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Weekly Bulletin

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Wholesale Trade

Wholesale merchants' sales in March 1984 continued to increase strongly, rising 12.4% over the same period last year. (Revised sales for February 1984 were up 21.9% from the February 1983 level.)

In March 1984, all trade groups recorded sales increases from a year earlier, with the most notable gains reported by wholesalers of metal and metal products (+30.8%), machinery and equipment, n.e.s. (+26.3%), drug and toilet preparations (+18.9%), motor vehicles and accessories (+17.8%) and paper and paper products (+15.4%). All provinces except Prince Edward Island (-0.2%) posted sales increases from a year earlier, gains ranging from +18.7% in New Brunswick to +5.2% in British Columbia.

Cumulative sales by wholesale merchants for the first three months of 1984 were up 16.7% over the January-March 1983 period.

Wholesale merchants' inventories in March 1984 increased by 3.5% from the corresponding period in 1983. (Revised wholesale inventories for February 1984 were up 3.2% from the February 1983 level.)

The year-to-year increase in inventories recorded in March 1984 is the third consecutive monthly increase.

For further information, order the March 1984 issue of *Wholesale Trade* (63-008, \$1.60/\$16).

Construction Activity

The Leading Indicator of Construction Activity (1971=100) dropped by 3.5% in January 1984 to 79.9 from the December level of 82.8. The preceding few months' steady decline in the residential component of construction is now matched by decelerating intentions in the non-residential sector.

The filtered index of residential construction fell again in January to 82.5, down 2.5% from December. A weakening of construction intentions in the Western Provinces, combined with the stagnation prevailing in other areas contributed to the decline in the index.

The filtered index of non-residential construction dropped 4.6% to 76.1 in January after moving up at a slow but steady pace since April 1983.

The most recent indexes appear in the February 1984 issue of *Building Permits* (64-001, \$3.85/\$38.50).

LATEST MONTHLY STATISTICS

EMPLOYMENT, INCOME

Average Weekly Earnings (\$)	Feb.	399.29	400.20	
Labour Income (\$ million)	Feb.	18,447.3	18,446.6	7.8
Persons with Jobs (million)	Apr.	10.67	10.60	2.5
Unemployed	Apr.	1,468,000	1,541,000	-7.2

INVENTORIES

Department Store (\$ million)	Feb.	3,146.5	3,058.2	17.1
Manufacturers' Owned (\$ million)	Mar.*	31,985.4	31,692.5	3.5

ORDERS

Manufacturers' New Orders (\$ million)	Mar.*	19,788.2	17,785.2	17.2
Manufacturers' Unfilled Orders (\$ million)	Mar.*	21,364.2	21,017.6	32.4

PRICES

Consumer Price Index (1981=100)	Apr.*	121.5	121.2	4.9
New House Price Index (1981=100)	Mar.	95.3	95.1	0.7
Raw Materials Price Index (1977=100)	Mar.	218.2	215.8	4.8
Excl. coal, crude oil, nat. gas	Mar.	164.2	160.3	10.3
Industry Selling Price Index (1971=100)	Mar.	308.1	306.6	4.4

CONSTRUCTION

Building Permits (\$ million)	Feb.	828.4	1,506.1	-0.6
Housing Starts — Urban Centres (units)	Mar.	6,195	21,540	-8.6

ENERGY

Coal Production (thousand tonnes)	Feb.	4 624	9 169	27.0
Electricity Generation (terawatt hours)	Feb.	36.2	77.7	10.3
Natural Gas Production (million cubic metres)	Jan.	10 482	10 482	5.8
Petroleum Refining (million cubic metres)	Mar.	7.3	22.6	7.7

FOREIGN TRADE

Exports — Balance of Payments Basis (\$ million)	Mar.	9,320	26,111	26.5
Imports — Balance of Payments Basis (\$ million)	Mar.	8,239	22,151	33.8

PRODUCTION

Railway Carloadings (million tonnes)	Apr.	19.3	74.0	19.9
Steel (ingots — thousand tonnes)	Apr.	1 288	5 055	33.8

