
Residential	17.8	21.8	23.1	90.9	100.7	10.8
Non-residential	45.3	28.2	-37.9	211.3	190.1	-10.0
Alberta	543.6	498.9	-8.2	2,264.1	2,762.3	22.0
Residential	396.7	327.6	-17.4	1,282.2	1,907.2	48.7
Non-residential	146.8	171.3	16.6	981.9	855.1	-12.9
British Columbia	539.8	409.2	-24.2	2,192.5	2,316.0	5.6
Residential	380.2	275.7	-27.5	1,162.4	1,627.9	40.0
Non-residential	159.6	133.5	-16.3	1,030.1	688.1	-33.2
Yukon	1.9	2.6	34.7	18.0	9.7	-46.2
Residential	1.9	1.7	-7.7	8.0	8.0	0.0
Non-residential	0.1	0.9	930.7	10.0	1.7	-83.4
Northwest Territories	17.1	6.7	-61.0	21.5	35.0	62.5
Residential	15.9	4.8	-69.7	7.1	21.5	203.0
Non-residential	1.3	1.9	48.9	14.4	13.5	-6.6
Nunavut	0.4	16.1	4,207.0	7.2	17.0	135.9
Residential	0.4	0.9	128.6	5.0	1.8	-63.8
Non-residential	0.0	15.3	...	2.3	15.3	574.0

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
... *Figures not applicable.*
Note: *Figures may not add to totals due to rounding.*

■

The health of Canada's communities

2000/01

Life expectancy in Canada is among the best in the world and has been for several decades. However, health status is by no means evenly distributed across Canada's communities, according to a new study.

For example, life expectancy — an important indicator of a population's health — varies from 65.4 years in the Région du Nunavik, Quebec, to 81.2 years in Richmond, British Columbia.

To some extent, such disparities can be attributed to socio-demographic differences between communities, since life expectancy within a community is associated with factors such as the unemployment rate and the proportion of people with a postsecondary education. Consequently, comparisons between communities are more pertinent if they are made among those that are socio-demographically similar.

To facilitate such comparisons, this study is based on 10 peer groups of health regions (labelled A to J). These groups were created from the 139 health regions defined by provincial ministries of health. Each peer group contains 5 to 34 health regions with similar socio-demographic profiles, using data from the 1996 Census. The principal socio-demographic characteristics of these peer groups are presented in the study.

The characteristics used to cluster health regions into peer groups included population size, average number of years of schooling, percentage of aboriginal and visible minority populations, population density, unemployment rate, income inequality, average income, percentage of lone parents, the elderly and those with low income, and the extent of inter-municipality migration since the previous census. Health- and health care-related characteristics were deliberately not used to form the peer groups in order to highlight whether or not socio-demographically similar communities were also similar in terms of their health-related characteristics.

This study compares these peer groups, and the health regions within each peer group, on the basis of key health indicators such as life expectancy and self-perceived health, as well as health-related risk factors, such as smoking, heavy drinking, obesity, stress levels and depression. It also explores reasons why residents of some regions enjoy better health than those of other regions.

The article *The health of Canada's communities* provides data in tables for each health region. A separate table is also available for each of the 10 peer groups to facilitate comparisons between the health regions within the peer group, as well as to Canada overall.

Note to readers

This report is the first in a series of articles using new data from the 2000/01 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) to examine various aspects of the health of Canadians.

For the first time, it is possible to make nationwide comparisons of estimates of health outcomes and risk factors at the community or health region level, because of the large sample size of the CCHS.

Risk factors were based on CCHS data. Life expectancy and disability-free life expectancy estimates were based on data from the Canadian Vital Statistics Database and the 1996 Census.

***Life expectancy** is the number of years a person is expected to live from the day he or she is born. **Disability-free life expectancy** estimates the number of years that a person can expect to live without activity limitation, and outside of a health care institution.*

Future articles, to be released roughly every three weeks, will explore topics such as the influence of regional social environment on the self-rated health of Canadians, Aboriginal Canadians living off-reserve and immigrants.

Socio-demographic and health-related risk factors both important for regions' health status

Before examining the health regions with each of the 10 peer groups, the analysis considered all 139 health regions together. Socio-demographic factors played an important role, accounting for 25% to over 55% of the variations in health status measures between communities. Even after controlling for each region's socio-demographic characteristics, higher daily smoking rates and higher heavy drinking rates were associated with shorter life expectancies. Similarly, higher obesity rates, higher daily smoking rates, and higher depression rates were associated with shorter disability-free life expectancies.

