



The Daily

Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Wholesale trade, February 2003**
Wholesale sales posted a slight decline in February (-0.2%), ending eight months of consecutive growth. Sectors with strong ties to retail trade bore the brunt of the declines.

2
- **Canada's international transactions in securities, February 2003**
Foreign holdings of Canadian securities rose in February for the first time in three months, mainly the result of large foreign purchases of existing Canadian federal bonds. In contrast, there was a small divestment by Canadian investors in foreign equities because of weak demand by mutual funds and other institutional investors.

5

OTHER RELEASES

Gambling: An update, 2002	8
Volunteering on company time, 2000	8
Steel primary forms — weekly data, week ending April 12, 2003	9
Cereals and oilseeds review, February 2003	9
Natural gas transportation and distribution, August 2002	9

NEW PRODUCTS

Perspectives on labour and income

April 2003 online edition

The April 2003 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income* features the article "Volunteering on company time." This article shows that in spite of leading busy lives, employed Canadians are actively involved in volunteering. If given employer support, employed volunteers are likely to devote more hours to their efforts. Also in this issue is a free fact sheet on gambling.

The April 2003 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (75-001-XIE, \$5/\$48), is now available. See *How to order products*. For more information, contact Henry Pold (613 951-4608; henry.pold@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.



MAJOR RELEASES

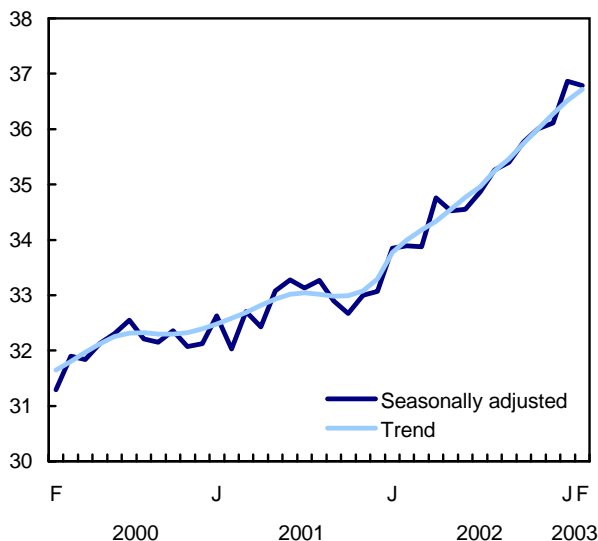
Wholesale trade

February 2003 (preliminary)

Wholesalers posted a slight decline in February (-0.2%), selling \$36.8 billion worth of goods and services. This decline ended eight consecutive months of growth. Sectors with strong ties to retail trade bore the brunt of the declines. Despite the drop in February, wholesale sales have posted relatively robust growth since November 2001, following a fairly lacklustre performance from the spring of 2000 to October 2001.

In February, wholesale sales weakened

\$ billions



In February, 6 of the 11 trade groups fell. The sectors that contributed the most to the decline in terms of value were beverage, drug and tobacco products (-2.2%), apparel and dry goods (-7.7%), and metals, hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies (-2.1%). The decline in sales in these sectors was partly offset by increases in computers, packaged software and other electronic equipment (+2.9%), and in the "other products" category (+1.6%).

In constant dollars, wholesale sales remained unchanged in February.

Note to reader:

Estimates from the Monthly Wholesale Trade Survey are classified according to the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Retail demand the source of weakness for wholesale trade in February

Aside from sales of food products, which remained essentially stable (+0.1%), all other non-durable goods sectors experienced a notable decline.

Beverage, drug and tobacco products fell 2.2% from January. However, January sales for this sector were inflated following the end of a strike at a major wholesaler; therefore, February sales returned to a more normal level.

Wholesale sales of apparel also fell (-7.7%). However, this sector has been relatively stable since October 2002, following a period of moderate growth that began in December 2001.

Sales linked to the housing market fall in February

Wholesale sales of household goods fell again in February (-3.8%), after a 1.2% drop in January. February also saw declines in metals and hardware (-2.1%) and in lumber and building materials (-1.4%), two wholesale sectors with strong links to the housing and renovation markets.

The declines observed in these sectors could be partly attributed to the downturn in the existing housing sales market observed by the Canadian Real Estate Association in three of the last four months.

Following the recent drops in household goods, this sector appears to have levelled off since September 2002, following relatively exceptional growth that began in October 2001.

