

I·N·F·O·M·A·T

A W E E K L Y R E V I E W

STATISTICS STATISTIQUE
CANADA CANADAIEN
Friday, March 4, 1988

OVERVIEW

■ Pace of Economic Growth Maintained in Fourth Quarter

The national income and expenditure accounts show that real GDP rose 1.5% in the fourth quarter, continuing the pattern of strong growth displayed in the first three quarters of 1987.

■ Current Account Deficit Relatively Stable

In 1987, the current account registered a deficit of \$9.6 billion, slightly higher than the record level posted in 1986.

■ Growth of Monthly GDP Slows

Gross domestic product at factor cost increased 0.2% in December, continuing the upward trend noted for 11 months, but at a slower pace.

■ Non-residents Reduce Their Holdings of Canadian Stocks

Following declines in the previous two months, non-residents reduced their holdings of outstanding Canadian stocks by \$263 million in December. The net reduction in the fourth quarter was \$1.3 billion.

■ Wholesale Merchants Show Good Results For Second Consecutive Year

Following an increase of 11.5% in 1986, wholesale trade rose by 13.8% in 1987. In addition, the ratio of inventories to sales was down despite rising levels of inventories.

■ Industrial Product Price Index Resumes Upward Trend

The IPPI rose 0.8% in January, the largest monthly increase since January 1986.

■ This issue also includes an article on the Raw Materials Price Index and Employment, Earnings and Hours.

Pace of Economic Growth Maintained in Fourth Quarter

Gross Domestic Product grew 8.6% in 1987 to \$554 billion. In constant 1981 dollars, GDP rose 3.9% and the GDP implicit price index increased 4.6%. Economic activity began to pick up early in the year, following a period of no growth in the second half of 1986. The expansion continued at a strong pace through the entire year. In the fourth quarter, real GDP increased 1.5%, bringing the volume of economic activity to a level 5.7% above that in the fourth quarter of 1986.

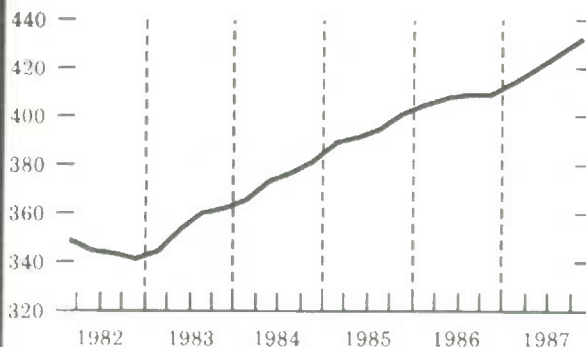
Final domestic demand and exports both recorded large volume increases in 1987. New housing construction and business outlays for capital equipment rose at a strong pace. Consumer spending also recorded a substantial advance. Government expenditure grew less rapidly than the other major components of demand.

The residential construction upswing, underway since 1983, continued in 1987 with a further real increase of 14.9%. New housing construction put-in-place rose 21.6% and spending on alterations and improvements to existing dwellings rose 11.0%. The housing boom continued through the third quarter and levelled off in the fourth.

(continued on page 2)

Gross Domestic Product

(billions of 1981 dollars)



Statistics
Canada

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Canada

... Pace of Economic Growth

Business investment in plant and equipment also rose substantially. Outlays on machinery and equipment surged ahead 14.8%, while a small increase of 1.6% was recorded in business non-residential construction investment. Demand for machinery and equipment was influenced by lower prices for these goods. The advance in non-residential construction outlays was partly a response to the rebound of natural resource prices in 1987 from the low levels of 1986.

Real personal expenditure advanced 4.5%. The increase reflected further gains in disposable income and a decrease in saving by the personal sector. Personal disposable income grew 6.5%, while the implicit price index for personal expenditure rose 4.3%. The personal saving rate declined to 9.3% in 1987, from 11.5% in 1986.

Within the goods component of consumption, spending rose most rapidly in the automotive products, furniture and appliances, and other durable goods categories. Within the services component, net travel abroad recorded a large increase. This represented a return to more normal international travel patterns by Canadians following Expo 86. The Canadian dollar appreciated 4.8% against the United States dollar, making it more attractive to vacation south of the border.

Total government expenditure rose more slowly than other major demand components (2.1% in terms of volume), reflecting budgetary restraint at all levels of government.