Regions' health status quite variable within peer groups

Even though socio-demographic characteristics were strongly associated with health status, there was still a considerable degree of variation in life expectancy across health regions within each peer group. Differences of three to five years in life expectancy between the top and bottom health region in the group were evident in most peer groups.

People living in largest cities generally most healthy

People living in the peer groups encompassing the nation's largest cities and urban centres (groups A and B) were among the healthiest in Canada. The health regions in these two peer groups are characterized mainly by their population size, and by high levels of education and high proportions of visible minority population.

Residents of the health regions of groups A and B had the longest life expectancies and disability-free life expectancies in the country. Compared with the Canadian average of 78.3 years, life expectancy for group A (Canada's largest cities) was half a year longer and for group B (some of Canada's second-tier cities), 1.3 years longer. However, these peer group averages mask considerable variation within both groups, as much as three years in life expectancy.

Residents of groups A and B tended to have healthier behaviours than the average Canadian. About 18% of residents in these peer groups were daily smokers in 2000/01, compared with the national average of 22%. The rates of obesity and heavy drinking for these groups were the lowest among the 10 peer groups.

Richmond, British Columbia, stood out as an exceptional health region within one of the healthiest peer groups (group A). Life expectancy in Richmond was the highest in the country at 81.2 years, close to three years longer than the national average. Richmond residents had healthy lifestyle practices. Smoking and obesity rates were the lowest in the country.

The Région de Montréal-Centre had the lowest life expectancy in group A, at 77.9 years. It also had the highest daily smoking rate, highest obesity rate, highest rate of heavy drinking and highest stress rate within group A.

Northern communities least healthy, but also not as stressed

Groups C and F contain remote northern communities, representing a small proportion of Canada's total population. Education levels in these communities are low and these groups had the lowest life expectancies and disability-free life expectancies in Canada.

The rates of smoking, obesity and heavy drinking for these groups were above the national averages. Residents of these northern communities, however, were less likely to report high levels of stress.

There were other favourable statistics for these two peer groups. The exercise rate for group F was better than the national average, and the depression rate for group C was the lowest in the country at 5%.

Again, these peer group averages mask considerable variation within both groups.

Groups consisting mostly of rural health regions

Three groups are made up mostly of rural health regions, predominantly from Canada's eastern provinces (peer group D) and Canada's Prairie provinces (peer groups E and G). Life expectancies for these groups were shorter than the Canadian average, but longer than the life expectancies for the northern communities. At the same time, within each of these peer groups, there were health regions with health status above the Canadian average, as well as those below.

Similar to the northern groups, these rural groups had smoking rates, obesity rates and heavy drinking rates above the nation's averages, but lower stress rates.

For example, the Région de la Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine in Quebec distinguished itself favourably with regard to health behaviours within group D. Residents there were less likely to be obese, less likely to be infrequent exercisers and less likely to drink heavily than group D's residents as a whole. Life expectancy, however, was at the peer group average.

These kinds of discrepancies between health status and health behaviours for some health regions raise challenging questions for future analyses — what is it about these communities that makes the expected relationships between health risk factors and health status stronger or weaker from one region to another? Future analyses with the CCHS will address this question.

A description of the method used to formulate these peer groups is provided in a previously released report, *Health region peer groups* (82-221-XIE, free), available on Statistics Canada's Web site (*www.statcan.ca*). From the *Our products and services* page, choose *Free publications*, then *Health*.

The article *The health of Canada's communities*, 2000/01, no. 1 (82-003-SIE, free) is now available on Statistics Canada's Web site (*www.statcan.ca*). From the *Our products and services* page, choose *Free publications*, then *Health*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Margot Shields (613-951-4177; *margot.shields@statcan.ca*), Health Statistics Division. ■

OTHER RELEASES

Help-wanted Index

June 2002

The Help-wanted Index (1996=100) increased slightly to 127.6 in June, up 0.6% from May. This is the fifth consecutive month of small increases following 15 months of declines. In the last five months, the turnaround in the index was led by Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick, with most other provinces following suit in more recent months.

The largest month-to-month increases were in Alberta (+2.1%), Prince Edward Island (+2.0%) and British Columbia (+1.9%), with five provinces remaining virtually flat. Manitoba was the only province that registered a slight decline (-0.4%).

The national index was down 16.8% from June 2001.