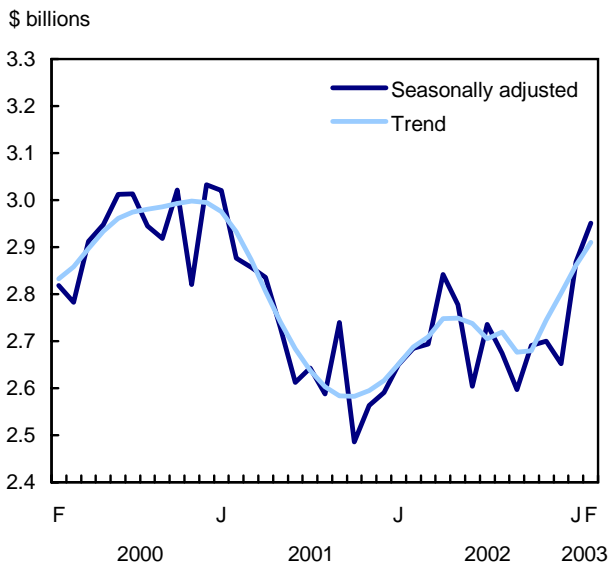
However, despite February's drop, wholesale sales of hardware, and lumber and building materials grew strongly throughout 2002 because of the solid performance of the housing construction market.

Computers and electronics rise for a second consecutive month

Computers and electronics posted a 2.9% increase. This followed a month of very strong growth in January (+8.1%). In recent months, sales have begun to show signs of strength after a slight downward trend from

April to September 2002. Nevertheless, sales remained well below levels observed in the fourth quarter of 2000. After the increase in 2000, wholesale sales of computers, packaged software and other electronic equipment weakened from January to September 2001.

Wholesale sales of computers and electronics on the rise for a second consecutive month



The slight drop in wholesale sales is felt in only half of the provinces

In February, five provinces posted declines in wholesale sales. The biggest drops were in British Columbia (-2.5%), Quebec (-2.5%) and New Brunswick (-1.3%), the three main beneficiaries of the strong growth in January.

Declining sales in the other products category (paper and paper products, wood chips, industrial and household chemicals, and so on) as well as

beverage, drug and tobacco products explained most of British Columbia's decline. The downturn in New Brunswick came mainly from lower wholesale sales in the automotive sector, as well as in beverage, drug and tobacco products. In Quebec, as in the other two provinces, the decline could also be attributed to lower sales of beverage, drug and tobacco products, as well as a strong drop in apparel and dry goods.

The strong increase in Prince Edward Island (+9.6%) was partly attributable to an increase in sales in the food products and the agricultural machinery sectors. This increase helped more than offset the 7.0% drop registered in January.

Inventory-to-sales ratio rises in February

The inventory-to-sales ratio rose to 1.24 in February. This was a slight rise from the 1.23 observed in January, a level that remains the lowest ever registered.

In February, inventories rose 0.3%, mainly because of the increases in the beverage, drug and tobacco sector and in the "other products" category.

Available on CANSIM: tables 081-0001 and 081-0002.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2401.

The February 2003 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, \$14/\$140) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

Estimates for wholesale sales for March will be released on May 20.

For general information or to order data, contact Client Services (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Jean Lebreux (613-951-4907; jean.lebreux@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. □