Viewed from an industry perspective, growth was strongest in wholesale and retail trade, construction, manufacturing and communication. Finance, insurance and real estate, forestry and utilities also recorded large increases. Output grew 4.5% in the business sector, which accounts for about four-fifths of the total economy. The increase in the non-business sector was 1.3%.

For 1987 as a whole, business non-farm inventories accumulated at a rate similar to 1986. However the

pattern within the year was quite different. In the first and third quarters, moderate accumulations occurred and, in the second quarter, inventories remained unchanged. In the fourth quarter, an exceptionally large build-up was observed.

There was a small reduction in stocks at the retail level, related to strong consumer demand. Inventories were built-up at the wholesale level, partly the result of a large inflow of imports toward the end of the year. Wholesale lumber stocks also accumulated in the fourth quarter as the construction boom levelled off and the demand for construction materials stabilized. Total stock levels also increased at the manufacturing level, as goods-in-process inventories grew in line with higher rates of production. The level of finished goods inventories in manufacturing industries contracted, reflecting strong demand throughout the year. Stock levels decreased in some primary industries, largely as a result of higher export sales of metals and lumber.

With continued moderate expansion in the OECD economies, real exports increased 5.6%. Exports of merchandise rose 6.4% in volume, following a 4.3% increase in 1986. Wheat, forest products, natural gas, and chemical product exports led the overall increase. Export sales to Japan and Europe increased very substantially, partly reflecting the steep depreciation of the Canadian dollar vis-a-vis the currencies of these countries over the past two years. Exports of services fell in 1987 due to lower tourist receipts and weak demand for business services.

Imports of goods recorded strong growth in 1987, 9.1% in real terms, in line with strong final demand. Particularly large increases occurred in the second half of 1987, reflecting higher purchases of machinery and equipment, motor vehicle products and crude petroleum. Imports of services were up sharply due to increased travel by Canadians abroad. Goods and services from the United States were more competitive in the Canadian market as a result of the appreciation of the Canadian dollar. The overall balance of payments deficit was \$9.6 billion in 1987, a level comparable to that of 1986.

For further information, contact Income and Expenditure Accounts at (613) 951-9155 or order National Income and Expenditure Accounts (catalogue number 13-001).

Current Account Deficit Relatively Stable

In 1987, the current account registered a deficit of \$9.6 billion, slightly higher than the record level posted in 1986. This was, however, much higher than in 1985 when the current account returned to a deficit after four years of surpluses. The current account measures the flow of goods, services, investment income and transfers between Canada and the rest of the world.

The merchandise trade surplus was virtually unchanged from its 1986 level, as imports and exports both expanded at the same rate during 1987. However, there were some notable changes within commodity groups, automotive products in particular. Trade in automotive products registered a deficit after five consecutive years of large surpluses.

(continued on page 3)

... Current Account Deficit Relatively Stable

Following a weak performance in 1986, merchandise exports grew 4.3% in 1987. Higher shipments were recorded for most commodity groups, except passenger cars which fell by 20% or \$3.5 billion. The largest increases in the value of exports were recorded for: forestry products where volumes and prices strengthened; crude petroleum and metal products where prices staged a partial recovery; and machinery and equipment, and trucks where demand for these products grew.

Merchandise imports rose 4.7% over 1986, a slackening from the strong advances of the previous four years. However, except for motor vehicle parts, higher imports were recorded in all principal commodity groups.

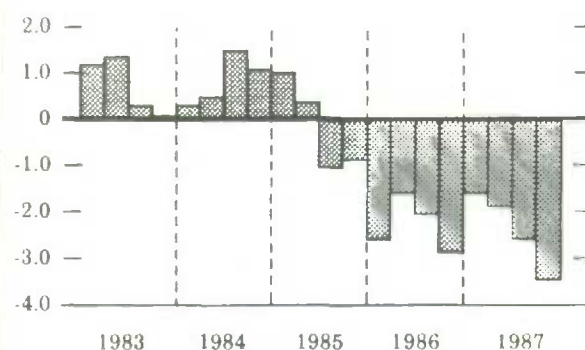
Among non-merchandise transactions, the deficit on travel more than doubled from an exceptionally low level in 1986 (attributable to Expo 86). The increase in the deficit was a result of lower payments by United States residents travelling in Canada and higher payments by Canadians travelling in the U.S. There was a higher surplus on unilateral transfers as immigrants' funds, especially from Hong Kong, increased significantly. Inheritances and immigrants' funds increased by \$1.4 billion, to \$3.4 billion.