Help-wanted Index

(1996=100)

	June 2002	May 2002	June 2001	May 2002 to June 2002	June 2001 to June 2002
	Seasonally adjusted and smoothed			% change	
Canada	**127.6**	**126.8**	**153.4**	**0.6**	**-16.8**
Newfoundland and Labrador	181.2	181.0	191.9	0.1	-5.6
Prince Edward Island	208.0	204.0	224.8	2.0	-7.5
Nova Scotia	132.1	132.0	154.3	0.1	-14.4
New Brunswick	169.0	168.8	164.2	0.1	2.9
Quebec	121.2	120.7	143.0	0.4	-15.2
Ontario	134.8	133.7	161.6	0.8	-16.6
Manitoba	147.9	148.5	163.6	-0.4	-9.6
Saskatchewan	130.4	128.8	143.7	1.2	-9.3
Alberta	137.7	134.9	177.0	2.1	-22.2
British Columbia	96.4	94.6	121.1	1.9	-20.4

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

Available on CANSIM: table 277-0002.

For general information or to order data, 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. ■

Canada's international trade in services

2001

Canada posted its third consecutive increase in the overall trade deficit in international services in 2001.

The trade deficit — the difference between services that Canada exports and its payments to foreign suppliers — increased to $8.4 billion from $7.4 billion in 2000.

Overall exports in services declined 0.9% to $56.6 billion, the first downturn since 1982. At the same time, payments rose 0.7% to $65.0 billion.

Trade in services covers transactions in travel, transportation, a range of business and professional services referred to as commercial services, and government services to Canada's trading partners.

The rise in the services deficit resulted from higher deficits in two components: commercial and transportation. This reflected slower growth rates in North America and other economies.

The deficit on commercial services rose $1 billion to $4.0 billion in 2001. This higher deficit largely reflected much lower revenues for research and development in high-tech industries. The smaller surplus in research and development went hand-in-hand with a lower surplus for computer services, where revenues were also weak. Payments rose more than revenues in a range of technical services.

In transportation services, revenues also declined as payments to non-residents increased. As a result, the deficit reached $3.7 billion in 2001, a rise of $0.9 billion. Deficits in air and water transportation expanded. Passenger revenues were particularly affected by the events of September 11.

In contrast, Canada's travel deficit last year was the lowest since 1986, shrinking $0.9 billion to $1.3 billion. This decline in deficit was the result of increased travel expenses from the United States while Canadians spent less in the United States. This clearly narrowed the deficit with Canada's major trading partner.

At the same time, the small deficit with other countries expanded. Canadians continued to increase their spending overseas, while spending by travellers from nations other than the United States remained flat. Most travel flows have at least partially recovered from levels of the third quarter 2001 and the impact of September 11.

Note: The geographic breakdown of services in the 2001 issue is reorganized and extended. It now aligns more closely with recent formats of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and with continental boundaries. For example, Turkey and Egypt are shifted to Europe and Africa, respectively, so that the Middle East region pertains only to Asia. The Antilles now designates the Caribbean islands and Bermuda separately from Central America. Three OECD countries in eastern Europe together with Iceland are a new sub-group of Europe. The Maghreb countries are a new sub-group of continental Africa. An estimate of the Caribbean Common Market countries joins the Free Trade Area of the Americas trading area as a memorandum item.

Available on CANSIM: tables 376-0031 to 376-0034 and 376-0036.

The 2001 issue of *Canada's international trade in services* (67-203-XIB, $30; 67-203-XPB, $40) 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 Denis Caron (613-951-1861; *caroden@statcan.ca*), Balance of Payments Division. ■

Farm product prices

May 2002

Prices that farmers received in May for grains, oilseeds, speciality crops, fruits, vegetables, cattle, hogs, poultry, eggs and dairy products are now available.

The Alberta slaughter calves price in May was $113.25 per hundredweight, the lowest since August 1999 but still well above the low of $68.26 in May 1996.

The May non-board wheat price in Saskatchewan, at $134.09 per metric tonne, was down from a peak of $143.35 in April but up 35% from May 2001.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bernie Rosien (613-951-2441; fax: 613-951-3868; *bernie.rosien@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Cement

May 2002

Manufacturers shipped 1 243 301 metric tonnes of cement in May, up 20.7% from 1 030 030 tonnes in April, but down 6.4% from 1 328 398 tonnes in May 2001. Year-to-date shipments to the end of May totalled 4 082 061 tonnes, down 1.0% from 4 122 844 (revised) in the same period of 2001.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0001.

The May 2002 issue of *Cement*, Vol. 54, no. 5 (44-001-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 Nicole Boucher (613-951-4070; *boucnic@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Sawmills and planing mills

April 2002

Continued strong demand from new home builders combined with the temporary cancellation of countervailing duties on exports to the United States contributed to double-digit increases for both production and shipments by Canadian sawmills.

Sawmill production rose for the fourth consecutive month, reaching 6 775.6 thousand cubic metres in April, up 12.1% from the 6 042.1 thousand cubic metres produced in March.