Wholesale merchants' sales and inventories

	February 2002	November 2002 ^r	December 2002 ^r	January 2003 ^r	February 2003 ^p	January to February 2003	February 2002 to February 2003
Seasonally adjusted							
	\$ millions					% change	
Sales, all trade groups	33,894	36,007	36,114	36,862	36,787	-0.2	8.5
Food products	5,462	5,739	5,815	5,843	5,852	0.1	7.1
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	2,930	2,996	2,984	3,161	3,090	-2.2	5.5
Apparel and dry goods	594	652	657	661	610	-7.7	2.7
Household goods	943	1,021	1,065	1,053	1,013	-3.8	7.3
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,625	7,383	7,238	7,440	7,419	-0.3	12.0
Metals, hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	1,988	2,155	2,144	2,261	2,213	-2.1	11.3
Lumber and building materials	2,556	2,816	2,899	2,902	2,862	-1.4	12.0
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	688	691	717	708	729	3.0	6.0
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	4,943	4,859	4,872	4,882	4,886	0.1	-1.1
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	2,685	2,700	2,652	2,868	2,951	2.9	9.9
Other products	4,479	4,996	5,070	5,082	5,161	1.6	15.2
Sales by province and territory							
Newfoundland and Labrador	212	212	215	210	208	-0.7	-1.5
Prince Edward Island	54	56	56	52	57	9.6	4.8
Nova Scotia	593	637	625	634	632	-0.4	6.6
New Brunswick	422	453	442	455	449	-1.3	6.3
Quebec	7,012	7,138	7,173	7,427	7,240	-2.5	3.3
Ontario	16,904	18,360	18,225	18,621	18,739	0.6	10.9
Manitoba	1,004	1,013	1,036	1,005	1,041	3.6	3.7
Saskatchewan	994	1,036	1,084	1,057	1,082	2.4	8.9
Alberta	3,438	3,609	3,755	3,750	3,778	0.7	9.9
British Columbia	3,218	3,458	3,474	3,620	3,531	-2.5	9.7
Yukon	10	10	9	11	10	-10.4	0.4
Northwest Territories	32	21	18	18	18	1.0	-42.6
Nunavut	2	2	2	2	2	-20.5	8.0
Inventories, all trade groups	42,939	44,836	44,995	45,347	45,498	0.3	6.0
Food products	3,234	3,427	3,404	3,356	3,386	0.9	4.7
Beverage, drug and tobacco products	3,171	3,438	3,410	3,499	3,572	2.1	12.6
Apparel and dry goods	1,224	1,300	1,329	1,368	1,330	-2.8	8.7
Household goods	1,551	1,743	1,736	1,710	1,717	0.4	10.7
Motor vehicles, parts and accessories	6,168	6,693	6,627	6,846	6,734	-1.6	9.2
Metals, hardware, and plumbing and heating equipment and supplies	3,583	3,744	3,777	3,806	3,837	0.8	7.1
Lumber and building materials	4,065	4,423	4,451	4,538	4,562	0.5	12.2
Farm machinery, equipment and supplies	1,818	1,854	1,861	1,892	1,903	0.6	4.7
Industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies	10,500	10,249	10,195	10,119	10,129	0.1	-3.5
Computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery	1,912	2,032	2,087	1,959	1,952	-0.4	2.1
Other products	5,713	5,933	6,117	6,254	6,377	2.0	11.6

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.



Canada's international transactions in securities

February 2003

Foreign holdings of Canadian securities rose in February for the first time in three months, mainly the result of large foreign purchases of existing Canadian federal bonds. In contrast, there was a small divestment by Canadian investors in foreign equities because of weak demand by mutual funds and other institutional investors.

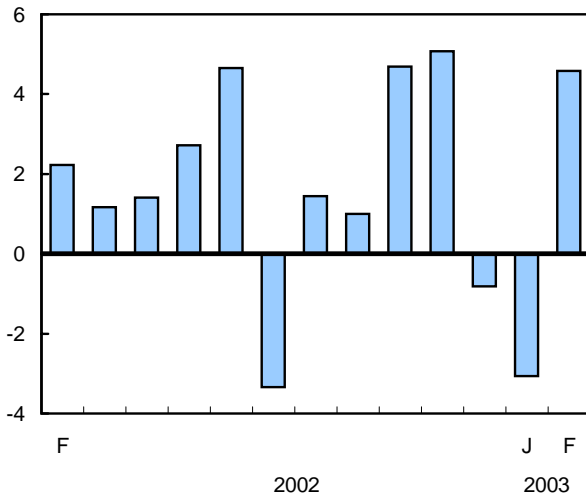
Substantial foreign investment in Canadian federal bonds

Foreign investors increased their holdings of Canadian bonds by \$5.0 billion in February, reversing most of the \$6.1 billion divestment of the previous two months. The principal driver was \$5.4 billion in foreign purchases of existing federal issues, an amount similar to that of October 2002. The purchases were directed to a broad range of maturities spanning 2 to 11 years.

Coinciding with this surge in investment was a stronger Canadian dollar relative to most major currencies and a widening gap between Canadian and US long-term interest rates in favour of investment in Canada (see box on related market information).

Foreign investment in Canadian securities¹

\$ billions



¹ Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

There were \$5.3 billion worth of new Canadian bond issues sold in foreign markets in February, a sharp turnaround from the two-year low in January. Retirements of Canadian bonds held outside the

Related market information

In February, the gap between Canadian and US short-term interest rates continued to grow, rising to 171 basis points from 166 in January. Canadian rates rose 5 basis points to 2.88% compared with no change in US rates, which remained at 1.17% in February.