Among capital transactions in 1987, foreign investment in Canadian bonds dropped by \$15 billion. New issues and outstanding bonds were both affected by the change in investors' interest. Sales of new bonds dropped to \$16 billion from \$25 billion in 1986. The net inflow from the secondary market fell by nearly \$5 billion, reflecting reduced investment by Japan.

Foreign direct investment in Canada more than doubled the previous high recorded in 1984. Half of the

Current Account Balance

(billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted)



total inflow (\$4.4 billion) was from United States residents, a direct contrast with their net disinvestments in the two previous years.

Portfolio transactions included a net inflow of \$7 billion for Canadian stocks. Foreign investment in Canadian stocks averaged \$2.5 billion in the first three quarters of the year. Concomitant to the sharp decline in stock prices in October, non-residents reduced their holdings by \$1.2 billion in the fourth quarter.

Canadian direct investment abroad increased, resulting in a net inflow of \$6 billion, a significant rise from 1986. Approximately 70% of these funds were channelled to the United States. Canadian portfolio investment abroad was down, dropping to \$1.9 billion. The mix of investment also changed during the year as net bond purchases increased sharply and net purchases of foreign stocks fell more than half.

For further information, contact International and Financial Economics Division at (613) 951-9050.

Growth of Monthly GDP Slows

Gross Domestic Product at factor cost (in 1981 prices) increased 0.2% in December following gains of 0.5% in October and 0.2% in November. The advance in December was the eleventh consecutive monthly increase, but the gains in the last two months were marginal. Output from the goods-producing and service-producing industries grew at about the same rate in December.

The growth in the goods-producing industries maintained the upward trend evident in 1987, but the 0.2% increase in December was small compared to advances in the two preceding months. The advance in

Real Gross Domestic Product

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
% change, previous month					
Real Gross Domestic Product	0.9	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2
Goods industries	1.5	0.5	0.6	0.9	0.2
Service industries	0.4	0.5	0.5	-0.2	0.3

December was primarily concentrated in manufacturing, although gains were recorded for agriculture and forestry.

(continued on page 4)

... Growth of Monthly GDP Slows

Rising for the fifth consecutive month, output from the manufacturing industries advanced 0.4%. Substantial production increases were recorded by manufacturers of primary metals, transportation equipment, chemicals, and paper and allied products. Primary metals industries have generally shown strong growth since August 1987. In the transportation equipment industries, production rose 1.1% in December, following a decrease in November and large gains from August to October. Output of chemical products was up 1.9%, marking a continuation of the fluctuations recorded since August.

The construction industry advanced slightly in December, mostly due to a 2.4% increase in non-residential building construction. Residential construction declined 1.5% in the month, mainly due to

decreases in construction of multiple dwelling units. A sharp cutback in crude petroleum and natural gas exploration activity produced a decline in mining output, the second in eight months.

The service-producing industries rallied to rise 0.3% in December, following a 0.2% decline in November. The finance, insurance and real estate industry was the major contributor to this gain. (It was also a major contributor to the decrease in November.) Retail trade rose 0.8% in December, its fifth consecutive monthly advance. The increase originated with motor vehicle dealers, general merchandise stores and food stores.

Air transportation recorded the most substantial decline in the service-producing industries due to a three-week labour dispute at Air Canada. Wholesale trade also fell in December for the second time in three months.

For further information, contact Industry Measures and Analysis Division at (613) 951-3673 or order Gross Domestic Product by Industry (catalogue number 15-001).

Non-residents Reduce Their Holdings of Canadian Stocks

Following declines in the previous two months, non-residents reduced their holdings of outstanding Canadian stocks by \$263 million in December. The net reduction in this three-month period was \$1.3 billion, a sharp contrast with the large net investments made in the first nine months of the year. For the whole of 1987, however, foreign acquisitions of outstanding Canadian stocks were a record \$4.4 billion. U.S. residents were the largest net investors, accounting for almost 60% of the total, followed by continental Europe and the United Kingdom.

