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The Daily

Statistics Canada

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Releases

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Canada

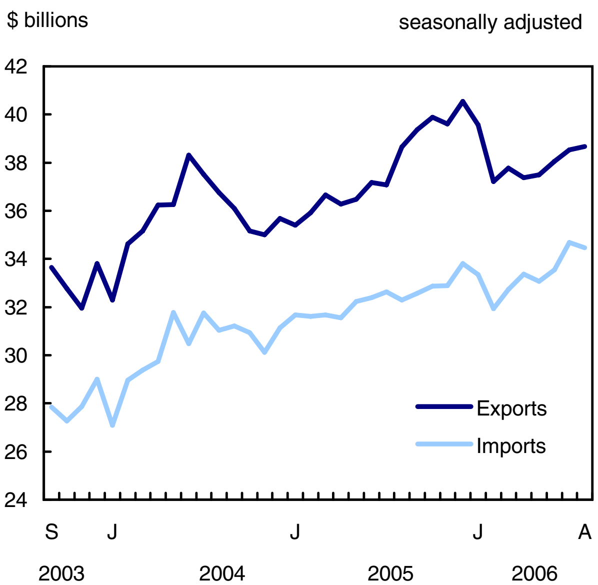
Releases

Canadian international merchandise trade

August 2006

The nation's merchandise trade surplus rose in August as exports advanced for the fourth consecutive month and imports fell.

Exports and imports



Canadian companies exported merchandise worth $38.7 billion in August, up 0.3% from July, with strong gains in industrial goods and materials and automotive products. On the other hand, imports declined 0.6% to $34.5 billion, following two consecutive monthly increases.

The resulting merchandise trade surplus amounted to $4.2 billion, compared with $3.9 billion in July.

The surplus with the United States, Canada's largest trading partner, moved up from a revised $8.1 billion to $8.2 billion. Both exports and imports declined, but imports fell more than exports.

Note to readers

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

Balance of payments data are available for the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom. Trade data for all other individual countries are available on a customs basis only.

Revisions

In general, merchandise trade data are revised on an ongoing basis for each month of the current year. Customs basis data are revised for the previous data year each quarter.

Factors influencing revisions include late receipt of import and export documentation, incorrect information on customs forms, replacement of estimates with actual figures, changes in classification of merchandise based on more current information, and changes to seasonal adjustment factors.

Revised data are available in the appropriate CANSIM tables.

At the same time, the nation's trade deficit with countries other than the United States narrowed from $4.2 billion in July to $4.0 billion.

Exports: Industrial goods and materials and automotive products lead growth

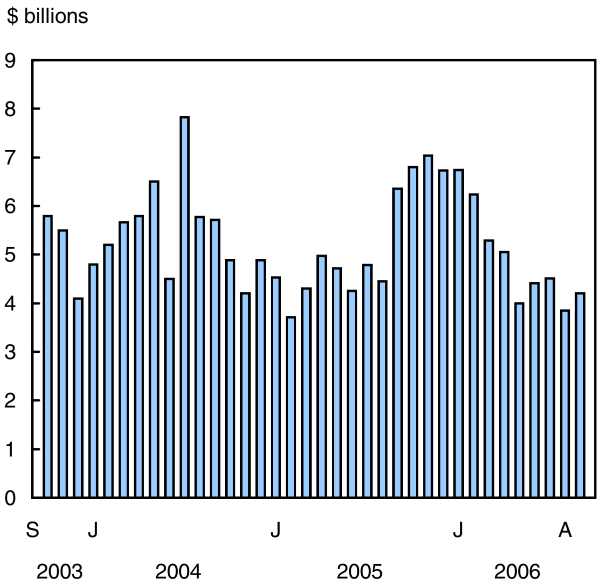
The largest boost to exports in August came from industrial goods and materials, where exports advanced 2.8% to a record $8.3 billion. This marked the sector's fourth consecutive upward movement. The strength came from record-setting exports of chemicals, plastics and fertilizers, up 6.8%, as well as metal ores, which surged 11.6%.

Exports of fertilizers to China, Brazil and Colombia rose significantly in August. Record high nickel prices also played a role in the growth of exports in the month.

