

# I·N·F·O·M·A·T

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

Friday, June 24, 1988

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### OVERVIEW

#### ■ GDP Growth Moderates

Real gross domestic product grew 0.8% in the first quarter of 1988, moderating somewhat from the 1.5% average quarterly advance reported for 1987. The GDP implicit price index rose 0.8% in the quarter, easing from the 1.2% recorded in the previous quarter.

#### ■ Reduction in Current Account Deficit

First quarter 1988 estimates showed a reduction in the current account deficit to \$1.5 billion from the \$3.4 billion recorded in the previous quarter. The first quarter deficit was the lowest since the end of 1985.

#### ■ Accelerated Growth in the Composite Leading Indicator

In March, the composite leading indicator advanced 0.6%, its largest monthly increase since September 1987. The March increase reflected higher orders for durable goods and a slowing in the rate of decrease of the stock exchange index.

#### ■ CPI Up 0.6%

In May, the consumer price index rose 0.6% from April. The 4.1% year-over-year increase was consistent with the yearly increases observed since January.

#### ■ Slight Decline in Value of Building Permits

The value of building permits declined a marginal 1% in February after a sharp gain in January. Large gains in the non-residential sector were more than offset by declines in residential permits.

#### ■ Manufacturing Shipments Level Off

The marginal 0.2% increase in April coupled with the increase in March have offset most of the decline in manufacturing shipments recorded for February. This levelling off in the growth of shipments observed since November contrasts with the strong growth recorded during the preceding eight months.

### GDP Growth Moderates

Gross domestic product in constant 1981 prices grew 0.8% in the first quarter 1988, moderating somewhat from the 1.5% average quarterly advance reported for 1987. Business, government and export demand all expanded substantially in the quarter, while consumer outlays increased slightly. The GDP implicit price index rose 0.8% in the quarter, easing from the 1.2% recorded in the previous quarter.

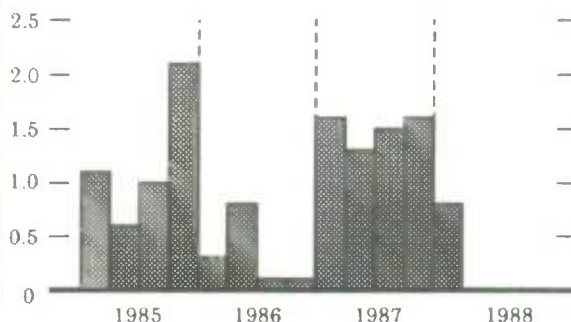
The largest contribution to growth in the first quarter came from trade in goods and services, up an amount equivalent to 0.6% of GDP. The volume of exports of goods and services grew 3.3%, outpacing import growth of 1.5%. Exports have recorded three quarters of strong growth averaging over 3% a quarter. The rise in import values was the smallest in five quarters. Higher travel receipts from non-residents, mainly attributable to the Calgary Winter Olympics, boosted exports of services in the quarter.

Consistent with the Private and Public Investment Intentions Survey for 1988, business investment in plant and equipment rose for the sixth consecutive

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### Real GDP Growth

(% change from previous quarter)


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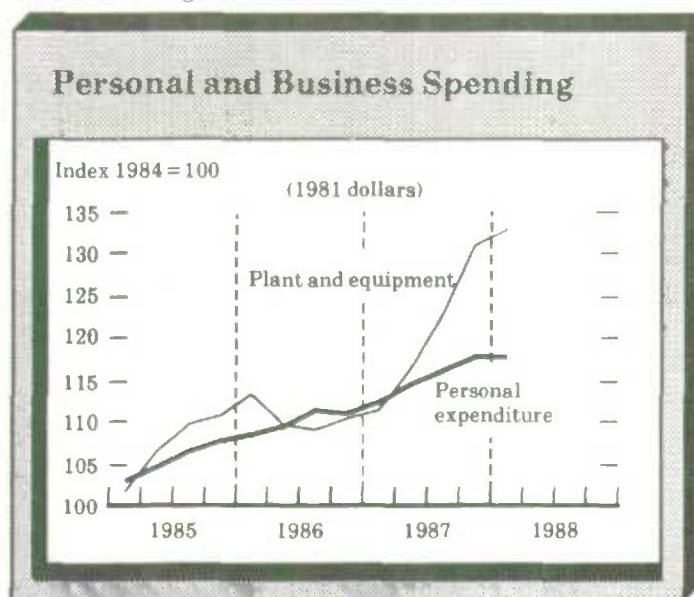
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### ... GDP Growth Moderates