The strong demand for lumber by builders in Canada and the United States pushed shipments up 14.8% from March. Shipments reached 6 670.4 thousand cubic metres, up 7.9% from April 2001.

The intense activity in the residential construction sector is still fuelled by the low vacancy rate of existing dwelling units as well as by low interest rates and the high level of consumer confidence. Lumber exports, as measured by the International Trade Division, increased 2.4% in April from March; this was partly the result of the cancellation of countervailing duties on exports to the United States until the end of May.

The total value of building permits in Canada reached $3.9 billion in April, up 5.6% from March and the highest since August 1989, according to the Building Permits Monthly Survey. After the frantic activity observed at the end of 2001 and the beginning of 2002, housing starts fell in April from March, down 7.3% in the United States and 11.0% in Canada. Housing starts in both countries, however, remain significantly higher than they were throughout 2001.

Despite the fact that sawmill production outpaced the quantity shipped, losses due to transfers out and waste resulted in closing inventories of 8 714.6 thousand cubic metres in April, down 2.5% from March. This was the first decline in 2002 after a few monthly increases.

Lumber prices in April diminished a slight 1.5% from March, according to the Industrial Product Price Index. However, prices remain 14.1% higher than in April 2001.

Available on CANSIM: table 303-0009.

The April 2002 issue of *Sawmills and planing mills*, Vol. 56, no. 4 (35-003-XIB, $9/$86) 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 Gilles Simard (613-951-3516; *simales@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Work absences

2001

Work absenteeism rates rose significantly in 2001, according to data from the Labour Force Survey.

An estimated 700,000 full-time employees, or about 7.0% of the total, were absent from work for all or part of any given week because of personal reasons, such as illness or disability, or personal or family responsibilities, excluding maternity leave. This was up considerably from 6.3% in 2000, and 5.5% in 1997.

As a result of these absences, 3.4% of usual weekly work time was lost in 2001. This "inactivity rate" was higher than the 3.2% in 2000, and 3.0% in 1997.

This translates into an average 8.5 days for each full-time employee, about half a day more than in 2000, and a little over a full day more than the 7.4 days five years earlier.

In total, an estimated 85.2 million workdays were lost because of personal reasons in 2001, up from 78.6 million in 2000 and 65.6 million in 1997.

Average workdays lost per full-time worker on account of own illness or disability rose over the five-year period from 6.2 days in 1997 to 7.0 days in 2001. Average workdays lost to personal and family responsibilities rose from 1.2 days to 1.5 days.

Detailed tables are provided in *Work absence rates*, 1991 to 2001 (71-535-MPB, $50), which is already available. See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Henry Pold (613-951-4608; *perspectives@statcan.ca*), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

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Catalogue number 15-001-XIE ($11/$110).

Cereals and oilseeds review, April 2002, Vol. 25, no. 4
Catalogue number 22-007-XIB ($11/$112).

Cereals and oilseeds review, April 2002, Vol. 25, no. 4
Catalogue number 22-007-XPB ($15/$149).

Sawmills and planing mills, April 2002, Vol. 56, no. 4
Catalogue number 35-003-XIB ($9/$86).

Cement, May 2002, Vol. 54, no. 5
Catalogue number 44-001-XIB ($5/$47).

Electric power statistics, April 2002, Vol. 70, no. 4
Catalogue number 57-001-XIB ($9/$85).

Canada's international trade in services, 2001
Catalogue number 67-203-XIB ($30).

Canada's international trade in services, 2001
Catalogue number 67-203-XPB ($40).

Labour force information, week ending June 15, 2002
Catalogue number 71-001-PIB ($8/$78).
Available at 7 am Friday, July 5

Labour force information, week ending June 15, 2002
Catalogue number 71-001-PPB ($11/$103).
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The health of Canada's communities, 2000/01, no. 1
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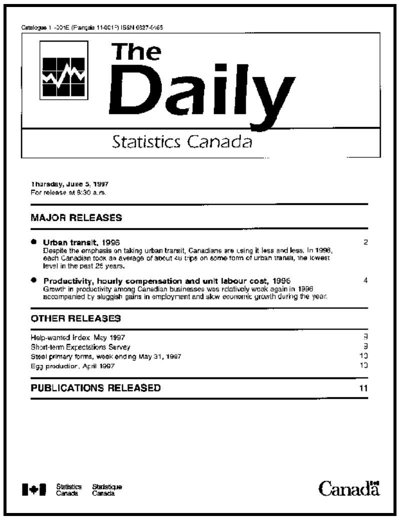
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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, June 5, 1997
For release at 8:30 a.m.

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- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996** 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

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