The industrial goods and materials sector has been on a steep upward trend since mid-2003. Between June 2003 and August 2006, prices for metals and alloys jumped 60.8% while metal ore prices more than doubled (+106.5%), reflecting significant increases in demand for these goods.

Exports of automotive products increased 2.6% following the decline in July. All three components of the sector supported the advance, although the bulk of the strength came from motor vehicle parts (+4.0%) and passenger autos and chassis (+2.6%).

Trade balance



Exports of agricultural and fishing products grew 3.2% to $2.7 billion, primarily because of a 19.1% surge in wheat exports. Following a 9.4% increase in July, exports of other agricultural and fishing products advanced 1.4%.

On the downside, exports of energy products declined 2.2% to $7.7 billion, partially reversing gains in June and July. Contributing to the decline were crude petroleum, down 8.5% as a result of a 7.9% decrease in prices, and refined petroleum and coal products, down 4.8% while prices rose 2.0%. Exports of natural gas posted their second straight monthly advance, rising 10.2% in August. Exports of electricity, and coal and other bituminous substances also advanced.

Exports of machinery and equipment declined 1.2% after advancing for three straight months. The bulk of the decline in August came from aircraft and other transportation equipment, where exports fell 9.2%, following three consecutive gains. Exports of industrial and agricultural machinery fell 1.0%, while other machinery and equipment grew 2.1%.

Machinery and equipment exports have been on an upward trend since mid-2003.

Exports of forestry products edged down 0.1% as lumber and sawmill products exports fell for the seventh straight month, with a 4.6% decline in August, in the wake of falling housing construction in the United States. However, exports of newsprint and other paper rose 1.8%, while wood pulp and other wood products advanced 8.3%.

Imports: Automotive products offset moderate gains in other sectors

Imports made moderate gains in five of seven major sectors in August, but they were offset by a large decline in automotive products.

Imports of automotive products fell 6.8% to $6.8 billion after advancing for two consecutive months, with a 12.3% surge in July. The bulk of the decrease came from motor vehicle parts (-9.0%). However, declines in passenger autos and chassis (-4.2%) and trucks and other motor vehicles (-5.9%) were also contributing factors. Imports of automotive products have been volatile month over month while the trend has been virtually flat since early 2005.

Imports of other consumer goods, which have been on a long-term upward trend, retreated for the second consecutive month, edging down 0.2% in August. A 3.3% drop in apparel and footwear imports more than offset a small rise in imports of such products as television, radios and phonographs; watches, sporting goods and toys; photographic goods; and other end products.

On the plus side, machinery and equipment imports rose 0.8% to $9.6 billion, their second consecutive monthly increase. Supporting the rise were an 11.7% jump in imports of aircraft and other transportation equipment, and a 1.5% increase in other machinery and equipment. Dampening the growth were declines in industrial and agricultural machinery (-0.8%) and office machines and equipment (-7.4%).

Imports of energy products moved ahead for the third straight month, advancing 1.6%. Supporting the gain were crude petroleum (+1.3%) and coal and other related products (+15.3%). A small decrease in refined petroleum and coal products imports partly offset the gains.

In the industrial goods and materials sector, imports edged up 0.3% solely on the record-setting strength of metals and metal ores, where imports rose 4.2%. The gain mostly reflected strong demand for metals in ores, concentrates and scrap. Reduced purchases of chemicals and plastics, and other industrial goods and materials dampened these gains to a large extent.

Imports of forestry products advanced 4.9%, more than recovering the ground lost in July. Agricultural and fishing products imports advanced marginally, with the bulk of the strength occurring in products such as cocoa, coffee, and other preparations (+7.1%), and meat and meat preparations (+8.1%).

Available on CANSIM: tables 228-0001 to 228-0003 and 228-0033 to 228-0046.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2201, 2202 and 2203.

The August 2006 issue of *Canadian International Merchandise Trade*, Vol. 60, no. 8 (65-001-XIB, free) is now available from the *Publications* module of our website. The publication includes 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-XIE, free).

Merchandise trade data are available in PDF format on the morning of release.