SALES

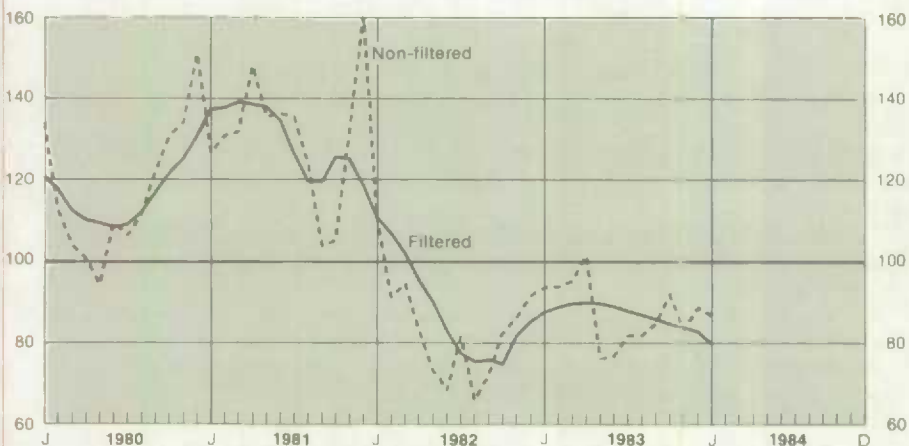
Department Store Sales (\$ million)	Mar.	806.7	2,115.4	5.0
Manufacturers' Shipments (\$ million)	Mar.*	19,441.6	53,978.6	19.0
New Motor Vehicle Sales (\$ million)	Mar.	1,528.3	3,572.5	48.9
Retail Sales (\$ million)	Feb.	7,767.2	15,393.4	12.6

Statistics are in current dollars and are not seasonally adjusted.

* - new this week.

Indexes of Construction Activity in Canada

1971=100



Source: Statistics Canada, Building Permits (64-001)

Canada

Industrial Firms: Finances

Preliminary data show that in the first quarter of 1984, seasonally adjusted pre-tax profits of Canadian industrial corporations rose 2.2% from the preceding quarter to a level of \$8.3 billion. This small quarterly increase confirms the deceleration in the rate of recovery of industrial corporations profits that was first indicated in the fourth quarter of 1983 when pre-tax profits rose 6.6%. By comparison, profits increases for the first three quarters of 1983 were 20.6%, 13.4% and 15.5%.

Although the recovery in corporation profits is slowing, seasonally adjusted pre-tax profits are at their highest level since the second quarter 1981 total of \$8.7 billion (although well short of the \$9.3 billion mark recorded in the first quarter of 1980).

The transportation equipment industry again provided the main impetus in the first quarter of 1984 with pre-tax profits jumping ahead 20.9% from the fourth quarter of 1983 to a level of \$931 million. Among the remaining industries, however, only 18 of the 43 reflected increases (compared to 21 in the previous quarter).

One of the reasons for the sluggish growth in industrial corporations profits is the operating margin, which relates operating income to sales. The operating margin held at 4.3% this quarter, the same as in the fourth quarter of 1983; this follows five consecutive quarters of increases in this ratio from a low of 1.9%. The interest coverage ratio, which measures the ability of corporations to meet interest charges out of currently generated profits, continued to improve marginally, rising to 3.23 times in the first quarter of 1984 from 3.17 times in the fourth quarter of 1983. This represents the seventh straight quarterly increase in this coverage ratio.

On a year-over-year basis, profits before taxes and extraordinary items climbed 44.1% to \$8.1 billion currently from \$5.7 billion in the first quarter of 1983. The profits advance was achieved on a 14.7% increase in sales.

For further information, contact Tom Maxwell or Bill Potter (613-995-9751), Business Finance Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.

A Data Bank with a TV Focus

A new data bank will permit study of television viewing on the basis of specific program characteristics. For example, researchers can look into children's programming and determine what children are really watching. They can determine which countries supply most of the programs children watch and whether there is a difference in the viewing habits of francophones and anglophones.

The data bank promises to be of special interest to the television industry, policy makers at all levels and those who want to know what people watch on television just as a matter of interest.

The project has been developed through a four-way partnership involving the Research Branch of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the Broadcasting and Content Services Policy Branch and the Cultural Affairs Sector of the Department of Communications (DOC) and the Culture Sub-division of Statistics Canada.

For further information, contact John Gordon (613-593-6862), Manager, Television Project, Culture Sub-division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.

Measures of Unemployment

The official unemployment rate has always been the single most widely used statistic among the multitude of labour market measures produced from the Labour Force Survey. However, the recent recession has given rise to a closer scrutiny of the strengths and limitations of this summary measure.

An article appearing in the April 1984 issue of *The Labour Force* (71-001, \$3.70/\$37) entitled "Supplementary Measures of Unemployment — An Update" illustrates what happens to the unemployment rate when different definitions of employment and unemployment are used.

