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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Tuesday, September 7, 2004
Released at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time

MAJOR RELEASES

OTHER RELEASES

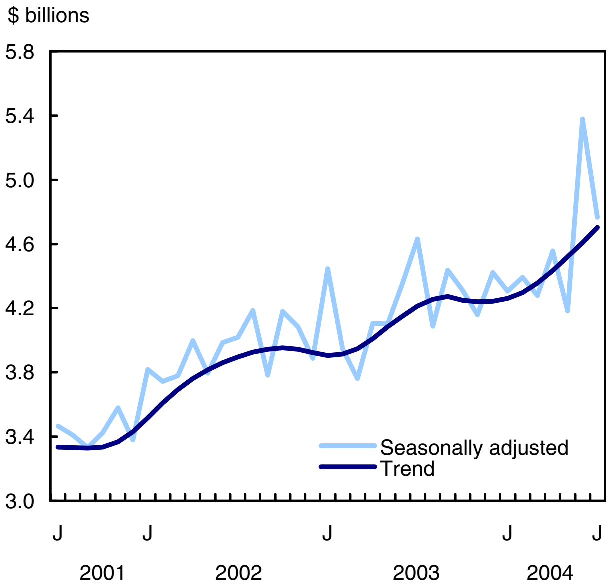
NEW PRODUCTS

MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits
July 2004

The value of building permits issued in July fell 11.4% to $4.8 billion from the record $5.4 billion set in June, as both the residential and non-residential sectors declined. However, July was still the second highest month on record.

Total value of permits continues on upward trend



A drop of nearly one-third in the value of multi-family permits issued compared with the previous month drove the residential sector down 10.3% to $3.1 billion. Despite the decline, it was still the third best month on record.

The growth in the institutional sector in July was more than offset by flagging demand for commercial permits, which led to a drop in non-residential projects (-13.3% to $1.7 billion). This was the second highest level for non-residential permits over the last 12 months.

On a year-to-date basis, the residential sector's strength drove the overall value of building permits for the first seven months of 2004 up 8.6% to $31.9 billion. Builders took out $21.2 billion worth of residential permits between January and July, up 18.3% from the same period in 2003. Non-residential permits fell 6.7% to $10.7 billion.

Note to readers

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

The Building Permits 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.

Regionally, the census metropolitan areas of Vancouver and Montreal posted the largest gains in 2004, thanks to the demand for new dwellings in both areas. A drop in industrial and institutional building permits led to Toronto posting the largest year-to-date decline compared with 2003.

Single-family dwellings post new high while the multi-family component retreats

Despite the 10.3% decline in June, the housing market remained exceptionally strong, staying above the three billion dollar mark in July—the third highest monthly value on record.

The steady upward march in the value of permits for single-family dwellings continued in July. The value of homes approved edged up 2.0% from the previous month to top $2.1 billion—a new monthly record. Nearly 11,250 new single family units were approved in July alone.

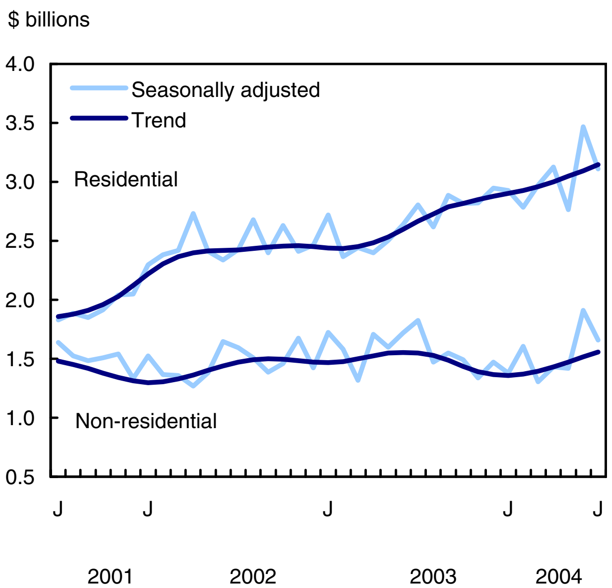
After a remarkable record showing in June, multi-family permits fell 29.0% to a still robust $975 million dollars. Municipalities approved 9,200 multi-family units during the month.

Very advantageous mortgage rates, the positive employment situation and an increase in disposable income helped fuel the feverish demand for new dwellings.

Alberta posted the largest monthly gain in dollars (+11.2% to $408 million) on the strength of both single- and multi-family permit issues. The largest decline was in British Columbia, down 41.5% to a still healthy $474 million. This followed a record high in the residential sector in June, which was spurred by permits for multi-family dwellings.