For more information on products and services, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Anne Couillard (613-951-6867), International Trade Division. □

Merchandise trade

	July 2006[r]	August 2006	July to August 2006	August 2005 to August 2006	January to August 2005	January to August 2006	January–August 2005 to January–August 2006
	Seasonally adjusted, $ current						
	$ millions		% change		$ millions		% change
Principal trading partners							
Exports							
United States	30,802	30,567	-0.8	-1.7	238,438	243,722	2.2
Japan	826	940	13.8	7.8	6,705	7,031	4.9
European Union	2,654	2,709	2.1	4.5	19,040	21,506	13.0
Other OECD countries[1]	1,425	1,494	4.8	4.0	9,916	11,055	11.5
All other countries	2,835	2,963	4.5	12.3	19,535	21,378	9.4
Total	**38,541**	**38,672**	**0.3**	**0.1**	**293,635**	**304,689**	**3.8**
Imports							
United States	22,702	22,372	-1.5	3.0	172,255	174,949	1.6
Japan	998	1,065	6.7	16.6	7,437	7,984	7.4
European Union	3,428	3,715	8.4	19.9	25,308	27,830	10.0
Other OECD countries[1]	2,068	1,895	-8.4	-10.6	16,287	15,632	-4.0
All other countries	5,491	5,421	-1.3	22.0	34,785	40,744	17.1
Total	**34,688**	**34,469**	**-0.6**	**6.8**	**256,072**	**267,141**	**4.3**
Balance							
United States	8,100	8,195	...	...	66,183	68,773	...
Japan	-172	-125	...	...	-732	-953	...
European Union	-774	-1,006	...	...	-6,268	-6,324	...
Other OECD countries[1]	-643	-401	...	...	-6,371	-4,577	...
All other countries	-2,656	-2,458	...	...	-15,250	-19,366	...
Total	**3,853**	**4,203**	**...**	**...**	**37,563**	**37,548**	**...**
Principal commodity groupings							
Exports							
Agricultural and fishing products	2,582	2,665	3.2	1.8	19,740	20,571	4.2
Energy products	7,888	7,718	-2.2	-1.5	52,152	59,782	14.6
Forestry products	2,733	2,729	-0.1	-6.1	24,541	22,772	-7.2
Industrial goods and materials	8,116	8,341	2.8	18.0	56,104	61,064	8.8
Machinery and equipment	8,110	8,015	-1.2	0.3	62,961	63,305	0.5
Automotive products	6,328	6,493	2.6	-13.6	57,035	55,535	-2.6
Other consumer goods	1,530	1,516	-0.9	2.4	11,600	11,652	0.4
Special transactions trade[2]	737	658	-10.7	-2.2	5,387	5,728	6.3
Other balance of payments adjustments	517	535	3.5	-2.7	4,111	4,282	4.2
Imports							
Agricultural and fishing products	1,991	1,996	0.3	9.7	14,560	15,380	5.6
Energy products	3,299	3,353	1.6	14.7	21,457	23,541	9.7
Forestry products	246	258	4.9	5.3	2,129	2,027	-4.8
Industrial goods and materials	7,020	7,038	0.3	10.3	52,050	55,416	6.5
Machinery and equipment	9,545	9,620	0.8	3.9	73,087	75,369	3.1
Automotive products	7,312	6,817	-6.8	2.9	52,078	53,355	2.5
Other consumer goods	4,290	4,283	-0.2	5.9	32,714	34,105	4.3
Special transactions trade[2]	345	482	39.7	34.3	3,045	3,038	-0.2
Other balance of payments adjustments	639	621	-2.8	-0.8	4,950	4,907	-0.9

... *figures not appropriate or not applicable*
r *revised*
1. *Includes Australia, Canada, Iceland, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, South Korea, Switzerland and Turkey.*
2. *These are mainly low valued transactions, value of repairs to equipment, and goods returned to country of origin.*