For further information, contact Doreen Duchesne (613-995-9381), Labour Force Activity Section, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.

Restaurant/Caterers/Taverns

Preliminary estimates for March 1984 show restaurant, caterer and tavern establishments in Canada had sales totalling \$857.4 million, up 7.4% from March 1983.

Revised total receipts for February 1984 were \$763.5 million, an increase of 6.9% over February 1983.

For further information on provincial totals by kind of business and on chains versus independents, order the March 1984 issue of Restaurant, Caterer and Tavern Statistics (catalogue 63-011, \$1.60/\$16).

Telephone Systems

Canada's 13 major telephone systems reported revenues of \$747.8 million in March 1984, up 10.0% from a year earlier. Operating expenses increased 7.0% over the 12-month period to \$529.3 million. Net operating revenue at \$218.5 million showed a gain of 18.0% over March 1983.

For further information, order the March 1984 issue of Telephone Statistics (56-002, \$1.60/\$16).

Inventories/Shipments/Orders

Preliminary estimates show the seasonally adjusted value of new orders received in all Canadian manufacturing industries in March 1984 increased 5.3% to \$18,642.5 million from the revised February level of \$17,702.3 million. In durable goods industries, new orders climbed 7.3% to \$8,361.6 million from \$7,791.4 million with most of the increase attributable to gains of \$335.8 million in transportation equipment industries and \$189.0 million in metal fabricating industries. In non-durable goods industries, new orders received were valued at \$10,280.9 million, up 3.7% from the revised estimate of \$9,910.9 million for February.

The unfilled orders backlog of manufacturers at the end of March was \$21,068.5 million, seasonally adjusted, up 2.1% from the revised February total of \$20,637.8 million. Unfilled orders increased 1.9% in durable goods industries to \$18,890.2 million from \$18,542.9 million and in non-durable goods industries, the level was up 4.0% to \$2,178.3 million from \$2,094.9 million a month earlier.

Manufacturers' shipments in March totalled \$18,211.8 million, seasonally adjusted, up 2.4% from February's value of \$17,786.6 million. Shipments in durable goods industries rose 1.5% to \$8,014.2 million from \$7,892.1 million with an \$85.2 million increase in metal fabricating industries providing the major contribution. Shipments of non-durable goods industries were up 3.1% to \$10,197.5 million from \$9,894.5 million with increases of \$166.4 million in petroleum and coal products industries and \$66.0 million in chemical and chemical products industries accounting for most of the gain.

Inventory owned by manufacturers at the end of March was \$31,502.3 million, seasonally adjusted, up 0.5% from the previous month's revised value of \$31,354.6 million. Total inventory held increased 0.6% to \$32,695.4 million from \$32,500.4 million in February with increases of 0.2% in raw materials, 1.8% in goods in process and 0.2% in finished products.

The seasonally adjusted ratio of total inventory owned to shipments at the end of March was 1.73:1, down from 1.76:1 in February. The ratio of finished products inventory to shipments edged down to 0.63:1 in March from 0.64:1 in February.

Not adjusted for seasonal variation, manufacturers' shipments in March 1984 were estimated at \$19,441.6 million, 11.0% higher than the revised February value of \$17,510.3 million.

For further information, order the March 1984 issue of Inventories, Shipments and Orders in Manufacturing Industries (31-001, \$3.85/\$38.50). Certain preliminary series of shipments data by province in greater detail than normally published may be available on request. Contact J. Lepage (613-996-7008), Shipments, Inventories and Orders Section, Manufacturing and Primary Industries Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.

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Consumer Price Index

The Consumer Price Index stood at 121.5 (1981=100) in April, up 0.2% from the March level of 121.2. The marginal increase was spread throughout most major components with the exception of clothing, which recorded a slight decline. The food index advanced by 0.3% between March and April, down from the advance of 0.8% registered in March. The all-items-excluding-food index advanced 0.2%, virtually unchanged from the increase of 0.1% recorded between February and March.

The year-over-year increase in the CPI, as measured by comparing the index of April 1984 to that of April 1983, was 4.9%, up from the advance of 4.7% registered between March 1983 and March 1984. The slight acceleration in the latest year-over-year increase was principally attributable to the downward impact that gasoline price wars had on the April 1983 index, price wars which were not in effect to the same extent in April 1984.