quarter, increasing 1.5% in real terms. This brought the first quarter to a level 19.2% above that of a year earlier. Government current expenditure on goods and services rose 1.7%, its largest quarterly increase in three years. The first quarter increase was largely due to higher outlays for military equipment.

Consumer spending increased a modest 0.1% in the quarter, following increases averaging 1.5% throughout 1987. Spending on durable and semi-durable goods declined while increases were recorded for non-durable goods and services. The growth rate for services was the smallest in three years. Residential construction, after a slight decline in the fourth quarter, levelled off in the first quarter. This follows increases averaging 5% for the first three quarters of 1987. There was a slightly higher rate of non-farm inventory accumulation during the first three months of 1988, centered in the manufacturing and trade industries.



Labour income, representing over 50% of gross domestic product, grew by 1.9% in the first quarter, consistent with the strong employment gains in the quarter. Paid worker employment as measured by the Labour Force Survey was up 1.1% in the quarter. The 7.6% year-over-year increase in labour income noted for the first quarter was virtually the same as the average quarterly gain over the past year.

Corporation profits fell 2% from the previous quarter with much of the drop the result of lower inventory profits. Lower crude oil prices and the appreciation of the Canadian dollar had adverse effects on the profits of some industries. Despite the first quarter decline, profits remained 16.2% higher than a year earlier.

The personal savings rate fell to 7.5% in the first quarter from 8.3% in the fourth quarter, despite the slowing in consumer expenditure. The decrease in the savings rate can be attributed in large measure to a drop in personal disposable income resulting from a change in the timing of income tax collections, particularly involving accelerated remittances of employer source deductions.

The overall rate of inflation, measured by the implicit price index for GDP, was 0.8% in the first quarter. This was a considerable moderation from the 1.2% rate in the fourth quarter. The appreciation of the Canadian dollar vis-a-vis the U.S. dollar was associated with a 1.5% drop in the implicit price index for imports. A 1.5% drop in the implicit price index for exports helped moderate the overall increase in the GDP implicit price index.

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

### Reduction in Current Account Deficit

First quarter 1988 estimates showed a reduction in Canada's seasonally adjusted current account deficit to \$1.5 billion from the \$3.4 billion recorded in the previous quarter. The lower deficit was largely the result of higher dividend receipts from foreign countries, although a moderate increase in the merchandise trade surplus and higher travel receipts also contributed. The first quarter deficit was the lowest since the end of 1985.

The current account represents transactions with the rest of the world in goods, services, investment income and transfers. Dividend receipts in the first quarter 1988 reached a record \$2.1 billion. This increase was partly linked to Canadian acquisitions of foreign

companies abroad. A moderate increase in Canada's merchandise trade surplus to \$2.4 billion was the result of a small increase in exports coupled with no change in imports. Higher exports of motor vehicles and wheat were accompanied by lower sales abroad of metals, lumber, auto parts and a range of machinery and equipment. Higher imports of machinery and equipment and of auto parts were offset by lower imports of motor vehicles and energy products. Higher travel receipts, attributable to the Calgary Winter Olympics, resulted in a smaller travel deficit in the first quarter.

Canada's capital account represents transactions in claims on and liabilities to non-residents. Non-residents invested a net \$7.5 billion in Canadian bonds and money market securities during the first quarter. Increases

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### ... Reduction in Current Account Deficit

were widespread among foreign countries, with the notable exception of Japan, where trading in Canadian bonds was heavy but overall holdings remained unchanged.