On a year-to-date basis, the value of single-family permits stands at $14.1 billion dollars, up 13.1% over the same period last year. The multi-family segment has staged even more robust growth, gaining 30.3% to $7.1 billion.

Both residential and non-residential sector trend up



Overall, municipalities have authorized 141,628 single- and multi-family units over the first seven months of 2004, up 11.6% compared with the same period in 2003.

In every province and territory, the cumulative value of housing permits issued so far in 2004 have surpassed last year. British Columbia and Quebec have posted the most striking growth in value with both jurisdictions adding over a billion dollars to last year's cumulative total for the period.

Large decline in the commercial construction intention pulled down non-residential sector

Builders took out fewer commercial and industrial permits in July, while the value of institutional permits climbed.

Following June's tremendous increase, commercial permits fell 29.0% to $764 million. This was largely the result of lower demand for recreational projects and trade and services buildings. Commercial permits in Ontario plunged 26.6% to $329 million—the largest drop among the provinces.

After two monthly gains, the industrial component fell 1.6% to $301 million but remained higher than the monthly average this year. Lower demand in the mining and agricultural building category in British Colombia was responsible for this slide.

Permits for the institutional sector advanced 11.6% to $592 million—the highest level since July 2003. Demand for institutional permits in Ontario was particularly strong (+21.1% to $307 million), as construction intentions for educational buildings in the Toronto region increased.

Despite the decline in the value of non-residential permits, good news has recently emerged for the non-residential sector. Retailers have enjoyed five monthly sales gains since the beginning of 2004. Cumulative sales in the first six months of the year were 4.0% higher compared with the same period of 2003. Canadian corporations earned record high profits of $50.7 billion in the second quarter of 2004, up 4.1% from the first quarter. Operating profits have now risen for four consecutive quarters. In addition, manufacturers posted record-high shipments in June.

On a provincial basis, the largest decrease (in dollars) was in Quebec (-27.9% to $303 million), where a gain in the institutional component was more than offset by declines in the industrial and commercial sectors. The largest increase was in Alberta, led by gains in all three components.

Approximately $10.7 billion worth of non-residential permits were issued in the first seven months of 2004, down 6.7% from the same period of 2003. This drop was related to decreases in the institutional (-15.5%) and industrial (-19.1%) components. The commercial component advanced 4.7%.

Among the provinces, the largest decline in the non-residential sector was in Ontario (-11.2% to $4.8 billion), mainly the result of decreases in the institutional and industrial components in Toronto and the institutional component in Hamilton. The strongest gain occurred in British Columbia (+10.0% to $1.2 billion).

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

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2802.

The July 2004 issue of *Building Permits*, Vol. 48, no. 7 (64-001-XIE, $15/$156) will soon be available.

The August 2004 building permit estimate will be released on October 6.

To order data, contact Brad Sernoskie (613-951-4646 or 1-800-579-8533; *bdp_information@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), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Value of building permits, by census metropolitan area[1]

	June 2004[r]	July 2004[p]	June to July 2004	January to July 2003	January to July 2004	January-July 2003 to January-July 2004
	seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
St. John's	28.4	29.1	2.6	150.4	207.3	37.9
Halifax	46.5	64.1	37.7	353.1	370.5	4.9
Saint John	13.1	14.6	11.8	64.9	70.3	8.3
Saguenay	18.4	8.8	-52.3	86.2	69.6	-19.3
Québec	91.9	100.0	8.8	617.8	760.5	23.1
Sherbrooke	18.2	18.9	4.1	130.5	130.3	-0.2
Trois-Rivières	18.5	22.3	20.8	100.9	106.3	5.3
Montréal	599.9	493.2	-17.8	2,924.8	3,636.3	24.3
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	210.3	271.4	29.1	1,305.0	1,343.9	3.0
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	65.9	76.4	16.0	282.5	338.4	19.8
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	144.5	195.1	35.0	1,022.5	1,005.5	-1.7
Kingston	20.0	32.7	63.6	122.7	135.7	10.5
Oshawa	102.5	45.6	-55.6	624.6	496.0	-20.6
Toronto	1,069.9	1,072.9	0.3	6,710.9	6,523.5	-2.8
Hamilton	129.4	82.4	-36.3	682.5	566.8	-16.9
St. Catharines–Niagara	39.2	48.6	24.0	262.0	328.5	25.4
Kitchener	69.4	81.8	17.9	574.7	539.5	-6.1
London	53.1	73.7	38.6	450.0	497.3	10.5
Windsor	50.6	46.4	-8.3	351.8	309.3	-12.1
Greater Sudbury	7.2	13.7	89.7	60.7	58.8	-3.2
Thunder Bay	12.6	13.3	5.6	62.5	60.5	-3.1
Winnipeg	105.4	66.3	-37.1	424.1	434.4	2.4
Regina	12.6	27.9	122.3	161.0	135.1	-16.1
Saskatoon	24.0	16.1	-33.0	148.6	136.8	-7.9
Calgary	204.4	290.2	42.0	1,685.0	1,702.7	1.1
Edmonton	170.3	183.7	7.9	1,023.0	1,153.2	12.7
Abbotsford	31.0	9.4	-69.7	102.5	106.4	3.9
Vancouver	783.5	386.9	-50.6	1,998.1	3,027.6	51.5
Victoria	53.8	41.1	-23.6	310.6	310.6	0.0