The increase of 0.3% in the food index was largely attributable to higher fresh fruit prices, especially for bananas and grapefruit, and to a lesser extent, to increased prices for selected beef cuts, cooked meat products, and for restaurant meals.

The factors responsible for the 0.2% increase in the all-items-excluding-food index were diverse, spread throughout all of the components making up this index, with the exception of the clothing component, which recorded a marginal decline, reflecting seasonal specials.

Viewed in terms of goods and services, the price level for goods advanced 0.2% while that for services increased 0.3%. As a result, between April 1983 and April 1984, the price level for goods advanced by 5.6% while that for services increased by 4.0%.

For further information, order the April 1984 issue of *The Consumer Price Index* (62-011, \$2.75/\$27.50), or contact Sandra Shadlock or Suzanne Gratton (613-995-4078), Prices Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.

Lone-Parent Families

There were more husband-wife and lone-parent families reported in Canada's 1981 Census than at any time during the preceding 50-year period. However, since 1966, lone-parent families have increased at a faster rate than husband-wife families. *Canada's Lone-Parent Families* (99-933, Canada: \$5.50; other countries: \$6.60), a new publication from Statistics Canada, analyzes the recent growth in the number and percentage of lone-parent families.

In 1981, the largest concentrations of lone-parent families were to be found, as expected, in the most populous provinces: that is, in Ontario, Quebec, British Columbia and Alberta, in that order. It is also noteworthy that since the late 1960s these provinces have reported and continue to experience the highest divorce rates as compared, for example, with Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

An important aspect of the growing numbers of all lone-parent families is the considerable contribution being made by separated, divorced and never-married lone mothers who are more and more in the younger ages with dependent children in their formative years at home.

Lone-parent families and their members still constitute fairly small proportions of all of Canada's families and of their total family and child populations, as defined in the Canadian census. However, their continued, recently accelerated, and anticipated future increase in both numerical and percentage terms, is cause for concern.

Canada's Lone-Parent Families, part of the Census Content Series of non-technical publications featuring numerous charts and graphs, will be of interest to social workers, planners, and non-specialists interested in the numbers of lone-parent families. The study will be particularly useful to teachers of courses in social and family studies as a supplementary text.

Copies of *Canada's Lone-Parent Families* can be purchased by sending a cheque or money order payable to the Receiver General for Canada to Publication Sales and Services, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6, or visiting any one of the Bureau's Regional Reference Centres.



Women: Their Health

Statistics Canada has released a report that examines the state of women's health in Canada.

Copies of *Canadian Women: Profile of Their Health* (82-542E, Canada: \$6.65; other countries: \$7.95) are available from Publication Sales and Services or any of the Bureau's regional reference centres.

Further information is available from Doug Angus (613-995-7808), or Vicki Jasperse (613-593-7644).

International Travel

An international travel account deficit of \$1,361 million, up from the \$1,144 million deficit recorded in the first quarter of 1983, marked first quarter 1984. Canada earned \$460 million, up 19.2% from the 1983 period, while payments by Canadians travelling abroad increased by 19.0% to \$1,821 million.

Final estimates for 1983 show that Canada earned \$3,841 million from international travel, up 3.1% from 1982. During the same period, Canadians travelling abroad increased their payments by 20.7% to \$6,045 million, leaving the international-travel account with a deficit of \$2,204 million.

In the fourth quarter of 1983, Canada registered a deficit of \$646 million, up 88.9% from the fourth quarter 1982 deficit of \$342 million. Receipts from the United States totalled \$389 million, up 1.8% from 1982, while receipts from all other countries decreased by 2.6% to \$187 million. Payments by Canadians to the United States amounted to \$746 million, 29.1% above 1982, while payments to all other countries increased by 40.8% to \$476 million.

For further information, order the January-March issue of *Travel Between Canada and Other Countries* (66-001, \$7.95/\$31.80), or contact Paul L. Paradis (613-995-0847), International Travel Section, Statistics Canada, Ottawa K1A 0T6.



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The Dairy Review, March 1984	23-001	\$2.75/\$27.50	\$3.30/\$33
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Cheques Cashed, March 1984	61-001	\$1.60/\$16	\$1.90/\$19
Corporation Taxation Statistics, 1981	61-208	\$8.85	\$10.60
CONSTRUCTION			
Service Bulletin			
Construction Statistics, Vol. 7, No. 4, Construction Duration of Apartments by Size of Structure, 1983	64-003	(N/C)	(N/C)
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