■

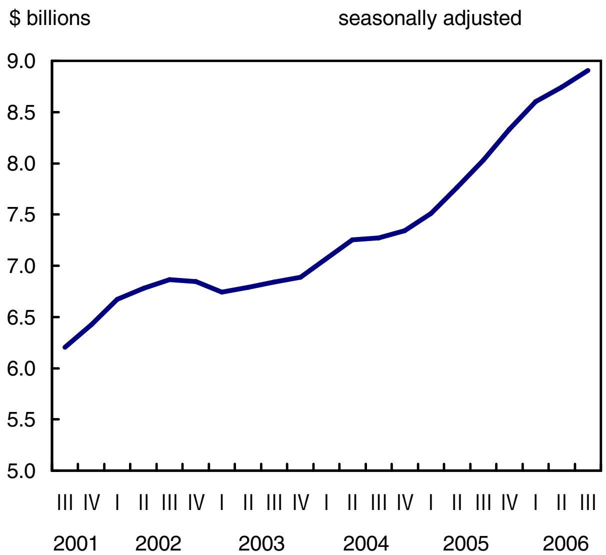
Investment in non-residential building construction

Third quarter 2006

Heavy spending on office buildings in Alberta and Ontario pushed investment in non-residential building construction to another record high between July and September.

Investment hit $8.9 billion, up 1.9% from the second quarter, the 14th consecutive quarterly increase.

Investment in non-residential building construction continues to grow



Investment reached record highs in two of three components — commercial and institutional. Investors pumped $5.1 billion into commercial projects, up 4.0% from the second quarter. In the institutional component, investment edged up 0.7% to $2.4 billion.

Spending in the industrial component declined 3.5% to $1.4 billion.

Provincially, the biggest third-quarter increase (in dollars) occurred by far in Alberta where investment rose 7.0% to $1.7 billion, a ninth straight quarterly gain. In British Columbia, which was a distant second, investment increased 2.6% to $1.3 billion.

In contrast, Ontario and New Brunswick posted the biggest declines.

Western Canada's dynamic economy continued to spark the non-residential sector. Other contributing factors included a strong labour market, strong consumer demand for durable goods and declining vacancy rates in large urban centres, which provided added incentive for office building construction.

Locally, 19 of the 28 census metropolitan areas recorded gains, with the strongest in Calgary, where investment rose 13.8% to $689 million. Fuelled by drops in all three components, Edmonton ended the third quarter with the most significant decline.

In constant dollars, investment in non-residential building construction declined 1.1% from the second quarter.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.*
>
> *Investments in non-residential building construction exclude engineering construction. This series is based on the Building Permits Survey of municipalities, which collects information on construction intentions.*
>
> *Work put-in-place patterns are assigned to each type of structure (industrial, commercial and institutional). These work patterns are used to distribute the value of building permits according to project length. Work put-in-place patterns differ according to the value of the construction project; a project worth several million dollars will usually take longer to complete than will a project of a few hundred thousand dollars.*
>
> *Additional data from the Capital and Repair Expenditures Surveys are used to create this investment series. Investment in non-residential building data is benchmarked to Statistics Canada's System of National Accounts of non-residential building investment series.*
>
> *For the purpose of the Investment in non-residential building construction release, the census metropolitan area of Ottawa–Gatineau is divided into two areas: Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part) and Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part).*

Commercial: Robust office activity in Alberta and Ontario

Investment in commercial building construction increased for the 12th quarter in a row, in the wake of robust activity in office building construction sites in Alberta and Ontario.

Overall, seven provinces and three territories showed increases in commercial investment in the third quarter. The largest contributions (in dollars) occurred in Alberta (+6.7% to $1.0 billion) and in Ontario (+3.3% to $1.9 billion), both all-time highs.

After four consecutive quarterly increases, Manitoba recorded the most significant decline in the wake of a downturn in investment in warehouses, shopping centres and recreational building.

Investment in non-residential building construction, by census metropolitan area[1]