r Revised data.
p Preliminary data.
1. Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.
Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

Value of building permits, by province and territory

	June 2004r	July 2004p	June to July 2004	January to July 2003	January to July 2004	January-July 2003 to January-July 2004
	seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	5,379.6	4,767.6	-11.4	29,355.3	31,865.7	8.6
Residential	3,467.9	3,110.9	-10.3	17,880.2	21,156.3	18.3
Non-residential	1,911.6	1,656.7	-13.3	11,475.1	10,709.4	-6.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	39.7	40.5	2.0	212.8	283.4	33.2
Residential	30.8	26.9	-12.6	147.6	214.4	45.3
Non-residential	8.9	13.6	52.3	65.2	69.0	5.9
Prince Edward Island	17.7	23.6	33.5	126.9	111.7	-12.0
Residential	13.3	10.5	-21.1	57.2	70.6	23.4
Non-residential	4.3	13.1	200.8	69.7	41.0	-41.1
Nova Scotia	106.3	105.1	-1.1	609.1	665.3	9.2
Residential	61.1	81.1	32.9	394.9	444.5	12.5
Non-residential	45.3	24.0	-47.0	214.2	220.9	3.1
New Brunswick	80.4	69.7	-13.4	392.2	439.7	12.1
Residential	39.0	37.1	-4.8	238.5	293.8	23.2
Non-residential	41.5	32.6	-21.4	153.7	145.9	-5.1
Quebec	1,109.0	959.8	-13.5	5,798.1	6,923.0	19.4
Residential	688.7	656.8	-4.6	3,483.2	4,526.4	30.0
Non-residential	420.3	303.0	-27.9	2,315.0	2,396.7	3.5
Ontario	2,196.5	2,110.1	-3.9	13,505.0	13,375.3	-1.0
Residential	1,352.8	1,309.2	-3.2	8,118.8	8,592.9	5.8
Non-residential	843.7	800.9	-5.1	5,386.2	4,782.5	-11.2
Manitoba	147.7	105.1	-28.9	669.0	667.1	-0.3
Residential	68.1	70.4	3.3	283.6	397.6	40.2
Non-residential	79.6	34.7	-56.4	385.4	269.5	-30.1
Saskatchewan	54.8	61.8	12.8	442.7	424.8	-4.0
Residential	26.7	27.8	4.2	198.5	225.1	13.4
Non-residential	28.1	34.0	21.0	244.2	199.7	-18.2
Alberta	543.4	639.2	17.6	3,906.4	4,050.7	3.7
Residential	367.2	408.3	11.2	2,441.9	2,700.9	10.6
Non-residential	176.2	230.8	31.0	1,464.6	1,349.8	-7.8
British Columbia	1,070.2	639.4	-40.3	3,545.4	4,812.0	35.7
Residential	810.2	473.6	-41.5	2,480.2	3,640.1	46.8
Non-residential	260.0	165.7	-36.3	1,065.2	1,171.9	10.0
Yukon	5.1	3.7	-28.2	31.8	49.4	55.4
Residential	4.2	2.3	-45.3	14.5	20.0	37.6
Non-residential	0.9	1.4	47.2	17.3	29.5	70.4
Northwest Territories	7.5	8.7	15.5	42.0	46.4	10.3
Residential	5.1	6.0	17.3	18.9	25.2	33.7
Non-residential	2.4	2.7	11.7	23.2	21.2	-8.7
Nunavut	1.1	0.9	-21.0	73.9	16.8	-77.2
Residential	0.8	0.8	1.2	2.5	4.8	94.7
Non-residential	0.3	0.1	-76.7	71.4	12.0	-83.2

r *Revised data.*
p *Preliminary data.*
Note: Data may not add to totals as a result of rounding.