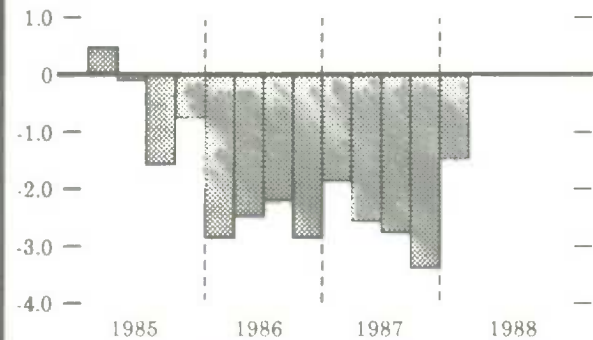
The net inflow from foreign direct investment in Canada doubled during the first quarter to a record \$2.4 billion, largely resulting from several large foreign takeovers of Canadian corporations. Non-residents reduced their holdings of Canadian stocks by \$0.7 billion during the January to March period for a cumulative net disinvestment of almost \$2 billion since the October stock market decline.

Canada's holdings of international reserves increased by \$5.5 billion in the first quarter 1988 to a level 50% higher than at the end of December 1987. For the second consecutive quarter, Canadian direct investment abroad increased by \$2.1 billion, 60% of which went towards acquiring new interests abroad.

*For further information, order the Quarterly Estimates of the Canadian Balance of International Payments (catalogue number 67-001) or contact International and Financial Economics Division at (613) 951-9050.*

### Current Account Balance

(billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted)



### Accelerated Growth in the Composite Leading Indicator

The smoothed version of the Canadian Composite Leading Indicator (1971=100) posted an advance of 0.6% in March, its largest monthly increase since September 1987. As seen in the accompanying chart, monthly increases during the last year have ranged from 0.3% to 0.8%. In March, the rate of decrease in the stock exchange index continued to slow, while new orders for durable goods jumped by 3.1%. Eight of the ten components used in constructing the Leading Indicator were up in March.

Most of the March surge in new orders for durable goods was attributable to transportation equipment, as business investment is expected to continue its expansion in 1988. Shipments were also up, led by increases in consumer goods industries. This rise, combined with a slight increase in inventories, left the ratio of shipments to finished goods inventories unchanged at a high level (1.81). The length of the average work week declined slightly.

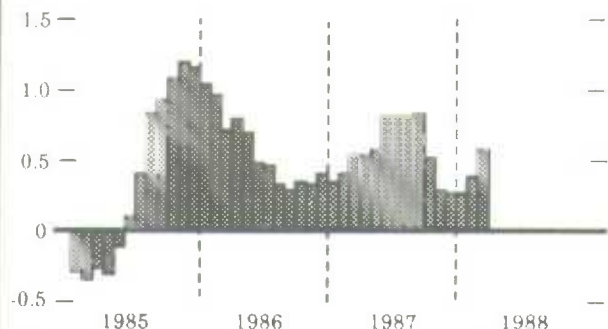
The United States leading indicator was unchanged in March, after three consecutive monthly declines. It has been weaker than the Canadian index since May 1987. The unsmoothed version increased slightly in March after a 1.2% jump in February. Household

demand indicators continued to increase in March as consumer confidence rebounded. Personal expenditure was up 1.1% in the first quarter, after a 0.6% dip in the fourth.