	Third quarter 2005	Second quarter 2006	Third quarter 2006	Second to third quarter 2006
	Seasonally adjusted			
	$ millions			% change
St. John's	65	55	50	-8.7
Halifax	126	141	160	13.4
Saint John	19	26	27	0.7
Saguenay	25	26	30	14.3
Québec	156	163	151	-6.9
Sherbrooke	29	32	38	21.0
Trois-Rivières	21	30	31	2.5
Montréal	703	667	683	2.4
Ottawa–Gatineau, Ontario/Quebec	307	398	393	-1.2
Ottawa–Gatineau (Que. part)	62	50	40	-19.1
Ottawa–Gatineau (Ont. part)	245	348	353	1.4
Kingston	42	23	28	21.7
Oshawa	116	92	96	3.7
Toronto	1,602	1,537	1,549	0.7
Hamilton	134	162	156	-3.8
St. Catharines–Niagara	61	64	79	23.1
Kitchener	157	124	128	3.7
London	142	101	100	-0.2
Windsor	65	84	76	-9.4
Greater Sudbury / Grand Sudbury	32	24	30	22.9
Thunder Bay	25	37	25	-32.1
Winnipeg	176	222	222	-0.1
Regina	60	76	78	2.8
Saskatoon	78	97	105	7.9
Calgary	493	605	689	13.8
Edmonton	308	428	411	-4.0
Abbotsford	44	64	75	16.6
Vancouver	620	691	707	2.2
Victoria	73	82	94	14.3

1. *Go online to view the census subdivisions that comprise the census metropolitan areas.*

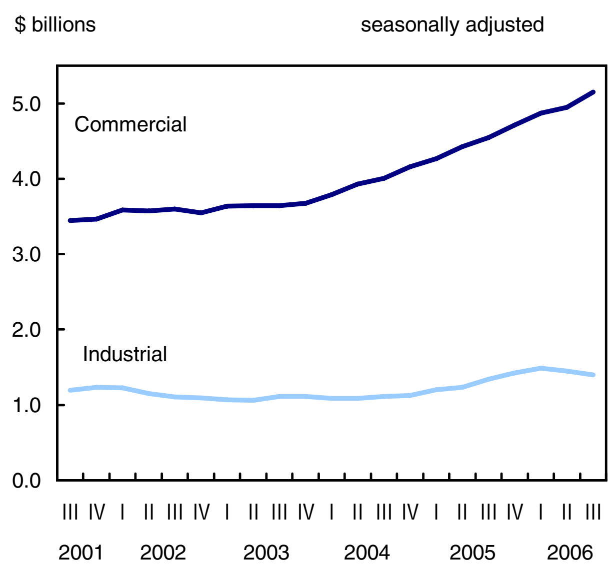
Following a decline in the second quarter, Toronto recorded the biggest growth in investment in commercial buildings construction compared to the other metropolitan areas. In contrast, St. John's experienced the largest decline.

In addition to the decline in vacancy rates in the major urban centres, growth in retail and wholesale trade appears to have had a favourable impact on the construction of shopping centres, which posted a new record high.

Institutional: New record thanks to gains in educational building

Spending in the institutional component rebounded to a record high after a second-quarter decline. Strong investments in educational building in eight provinces more than offset a drop in the majority of other institutional categories.

Record investment in commercial buildings



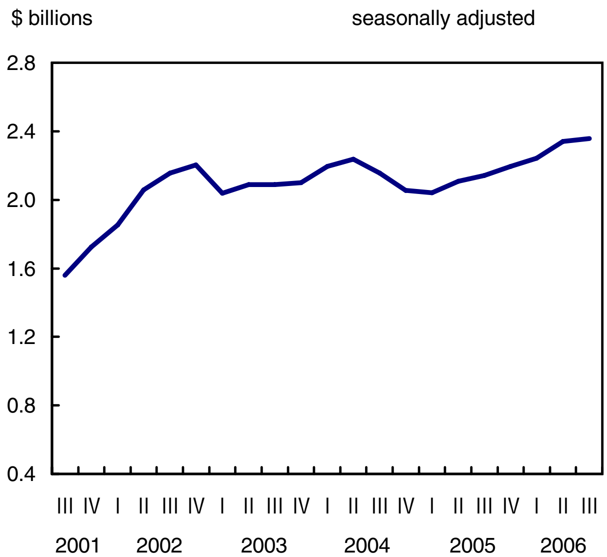
Alberta experienced the largest investment growth for a sixth consecutive quarter, as a result of significant spending on the construction of educational and health care facilities. Investment rose 4.4% to $349 million.

Ontario recorded the most significant decline in dollars (-2.3% to $996 million), in the wake of a downturn in investment in health care facilities following five consecutive quarterly gains.