■

OTHER RELEASES

Study: The Effect of Literacy on Immigrant Earnings
1998

The study *The Effect of Literacy on Immigrant Earnings*, released today, uses data from the 1998 Ontario Adult Literacy Survey to explore how official language literacy and numeracy skills influence the labour market outcomes of immigrants to Ontario.

The target population of the survey consisted of immigrants aged 16 to 69, living in six census metropolitan areas: Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Kitchener, London and St. Catharines–Niagara. Together, these areas accounted for more than 80% of the province's immigrants.

This analysis, which builds on findings from the 1994 International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALS), reveals that literacy and numeracy skills exert a significant influence on a range of individual labour market outcomes.

This influence includes the probability of being in the labour force, the probability of being employed, the probability of being unemployed, the stability and duration of employment and, most importantly, upon the wage rates paid to workers. Without exception, higher average skill levels are associated with better average labour market outcomes.

The current study has three main findings. First, literacy skills among immigrants differ from those of Canadian-born people. The analysis clearly shows that the average literacy and numeracy of immigrants are significantly below the averages of non-immigrants with equivalent educational credentials and other observable characteristics.

This finding may offer a partial explanation for the decline in the relative labour market success of immigrants to Canada over the past decade.

Secondly, there is no evidence that immigrants receive a lower return to the types of skills measured in literacy tests than otherwise equivalent Canadian-born workers.

In other words, Canadian labour markets appear to reward the literacy and numeracy of immigrants to Canada in exactly the same way that they do non-immigrants. A 100-point increase in literacy score yielded the same return to both groups.

The study found that the lower wage return to a university education acquired by immigrants before migration disappears when their literacy skill level is taken into account.

The findings suggest that if immigrants had the same average literacy scores as non-immigrants, the earnings differential would narrow by 20%. This change would eliminate just over one-half of the earnings disadvantage among immigrant workers who were university educated.

The study also suggests that Canadian employers place little value on foreign work experience, with highly educated immigrants realizing markedly lower returns for foreign experience.

In the case of less educated immigrants, the impact of raising immigrant literacy levels to those of non-immigrants would be slightly larger than would be realized if wage returns to foreign experience for less educated workers were increased to non-immigrant levels.

In the case of educated immigrants, the impact of raising immigrant literacy levels to those of non-immigrants is only about one quarter of the effect that would be realized if wage returns to foreign experience were increased to non-immigrant levels.

Thus, while literacy deficiencies among immigrants appear to have an important impact on differentials in earnings, they do not explain much of the impact of low returns to foreign experience for the highly educated.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 4406 and 4433.

The study *The Effect of Literacy on Immigrant Earnings*, no. 12 (89-552-MIE2004012, free) is now available online. From the *Our products and services page*, under Browse our *Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *Education*. This study is also available in paper version (89-552-MPE2004012, $11). See *How to order products*.

For more information, contact Client Services (1-800-307-3382 or 613-951-7608; fax: 613-951-9040; TTY: 1-800-363-7629; *educationstats@statcan.ca*). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Scott Murray (613-951-9035, *scott.murray@statcan.ca*) Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics. ■

Farm Product Price Index

June 2004

Prices received by farmers for their agricultural commodities fell 1.0% in June compared with the same period a year earlier, according to data from the Farm Product Price Index (FPPI).

The crop index was down 7.0% compared with the June 2003 level of 107.0, continuing the monthly year-over-year declines which began last July. The livestock and animal products index was 4.7% above year-earlier levels, marking the first year-over-year increase in the last 13 months. The only crop indexes that advanced compared with June 2003 were oilseeds and special crops. Poultry was the only index to post a decline in the livestock and animal products index.

The FPPI (1997=100) stood at 101.2 in June, down 1.2% from the revised May index. The total index had peaked in February 2003 at 111.3, and then slid to the recent low of 93.8 in September.

The livestock and animal products index dropped to 102.7 in June, down 1.1% from the revised May index. On a month-to-month basis, only the dairy and poultry indexes recorded increases. The eggs index was unchanged, the cattle and calves index fell 6.9%, and after strong growth for the first five months of 2004, the hog index dipped slightly (-0.6%).

The June 2004 cattle and calves index dropped to 91.2. The index has been very volatile since May 2003, when one cow in northern Alberta tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) and the subsequent ban on Canadian ruminants and all associated products by many countries. The month-to-month changes have ranged from a decline of 30.1% in July 2003 to a gain of 35.4% in September 2003, when the border opened to exports of select cuts of beef. Prolonged closure to live cattle exports and speculation on when the border will re-open continues to generate strong price fluctuations.