Trade in outstanding Canadian bonds resulted in a net investment by non-residents of \$630 million in December. This investment was the second consecutive and may indicate a return to the levels observed in the opening months of 1987. The second and third quarters were characterized by smaller net investments or disinvestments, as the Japanese restricted their purchases of Canadian bonds. The total investment for 1987 was \$2.5 billion, down markedly from the inflow of \$7.4 billion in 1986. Japanese investment amounted to \$1.6 billion, with almost all of this occurring in the first two months of 1987.

Wholesale Merchants Show Good Results For Second Consecutive Year

Preliminary estimates indicate that wholesale merchants continued to enjoy strong sales growth in 1987. Their sales rose a further 13.8% in 1987, following an increase of 11.5% in 1986.

Security Transactions

	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Net sales	millions of dollars				
Canadian Securities					
Bonds	61	121	-250	547	630
Stocks	681	511	-379	-666	-263
Total	742	632	-628	-119	367
Foreign Securities					
Bonds	129	-26	-485	126	-159
Stocks	429	-197	-388	195	-363
Total	558	-223	-873	321	-522

Canadian residents acquired some \$500 million of outstanding foreign securities in December, a turnaround from the net disinvestment in November. Except for fairly large net investments from March to June, the pattern of investment by Canadians has shown wide swings in 1987.

For further information, contact International and Financial Economics Division at (613) 951-9052 or order Security Transactions with Non-residents (catalogue number 67-002).

All major trade groups registered increases in 1987, but the groups having the most significant impact on overall sales were electrical and non-electrical machinery, equipment and supplies; other wholesalers and wholesalers of food. In the first half of the year, wholesalers servicing the residential construction industry reported large sales increases which coincided with the housing boom in Central Canada.

(continued on page 5)

... Wholesale Merchants

Increases in wholesale trade were posted in all regions in 1987, ranging from 16.5% in the Prairie provinces to 10.4% in Quebec. In British Columbia, the Atlantic and Prairie provinces, sales by wholesale merchants rose at a substantially faster rate than they did in 1986. Although the increase in Ontario was strong (14.7%), it was somewhat lower than that recorded for 1986.

Throughout 1987, the reported inventory levels were higher than those for the corresponding months of 1986. However, the ratio of inventories to sales for the year was down to 1.44:1 from 1.57:1 a year earlier as the growth of sales outstripped the increase in inventory levels.

For further information, contact Industry Division at (613) 951-3541 or order Wholesale Trade (catalogue number 63-008).

Industrial Product Price Index Resumes Upward Trend

In January, the industrial product price index (IPPI, 1981=100), which measures the price movements of the commodities sold by Canadian industries, rose 0.8%.

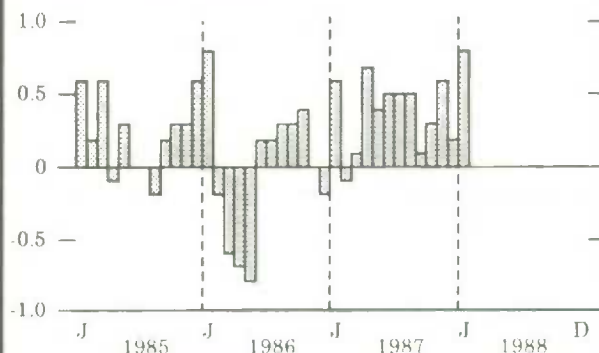
Preliminary estimates indicate that prices for petroleum and coal products rose 1.9% in January, following three consecutive declines. The advance was mainly the result of price increases for fuel oil.

Primary metal prices have advanced for 11 months. Copper and nickel prices continued to show strong increases and pushed the component up 1.3% over December.

The paper and paper products component rose 3.4%, reflecting marked price gains for pulp and newsprint. Overall, paper and paper product prices were almost 10% higher than in January 1986.