Among metropolitan areas, Calgary posted growth in the third quarter, with investments rising 13.1% to $154 million. The gain was driven by substantial investments in health care facilities.

In Toronto, which experienced the most significant decline in dollars (-10.3%), third-quarter institutional building investment fell to $368 million. Toronto recorded a drop in every category of institutional construction.

Institutional investment fuelled by spending on educational buildings



Of the 28 census metropolitan areas, 18 posted increases.

Industrial: Second consecutive quarterly decline

Investment in industrial construction fell 3.5%, as a result of a drop in the construction of manufacturing, processing and assembly plants. Even so, the $1.4 billion total was 7.8% higher than the average quarterly level recorded in 2005.

Third-quarter investment in industrial construction fell in seven provinces. The largest quarterly decrease (in dollars) occurred in Ontario (-11.2% to $432 million).

In contrast, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan showed increases in industrial construction investment, largely explained by more construction in maintenance buildings.

Overall, 12 census metropolitan areas recorded gains in investment. Calgary recorded the largest increase in industrial construction spending, which hit $67 million. Toronto posted the largest reduction.

Canadian manufacturers continued to face increased production costs, vigorous global competition and a strong Canadian dollar. Also, the industrial capacity utilization rate declined in the manufacturing sector for third straight quarter.

Investment in non-residential building construction

	Third quarter 2005	Second quarter 2006	Third quarter 2006	Second to third quarter 2006
	Seasonally adjusted			
	$ millions			% change
Canada	**8,031**	**8,743**	**8,907**	**1.9**
Newfoundland and Labrador	88	79	75	-4.5
Prince Edward Island	31	38	40	5.0
Nova Scotia	223	257	267	4.0
New Brunswick	161	176	170	-3.5
Quebec	1,398	1,397	1,395	-0.1
Ontario	3,287	3,369	3,352	-0.5
Manitoba	258	296	295	-0.4
Saskatchewan	192	237	263	11.3
Alberta	1,282	1,633	1,748	7.0
British Columbia	1,041	1,232	1,264	2.6
Yukon	20	17	22	31.0
Northwest Territories	39	12	14	15.5
Nunavut	11	1	3	273.4

Available on CANSIM: table 026-0016.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey number 5014.

More detailed data on investment in non-residential building construction are also available in free tables online. From the *Summary tables* module, choose *Subject*, then *Construction*.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, Bechir Oueriemmi (613-951-1165; *bdp_information@statcan.ca*), Investment and Capital Stock Division. ■

Study: Trends in business bankruptcies
1980 to 2005

The rate of business bankruptcies in Canada has declined to a 25-year low, but losses resulting from failures have not, according to a new study.

The study, which analyzed data from the Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy Canada and Statistics Canada, found that far fewer firms are going bankrupt, but the average size of the net financial losses from bankruptcy has been rising. Recent bankruptcies have involved large liabilities.

Just over 7,300 companies went bankrupt last year, a rate of about 7 firms for every 1,000 businesses, the lowest rate in the last 25 years. This rate was less than the peak that occurred in 1992 when 15.4 firms per 1,000 businesses failed.

Financial losses associated with bankruptcy rose sharply in the early part of this decade, peaking in 2002 at more than $6.6 billion. Since then, net liabilities have declined, and in 2005, they amounted to just under $3.3 billion.

The study found that the incidence of business bankruptcy has changed greatly during the last 25 years.

The recessions and economic restructuring of the early 1980s and early 1990s were accompanied by significant increases in both the overall number of bankruptcies and the rate of bankruptcies within the business population. Bankruptcy rates peaked in 1982 and 1992.

In contrast, the economic slowdown in the early part of this decade was not accompanied by a similar increase in the rate of business failures. Rates have declined significantly from those posted in the mid-1990s.

Over the last 25 years, net liabilities from business bankruptcy have increased substantially. In 1980, the losses from bankruptcy amounted to about $479 million, which represented about 0.32% of Canada's net assets. In 2005, losses represented about 0.52% of net assets.

On a regional basis, the study showed that there has been a strong convergence in bankruptcy statistics over time. The differences in bankruptcy rates among the various regions in Canada have fallen to 25-year lows.