The hog index dipped slightly from 103.6 in May to 103.0 in June. The index started the year at 66.1 in January and has climbed steadily on strengthening prices. Hog prices have been supported by robust exports and strong consumer demand.

On a month-to-month basis, the crop index dropped 1.1% in June. The indexes for grains, specialty crops and fruits all fell—ranging from a 1.2% drop for grains to an 8.6% decline for fruits.

The oilseed index inched up 0.4% to 109.6. This continues the month-to-month increase which began last December. Canadian oilseed prices have been buoyed by increased world oilseed consumption, tight United States soybean supplies and very strong soybean prices. However, with expectations of an abundant crop, prices US producers received for their soybeans slipped in June.

Farm Product Price Index

(1997=100)

	June 2003[r]	May 2004[r]	June 2004[p]	June 2003 to June 2004	May to June 2004
				% change	
Farm Product Price Index	**102.2**	**102.4**	**101.2**	**-1.0**	**-1.2**
Crops	**107.0**	**100.6**	**99.5**	**-7.0**	**-1.1**
Grains	111.4	91.6	90.5	-18.8	-1.2
Oilseeds	91.0	109.2	109.6	20.4	0.4
Specialty crops	107.6	120.1	111.3	3.4	-7.3
Fruit	108.1	107.6	98.3	-9.1	-8.6
Vegetables	111.3	109.5	110.4	-0.8	0.8
Potatoes	128.5	110.0	123.8	-3.7	12.5
Livestock and animal products	**98.1**	**103.8**	**102.7**	**4.7**	**-1.1**
Cattle and calves	91.0	98.0	91.2	0.2	-6.9
Hogs	86.0	103.6	103.0	19.8	-0.6
Poultry	97.2	96.1	96.6	-0.6	0.5
Eggs	101.5	104.5	104.5	3.0	0.0
Dairy	116.9	115.9	118.9	1.7	2.6

r *Revised figures.*
p *Preliminary figures.*

Available on CANSIM: tables 002-0021 and 002-0022.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5040.

The June 2004 issue of *Farm Product Price Index*, Vol. 4, no. 6 (21-007-XIB, free) is now available online. From the *Our products and services* page, under *Browse our Internet publications*, choose *Free*, then *Agriculture*.

For general information or to order data, call (1-800-465-1991). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Gail-Ann Breese (204-983-3445; fax: 204-983-7543; *gail-ann.breeese@statcan.ca*), Agriculture Division. ■

Refined petroleum products
April 2004

Data on the production, inventories and domestic sales of refined petroleum products for April are now available. Other selected data about these products are also available.

Available on CANSIM: tables 134-0001 to 134-0004.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 2150.

The April 2004 issue of *Refined Petroleum Products*, Vol. 59, no. 4 (45-004-XIB, $18/$166) 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 the dissemination officer (1-866-873-8789; 613-951-9497; *energ@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

NEW PRODUCTS

Infomat, A Weekly Review, September 7, 2004
Catalogue number 11-002-XWE ($100).

Farm Product Price Index, June 2004, Vol. 4, no. 6
Catalogue number 21-007-XIB
(free).

Refined Petroleum Products, April 2004, Vol. 59, no. 4
Catalogue number 45-004-XIB ($18/$166).

Quarterly Telecommunications Statistics, First quarter 2004, Vol. 28, no. 1
Catalogue number 56-002-XIE ($23/$43).

International Adult Literacy Survey [series] : The Effect of Literacy on Immigrant Earnings, 1994, no. 12
Catalogue number 89-552-MIE2004012
(free).

International Adult Literacy Survey [series] : The Effect of Literacy on Immigrant Earnings, 1994, no. 12
Catalogue number 89-552-MPE2004012 ($11).

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

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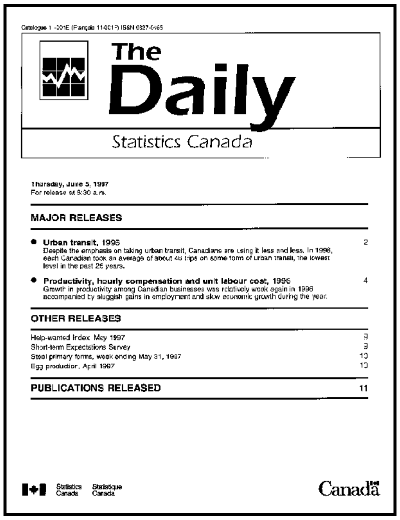

Catalogue 11-001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

The Daily

Statistics Canada

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

MAJOR RELEASES

- **Urban transit, 1996** 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about 46 trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- **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.

OTHER RELEASES

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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

Canada

Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001-XIE.

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

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