For long-term rates, the gap in favour of Canada likewise grew in February to 115 basis points from 96 in January. Rates of both countries fell in February, 9 basis points in Canada versus 28 basis points in the United States.

For the third consecutive month, Canadian stock prices (S&P/TSX composite index) were flat recording only a 0.2% decline in February. Since the sharp 5.1% run-up in November 2002, the index was changed little, closing February 2003 at the same level as November 2002.

By comparison, American stock prices (Standard & Poor's composite 500 index) after posting a similar gain in November 2002 (+5.7%), have recorded three consecutive declines totalling 10.2% in December through February.

The Canadian dollar continued the sharp climb it started in January of this year, adding a further one and two-thirds cents in February against the US dollar. This brought to a full four cents the gain over the first two months of 2003. February's closing of US 67.39 cents is the highest since August 2000.

Definitions

The data series on international security transactions cover portfolio transactions in stocks and bonds (both Canadian and foreign issues) and Canadian money market instruments (or paper).

Stocks include common and preferred equities, as well as warrants.

Debt securities include bonds and money market instruments.

Bonds have an original term to maturity of more than one year.

Money market instruments have an original term to maturity of one year or less. **Government of Canada paper** includes treasury bills and US-dollar Canada bills. **Other money market instruments** includes treasury bills and other paper issued by other Canadian governments or their enterprises, bankers' acceptances, bearer demand notes of banks, commercial paper and other short-term paper.

country remained high at \$5.6 billion in February. Overall, investment in February came mainly from American investors.

After adding \$4.6 billion to their holdings of Canadian money market paper in the previous four months, foreign investors reduced their holdings by \$1.2 billion in February. This divestment, which was solely in US holdings, was spread over federal T-bills and provincial and federal government enterprise paper. The gap between Canadian and US short-term interest rates continued to grow in favour of investment in Canada, rising to 171 basis points at the end of February from 166 at the end of January.

Foreign investors make a modest investment in Canadian stocks

Foreign investors made a \$0.8 billion investment in Canadian stocks in February. From November 2002 to February 2003, foreign investors increased their holdings of Canadian stocks by \$2.0 billion, roughly split between purchases of existing shares and new share offerings in foreign markets. For a third consecutive month, Canadian stock prices (S&P/TSX composite index) showed little change, after recording a sharp 5.1% rise in November 2002.

Canadian investors purchase foreign bonds but sell foreign stocks

Canadian investors purchased \$1.7 billion worth of foreign bonds, bringing to \$2.4 billion their investment in the first two months of 2003. February's investment was split between US treasuries and US corporate bonds.

In contrast, Canadian investors reduced their holdings of foreign stocks by \$0.7 billion in the first two months of 2003, a period when investment is usually quite substantial. The average investment in the first two months of the year from 2000 to 2002 was \$7.8 billion. Contributing to the lack of foreign equity investment are mutual funds, which have seen net sales of foreign equity funds turn negative over the first two months of 2003, something not seen in a number of years.

Available on CANSIM: tables 376-0018 to 376-0029 and 376-0042.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey numbers, including related surveys, 1532, 1534, 1535 and 1537.

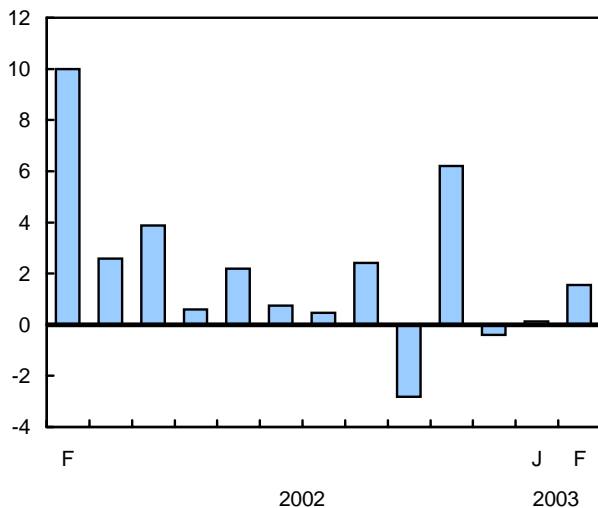
The February 2003 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (67-002-XIE, \$14/\$132) will be available soon. See *How to order products*.