Industrial Product Price Index

(% change, previous month)



LATEST MONTHLY STATISTICS

			Previous Month	% Change From Year Ago
EMPLOYMENT, INCOME				
Average Weekly Earnings (\$)	Dec.	451.69	451.05	4.3
Labour Income (\$ million)	Nov.	24,618	24,907	6.9
Persons with Jobs (million)	Jan.	11.82	12.03	4.3
Unemployed (thousand)	Jan.	1,161	1,025	-13.5
INVENTORIES				
Department Store (\$ million)	Dec.	4,031	5,133	-5.0
Manufacturers' Owned (\$ million)	Dec.	34,374	34,278	4.4
ORDERS				
Manufacturers' New Orders (\$ million)	Dec.	21,644	23,039	9.2
Manufacturers' Unfilled Orders (\$ million)	Dec.	24,221	24,573	2.9
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1981=100)	Jan.	140.8	140.5	4.1
New House Price Index (1981=100)	Dec.	123.2	122.9	14.1
Raw Materials Price Index (1981=100)	Jan.*	101.7	104.5	5.0
Excl. minerals fuels	Jan.*	113.9	114.2	8.5
Industrial Product Price Index (1981=100)	Jan.*	126.4	125.4	5.0
CONSTRUCTION				
Building Permits (\$ million)	Oct.	2,390	25,755	23.8
Housing Starts - Urban Centres (units)	Dec.	14,089	215,814	26.3
ENERGY				
Coal Production (thousand tonnes)	Nov.	5,976	55,472	7.7
Electricity Generation (gigawatt hours)	Nov.	41,974	436,223	6.1
Natural Gas Production (million cubic metres)	Nov.	10,862	100,916	6.2
FOREIGN TRADE				
Exports - Balance of Payments Basis (\$ million)	Dec.	11,263	125,765	4.3
Imports - Balance of Payments Basis (\$ million)	Dec.	10,301	115,424	4.7
SALES				
Department Store Sales (\$ million)	Dec.	2,031	12,753	3.8
Manufacturers' Shipments (\$ million)	Dec.	21,996	261,700	4.7
New Motor Vehicle Sales (\$ million)	Dec.	1,718	24,037	10.0
Refined Petroleum Products (thousand cubic metres)	Jan.*	6,579	6,579	8.7
Retail Sales (\$ million)	Dec.	16,212	153,700	12.0

Statistics are in current dollars and are not seasonally adjusted.
* new this week.

Employment, Earnings and Hours

In December, the total number of employees at the Canada industrial aggregate level was estimated to be 9.9 million, up 2.1% from December 1986. Year-to-year increases have moderated somewhat in recent months as employment growth in the service-producing industries has slowed.

In December, the year-to-year change in employment in the service-producing industries was a marginal advance of 1.1%, but this was an improvement on the increase registered in November. The year-over-year growth rate in the goods-producing industries was 4.7%.

On a year-over-year basis, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Alberta recorded their largest increases of 1987, while British Columbia recorded its lowest rate.

Compared to December 1986, average weekly earnings were up 4.3%, to \$451.69. The year-to-year growth was 4.4% in the goods-producing industries, somewhat higher than the change registered in November. The service-producing industries increased 4.0%.

For further information, contact Labour Division at (613) 951-4090 or order *Employment, Earnings and Hours* (catalogue number 72-002).

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED FROM FEBRUARY 26 - MARCH 3

AGRICULTURE

Farm Product Price Index, December 1987. Catalogue number 62-003 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).

CENSUS

Profiles - Census Tracts, Kitchener: Part 1, 1986 Census. Catalogue number 95-121 (Canada: \$22; Other Countries: \$23).

Profiles - Census Tracts, Moncton: Part 1, 1986 Census. Catalogue number 95-127 (Canada: \$20; Other Countries: \$21).

Profiles - Census Tracts, St. John's: Part 1, 1986 Census. Catalogue number 95-149 (Canada: \$20; Other Countries: \$21).

Profiles - Census Tracts, Sherbrooke: Part 1, 1986 Census. Catalogue number 95-157 (Canada: \$20; Other Countries: \$21).

Profiles - Census Tracts, Trois-Rivières: Part 1, 1986 Census. Catalogue number 95-165 (Canada: \$20; Other Countries: \$21).

EDUCATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM

International Travel - Advance Information, 1986-87. Catalogue number 66-001P (Canada: \$5.50/\$55; Other Countries: \$6.50/\$65).

HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

Household Facilities by Income and Other Characteristics, 1987. Catalogue number 13-218 (Canada: \$35; Other Countries: \$37).

INDUSTRY

Cement, December 1987. Catalogue number 44-001 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Chemical and Chemical Products Industries, 1985. Catalogue number 46-250 (Canada: \$30; Other Countries: \$31.50).