*For more information, order the Canadian Economic Observer (catalogue number 11-010) or contact the International and Financial Economics Division (613-951-3627).*

### Composite Leading Indicator

(% change, previous month)

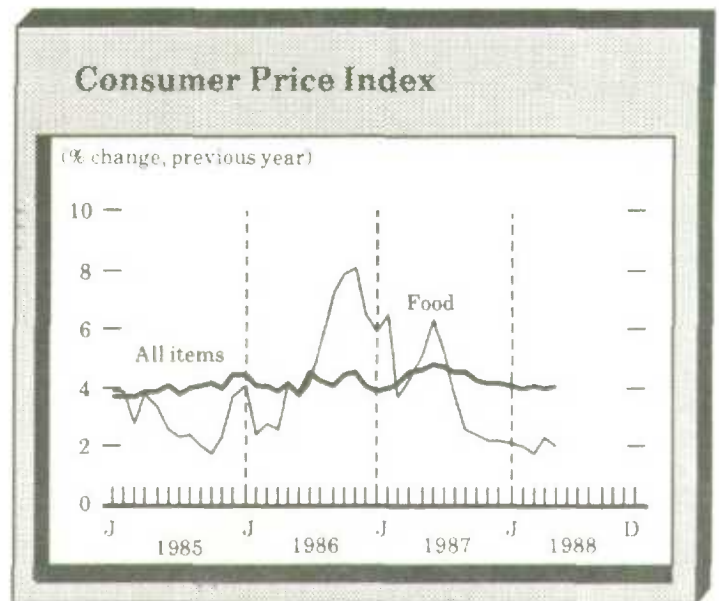


## CPI up 0.6%

The consumer price index rose 0.6% in May to a level of 143.4 (1981=100). This increase was led by a 5.3% advance in the tobacco products index and a 0.5% increase in the housing index. The Ontario sales tax increase, effective May 1, contributed to the May increase. The 4.1% year-over-year increase in the CPI between May 1987 and May 1988 was consistent with the yearly increases observed since January.

The 5.3% price increase in tobacco products was mainly the result of provincial tax increases in Ontario, Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan. Higher manufacturers' prices also had some impact. The 0.5% rise in the housing index reflected higher charges for owned, rented and traveller accommodation. Increased insurance premiums, mortgage interest costs and new house prices were largely responsible for the 0.3% advance in the owned accommodation component. Seasonal price increases caused the rise in the traveller accommodation index.

The food index advanced 0.6% in May, following the 0.5% increase reported in April. Higher prices for fresh fruits (5.3%), fresh vegetables (5.1%) and dairy products (1.6%) led the advance. Part of the increase in food prices was due to seasonal effects. In May, prices for food purchased from stores were up 1.3% from a year earlier compared to a 4.1% increase in prices for food purchased



from restaurants. The aggregate food index, on a year-over-year basis, rose 2.0%, down from the 2.3% reported for the 12-month period ending in April.

Increases in fees and dues associated with recreational activities and higher prices for recreational equipment resulted in a 1.7% increase in the recreation index. Within the transportation index, an 8.2% decline in air fares resulting from proportionately more passengers travelling at "seat sale" prices was partly offset by higher prices for gasoline, the result of tax changes by the Ontario government.

In seasonally adjusted terms, the all-items index rose 0.4%, up slightly from the 0.3% rise observed in April. The compound annual rate of increase based on seasonally adjusted index levels over the last three-month period, February to May, was 4.9%, an acceleration from the 4.0% reported for the three-month period ending in April.

### Consumer Price Index

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May
	% change, previous month				
All-items	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.6
Food	1.1	-0.1	-0.3	0.5	0.6
All-items, excl. food	0.1	0.5	0.7	0.3	0.6

For further information, order the Consumer Price Index (catalogue number 62-001) or contact Prices Division at (613) 951-9606.

## Slight Decline in Value of Building Permits

The value of building permits issued in Canada totalled an estimated \$2.7 billion in February, down 1% from January. This followed a sharp increase in January after a year of little growth. The small decrease in February was the result of large decreases in the residential sector offsetting gains in the non-residential sector.

The value of residential sector permits declined 12.3% in February to \$1.4 billion with declines in both the multi-family dwelling sector (14.2%) and the single-family dwelling sector (11.1%). Values of residential permits have been following a declining trend since

### Building Permits

	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
	% change, previous month				
Residential	-6.0	-6.5	1.4	10.0	-12.3
Non-residential	-2.5	7.4	-2.0	16.8	13.5
Total	-4.7	-1.0	-0.1	12.9	-1.0

March 1987, leaving values almost at the level of December 1986. The number of housing units authorized totalled 214,800 at annual rates in February, a

(continued on page 5)



### ... Building Permits

a decrease of 9.6% from January. All regions in Canada registered decreases in the number of dwellings authorized in February.