For more information or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Donald Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.



Canadian investment in foreign securities¹

\$ billions Reverse of balance of payments signs



¹ Includes bonds and stocks.

Canada's international transactions in securities

	November 2002	December 2002	January 2003	February 2003	January to February 2002	January to February 2003
\$ millions						
Foreign investment in Canadian securities	5,078	-814	-3,066	4,587	2,299	1,521
Bonds (net)	1,856	-2,976	-3,148	4,994	2,635	1,846
Outstanding	2,014	313	1,450	5,251	854	6,701
New issues	2,270	6,188	895	5,282	5,502	6,177
Retirements	-2,549	-7,917	-5,983	-5,555	-3,911	-11,538
Change in interest payable ¹	121	-1,561	490	16	189	506
Money market paper (net)	2,258	1,243	708	-1,158	55	-451
Government of Canada	555	825	-630	-637	-626	-1,267
Other	1,702	418	1,337	-522	681	816
Stocks (net)	964	919	-625	751	-390	126
Outstanding	436	570	-627	735	447	108
Other transactions	528	349	2	16	-837	18
Canadian investment in foreign securities	-6,196	404	-120	-1,556	-9,052	-1,676
Bonds (net)	-3,260	408	-654	-1,699	-2,753	-2,353
Stocks (net)	-2,936	-4	534	143	-6,299	677

¹ Interest accrued less interest paid.

Note: A minus sign indicates an outflow of money from Canada, that is, a withdrawal of foreign investment from Canada or an increase in Canadian investment abroad.



OTHER RELEASES

Gambling: An update

2002

Revenues (net of prizes) from government-run lotteries, video lottery terminals and casinos reached \$11.3 billion in 2002, up 5.6% from 2001 and four times higher than a decade earlier.

Gambling continues to be very profitable for governments, with revenues yielding \$6.0 billion in profit. This level was three and a half times the profit of \$1.7 billion realized in 1992.

Lotteries accounted for 27% of all non-charity gambling net revenues in 2002; casinos, 34%; video lottery terminals, 23%; and slot machines outside casinos, 17%.

An estimated 42,000 men and women were employed in the gambling industry in 2002, compared with only 12,000 in 1992. Women occupied 55% of jobs in gambling, compared with 46% of jobs in non-gambling industries.

While the likelihood of gambling increases with income, the proportion spent decreases. About 59% of households with incomes of less than \$20,000 gambled in 2001, spending an average of \$357. In contrast, 77% of households with incomes of \$80,000 or more gambled, spending an average of \$642.

On average, Canadians aged 18 and over each spent \$447 on gambling in 2001, compared with \$130 in 1992. The average varied from a low of \$105 in the three territories to a high of \$604 in Alberta.

The fact sheet on gambling is available free from the webpage of the April 2003 online issue of *Perspectives on labour and income*.

The April 2003 issue of *Perspective on labour and income*, vol. 4, no. 4 (75-001-XIE, \$5/\$48) 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 Katherine Marshall (613-951-6890; katherine.marshall@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Survey Analysis Division. ■

Volunteering on company time

2000

About one-quarter of all the time devoted to volunteer work in Canada in 2000 was done with the support of employers, according to a new study.

The study showed that volunteers who are employed are likely to devote more hours to their efforts if they receive support from their employers.

Using data from the National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating, conducted in 1997 and 2000, the article "Volunteering on company time" analyses the contribution of employers in supporting volunteering. It examines the types of employer support, benefits of employer-supported volunteering, and reasons employees do not volunteer.

In 2000, about 6.5 million people, or 27% of the population aged 15 and older, gave their time in one form or another as part of a group or organization. This represented a decline of about 1 million people from the 7.5 million, or 31% of the population, who volunteered in 1997.

With this decline, however, came an increase in the intensity of volunteering among those who gave their time. On average, each volunteer in 2000 contributed 162 hours during the year, up from 149 hours in 1997.

While the overall number of volunteers declined during this period, the proportion with the support of employers went up.

In 2000, an estimated 1,725,000 employed volunteers, or about 48% of all employed volunteers, received support from their employer in some form, up from 44% in 1997.

These volunteers gave an average of 148 hours during the year, about 20 hours more than their counterparts who got no employer support. This translated into more than 255 million hours of volunteer work that had at least one form of employer support, roughly one-quarter of total hours.