The most significant shift in regional bankruptcy rates occurred in Quebec. During the 1980s and 1990s, Quebec experienced much higher rates of bankruptcy than other regions.

However, Quebec's rate of business bankruptcy has declined sharply since the mid-1990s, and is now comparable to those in other regions.

In Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia, changes in bankruptcy rates over time are strongly correlated with changes in their unemployment rates, a basic indicator of the strength of their economies.

In the Prairies and Atlantic Canada, there has been a much weaker association between changes in bankruptcy rates and the unemployment rate, as bankruptcies have been influenced by specific structural shocks.

For example, the restructuring of the fishing industry in Atlantic Canada in the 1990s was accompanied by large changes in bankruptcy rates, with only modest changes in unemployment rates.

The analytical paper "National and regional trends in business bankruptcies, 1980 to 2005" is now available as part of the *Insights on the Canadian Economy* (11-624-MIE2006015, free) series from the *Publications* module of our website.

A shorter version of this article can also be found in the October 2006 Internet edition of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Vol. 19, no. 10 (11-010-XIB, free), that is now available.

More studies related to firm strategies and performance are available free of charge in the analytical series *Update on Economic Analysis* (11-623-XIE, free) on our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Cindy Lecavalier (613-951-2183) or John Baldwin (613-951-8588), Micro-economic Analysis Division. ■

Export and import price indexes
August 2006

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 August 2006 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 August 2006. 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 available now on a customs basis.

Available on CANSIM: tables 228-0001 to 228-0003 and 228-0033 to 228-0046.

Definitions, data sources and methods: survey numbers, including related surveys, 2201, 2202 and 2203.

The August 2006 issue of *Canadian International Merchandise Trade*, Vol. 60, no. 8 (65-001-XIB, free) is now available from the *Publications* module of our website.

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Marketing and Client Services Section (toll-free 1-800-294-5583), International Trade Division. ■

Chain Fisher dollar export and import values

1997

The International Trade Division has now produced and will be updating and disseminating chain Fisher real dollar values (reference year 1997) for Canadian international merchandise exports and imports. This series is not available in CANSIM.

Interested users who wish to order are advised to contact the Marketing and Client Services Section (toll-free 1-800-294-5583). To enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Bernard Lupien (613-951-6872), International Trade Division. ■

New products

Canadian Economic Observer, Vol. 19, no. 10
Catalogue number 11-010-XIB
(free).

Insights on the Canadian Economy: "National and regional trends in business bankruptcies, 1980 to 2005", no. 15
Catalogue number 11-624-MIE2006015
(free).

Canadian International Merchandise Trade, August 2006, Vol. 60, no. 8
Catalogue number 65-001-XIB
(free).

Exports by Commodity, July 2006, Vol. 63, no. 7
Catalogue number 65-004-XMB ($40/$387).

Exports by Commodity, July 2006, Vol. 63, no. 7
Catalogue number 65-004-XPB ($84/$828).

International Adult Literacy Survey Microdata File and User's Guide, 2003
Catalogue number 89M0016XCB
(free).

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

Catalogue numbers with an -XWE, -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions; those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; -XPB or -XPE are paper versions; -XDB or –XDE are electronic versions on diskette; -XCB or –XCE are electronic versions on compact disc and -XBB or -XBE a database.

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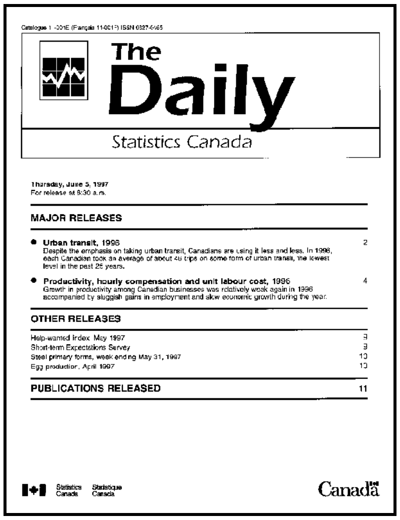

Catalogue 11-001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

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

Help-wanted Index, May 1997 9
Short-term Expectations Survey 9
Steel primary forms, week ending May 31, 1997 10
Egg production, April 1997 10

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED 11

Statistics Canada Statistique Canada

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