In the non-residential sector, the estimated value of building permits jumped 13.5% in February to \$1.4 billion, a slightly lower increase than that noticed in January. Values of non-residential permits have been steadily increasing since mid-1987 after a year that had yielded very little growth. The February increase was attributable to large gains in the Prairies. All other regions recorded declines in non-residential permits. The estimated value of permits in the industrial component of the non-residential sector was more than triple that of January with most of this value originating from the Prairie region. The commercial component decreased 18% to \$629 million while the institutional component dropped sharply by 39.6% to \$149 million. These two declines partly offset the gain in the industrial component referred to above.

### Building Permits

(billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted)



For further information, order *Building Permits* (catalogue number 64-001) or contact the Science, Technology and Capital Stock Division (613-951-2583).

### Manufacturing Shipments Level Off

The value of manufacturing shipments rose a marginal 0.2% in April, following a gain of 0.9% in March. These increases have offset most of the 1.6% decline in shipments recorded in February. This levelling off in the growth of shipments, observed since November, contrasts with the strong growth recorded during the preceding eight months.

New orders returned to more normal levels, with an 8.6% decrease in April, after a large increase of 10.3% in March 1988, due to an exceptionally large increase for shipbuilding.

Inventories increased 1.7% to \$36.9 billion in April. Increases averaging 0.6% a month over the last seven months have pushed inventories to a new high. The inventory to shipments ratio was up to 1.56:1 in April from 1.54:1 in March, reflecting the higher growth rate for inventories relative to shipments.

The unfilled orders backlog increased 0.6% in April 1988 to \$26.6 billion, following a large 10.2% increase in March, which was due to the exceptionally large increase for shipbuilding.

For further information, order *Inventories, Shipments and Orders in Manufacturing Industries* (catalogue number 31-001) or contact Industry Division at (613) 951-9497.

### Manufacturers' Shipments

(billions of dollars)



## PUBLICATIONS RELEASED FROM JUNE 17 - 23

### AGRICULTURE

**Grain Trade of Canada, 1986-1987.** Catalogue number 22-201 (Canada: \$35; Other Countries: \$36).

### DEMOGRAPHY

**Current Demographic Analysis: Income of Immigrants in Canada.** Catalogue number 91-527E (Canada: \$20; Other Countries: \$21)

**Postcensal Annual Estimates of Population by Marital Status, Age, Sex and Components of Growth for Canada, Provinces and Territories, June 1, 1987.** Catalogue number 91-210 (Canada: \$27; Other Countries: \$28).

### EDUCATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM

**Education Statistics Bulletin, Vol. 10, No. 5, Full-time Enrolment in Trade and Vocational Programs in Canada, 1983-1984 to 1985-1986.** Catalogue number 81-002 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

**Touriscope, International Travel, Advance Information, Vol. 4, No. 4.** Catalogue number 66-001P (Canada: \$5.50/\$55; Other Countries: \$6.50/\$65).

### HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS

**The Labour Force, May 1988.** Catalogue number 71-001 (Canada: \$22/\$220; Other Countries: \$24/\$240).

### INDUSTRY

**Chemical and Chemical Products Industries, Adhesives Industry, 1986 Census of Manufactures.** Catalogue number 46-250B 3792 (Canada: \$4; Other Countries: \$5).

**Construction Type Plywood, March 1988.** Catalogue number 35-001 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55)

**Footwear Statistics, April 1988.** Catalogue number 33-002 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

**Gypsum Products, April 1988.** Catalogue number 44-003 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

**Monthly Production of Soft Drinks, May 1988.** Catalogue number 32-001 (Canada: \$2.50/\$25; Other Countries: \$3.50/\$35).