Construction Type Plywood, December 1987. Catalogue number 35-001 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

The Crude Petroleum and Natural Gas Industry, 1986. Catalogue number 26-213 (Canada: \$24; Other Countries: \$25).

Electric Power Statistics, November 1987. Catalogue number 57-001 (Canada: \$9/\$90; Other Countries: \$10/\$100).

Gypsum Products, December 1987. Catalogue number 44-003 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Manufacturing Industries of Canada: National and Provincial Areas, 1985. Catalogue number 31-203 (Canada: \$55; Other Countries: \$65).

New Motor Vehicle Sales, October 1987. Catalogue number 63-007 (Canada: \$9/\$90; Other Countries: \$10/\$100).

Production and Inventories of Process Cheese and Instant Skim Milk Powder, December 1987. Catalogue number 32-024 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Production and Sales of Phonograph Records and Pre-recorded Tapes in Canada, November 1987. Catalogue number 47-004 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Production, Sales and Stocks of Major Appliances, December 1987. Catalogue number 43-010 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Restaurant, Caterer and Tavern Statistics, November 1987. Catalogue number 63-011 (Canada: \$5.50/\$55; Other Countries: \$6.50/\$65).

Shipments of Solid Fuel-burning Heating Products, Quarter Ended December 1987. Catalogue number 25-002 (Canada: \$4.25/\$17; Other Countries: \$5.25/\$21).

Steel Wire and Specified Wire Products, November 1987. Catalogue number 41-006 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Steel Wire and Specified Wire Products, December 1987. Catalogue number 41-006 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

Wholesale Trade Statistics, 1985. Catalogue number 63-226 (Canada: \$30; Other Countries: \$31).

INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS

Gross Domestic Product by Industry, November 1987. Catalogue number 15-001 (Canada: \$11.50/\$115; Other Countries: \$12.50/\$125).

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE

Financial Institutions: Financial Statistics, Third Quarter 1987. Catalogue number 61-006 (Canada: \$40/\$160; Other Countries: \$41.50/\$166).

INTERNATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ECONOMICS

Quarterly Estimates of the Canadian Balance of International Payments, Fourth Quarter 1987. Catalogue number 67-001P (Canada: \$9.25/\$37; Other Countries: \$10.25/\$41).

LABOUR

Unemployment Insurance Statistics, November 1987. Catalogue number 73-001 (Canada: \$13/\$130; Other Countries: \$14/\$140).

PRICES

Industry Price Indexes, December 1987. Catalogue number 62-011 (Canada: \$16.50/\$165; Other Countries: \$18.50/\$185).

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL STOCK

Housing Starts and Completions, November 1987. Catalogue number 64-002 (Canada: \$16.50/\$165; Other Countries: \$17.50/\$175).

Resources for Research and Development in Canada, 1985. Catalogue number 88-203 (Canada: \$30; Other Countries: \$31).

Science Statistics Service Bulletin, Vol. 12, No. 2, Industrial R&D and Key Technologies, 1986. Catalogue number 88-001 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).

SERVICES

Selected Service Industries in Canada, 1983-85. Catalogue number 63-231 (Canada: \$22; Other Countries: \$21).

TRANSPORTATION

Passenger Bus and Urban Transit Statistics, November 1987. Catalogue number 53-003 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).



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KEY RELEASE CALENDAR: March 1988*

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1	2	3	4 International Travel, January Building Permits, December
7 New Housing Price Index, January	8 Composite Leading Indicator, December Financial Activity in Canada, Fourth Quarter	9 Public and Private Investment, 1988 Department Store Sales, January	10 New Motor Vehicle Sales, January Help-wanted Index, February Labour Income, December	11 Labour Force, February
14	15 Housing Starts, January	16 International Trade, January	17 Capacity Utilization Rates, Fourth Quarter	18 Consumer Price Index, February Retail Trade, January
21 Department Store Sales and Stocks, January	22 Refined Petroleum Products, January	23 Wholesale Trade, January	24 Crude Oil and Natural Gas, December	25 Foreign Trade in Automotive Products, Fourth Quarter
28 Employment, Earnings and Hours, January	29 Security Transactions, January Gross Domestic Product, January	30 Unemployment Insurance Statistics, January	31 Industrial Product Price Index, February Raw Materials Price Index, February	

* Release dates for International Trade, the Consumer Price Index and the Labour Force Survey are fixed; dates for other data series may vary slightly.

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