In the smallest workplaces, those with fewer than 20 employees, employer support most commonly took the form of time off and changing work hours.

Employer support was more likely in these smaller workplaces. About 60% of employer-supported volunteers in small workplaces reported approval for time off, compared with 53% in workplaces with over 500 employees.

Similarly, 59% of employer-supported volunteers in small workplaces reported approval to change work hours, compared with 52% in the largest.

The study concluded that the benefits of employer support to workers, and ultimately the employer, are evident. Ancillary job benefits were reported more by employer-supported volunteers than by their counterparts who received no support.

In addition, employers may be influenced to support efforts by volunteers in their workforce to promote a positive public image and to retain staff.

The article "Volunteering on company time" is available in the April 2003 online edition of *Perspectives on labour and income*, Vol. 4, no. 4 (75-001-XIE, \$5/\$48). See *How to order products*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Diane Galarneau (613-951-4626; diane.galarneau@statcan.ca), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division. ■

Steel primary forms — weekly data

Week ending April 12, 2003 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending April 12 totalled 280 695 metric tonnes, down 9.3% from 309 443 tonnes a week earlier and 10.2% from 312 637 tonnes in the same week of 2002.

The year-to-date total as of April 12 was 4 422 371 tonnes, down 3.7% from 4 593 236 tonnes in the same period of 2002.

Information on methods and data quality available in the Integrated Meta Data Base: survey number 2131.

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

Cereals and oilseeds review

February 2003

In March, Chicago soybean futures' prices were bolstered by the mid-month United States Department of Agriculture supply-demand report that increased projected exports in the current marketing year by half a million metric tonnes from the February forecasts. Despite the same report increasing South American soybean production by 1.5 million tonnes, world carryout was pushed up by only 0.3 million tonnes from February.

The report weakened corn futures' prices by increasing the 2002/03 US carryout forecast by 1.9 million tonnes to 25.5 million tonnes (or slightly more than a billion bushels).

Winnipeg canola futures' prices lost more than \$10 a tonne in the first week and a half of March, pressured by weakness in the Chicago soybean complex and a stronger Canadian dollar. Canola rebounded in the remainder of the month because of spillover from Chicago soybeans and slower deliveries. Flaxseed futures lost most of their premium relative to canola as a result of weak demand and speculation that the market had been overbought.

Data from the February issue of *Cereals and oilseeds review* are now available. The information includes data on production, stocks, cash and futures prices, domestic processing, exports, farmers' deliveries and supply-disposition analyses.

The March situation report, an overview of current market conditions, both domestic and international, is also included in the February 2003 issue of *Cereals and oilseeds review* (22-007-XIB, \$11/\$112; 22-007-XPB, \$15/\$149), which 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 Les Macartney (613-951-8714; les.macartney@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division. ■

Natural gas transportation and distribution

August 2002

Data on natural gas transportation and distribution are now available for August 2002.

Available on CANSIM: tables 129-0001 to 129-0004.

For general information or to order data, contact the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; energ@statcan.ca). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Pierre Després (613-951-3579; pierre.despres@statcan.ca), Tom Lewis (613-951-3596; tom.lewis@statcan.ca) or Lloyd Cundell (613-951-7346; lloyd.cundell@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Supply and disposition of crude oil and natural gas,
July 2002, Vol. 54, no. 7
Catalogue number **26-006-XPB** (\$19/\$186).

Aviation: Service bulletin, Vol. 35, no. 1
Catalogue number **51-004-XIB** (\$8).

The Consumer Price Index, March 2003, Vol. 82, no. 3
Catalogue number **62-001-XIB** (\$8/\$77).
Available at 7 a.m. **Wednesday, April 23**

The Consumer Price Index, March 2003, Vol. 82, no. 3
Catalogue number **62-001-XPB** (\$11/\$103).
Available at 7 a.m. **Wednesday, April 23**

Perspectives on labour and income, Vol. 4, no. 4
Catalogue number **75-001-XIE** (\$5/\$48).

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

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Catalogue 11-001-XIE (P) (single) 11-001-XIE-0001-01-01



Statistics Canada

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

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1995** 2
Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are getting it less and less. In 1995, about 1.6 billion trips, an average of about 4.5 per person, were taken on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1995** 4
Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996, accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

- **Help-wanted index, May 1997** 3
- **Short-term Expectations Survey** 8
- **Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997** 12
- **Egg production, April 1997** 12

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

Statistics Canada

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

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