**Oil Pipe Line Transport, March 1988.** Catalogue number 55-001 (Canada: \$9/\$90; Other Countries: \$10/\$100).

**Other Manufacturing Industries, Musical Instrument and Sound Recording Industry, 1986 Census of Manufactures.** Catalogue number 47-250B 3994 (Canada: \$4; Other Countries: \$5).

**Printing, Publishing and Allied Industries, Business Forms Printing Industry, 1986 Census of Manufactures.** Catalogue number 36-251B 2811 (Canada: \$4; Other Countries: \$5).

**Printing, Publishing and Allied Industries, Other Combined Publishing and Printing Industries, 1986 Census of Manufactures.** Catalogue number 36-251B 2849 (Canada: \$4; Other Countries: \$5).

**Production and Disposition of Tobacco Products, May 1988.** Catalogue number 32-022 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

**Production and Shipments of Blow-moulded Plastic Bottles, Quarter Ended March 31, 1988.** Catalogue number 47-006 (Canada: \$6.25/\$25; Other Countries: \$7.25/\$29).

**Production and Shipments of Steel Pipe and Tubing, April 1988.** Catalogue number 41-011 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

### INDUSTRY - Concluded

**Production and Stocks of Tea, Coffee and Cocoa, Quarter ended March 1988.** Catalogue number 32-025 (Canada: \$6.25/\$25; Other Countries: \$7.25/\$29).

**Production, Shipments and Stocks on Hand of Sawmills in British Columbia, March 1988.** Catalogue number 35-003 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).

**Pulpwood and Wood Residue Statistics, April 1988.** Catalogue number 25-001 (Canada: \$5.50/\$55; Other Countries: \$6.50/\$65).

**Quarterly Shipments of Office Furniture Products, Quarter ended March 31, 1988.** Catalogue number 35-006 (Canada: \$6.25/\$25; Other Countries: \$7.25/\$29).

**Rubber and Plastic Products Industries, Plastic Bag Industry, 1986 Census of Manufactures.** Catalogue number 33-250B 1691 (Canada: \$4; Other Countries: \$5).

**Service Bulletin, Fruit and Vegetable Preservation, Vol. 16, No. 15, Pack of Processed Carrots, 1987.** Catalogue number 32-023 (Canada: \$7/\$115; Other Countries: \$8/\$125).

**Shipments of Plastic Film and Bags Manufactured from Resin, Quarter Ended March 31, 1988.** Catalogue number 47-007 (Canada: \$6.25/\$25; Other Countries: \$7.25/\$29).

**The Sugar Situation, May 1988.** Catalogue number 32-013 (Canada: \$4.50/\$45; Other Countries: \$5.50/\$55).

### INTERNATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ECONOMICS

**Canadian Economic Observer, June 1988.** Catalogue number 11-010 (Canada: \$20/\$200; Other Countries: \$22.50/\$225).

### LABOUR AND HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS ANALYSIS

**Labour Market Activity Survey - Profiles - Canada's Women: A Profile of their 1986 Labour Market Experience.** Catalogue number 71-205 (Canada: \$10; Other Countries: \$11).

**Labour Market Activity Survey - Profiles - Canada's Men: A Profile of Their 1986 Labour Market Experience.** Catalogue number 71-206 (Canada: \$10; Other Countries: \$11).

### SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND CAPITAL STOCK

**Building Permits, 1987.** Catalogue number 64-203 (Canada: \$50; Other Countries: \$51).

**Science Statistics Service Bulletin, Vol. 12, No. 5, Industrial Research and Development Expenditures, 1979 to 1988.** Catalogue number 88-001 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).

**Science Statistics Service Bulletin, Vol. 12, No. 6, Total Spending on Research and Development in Canada.** Catalogue number 88-001 (Canada: \$6.50/\$65; Other Countries: \$7.50/\$75).

### PRICES

**Consumer Prices and Price Indexes, October-December 1987.** Catalogue number 62-010 (Canada: \$16.50/\$66; Other Countries: \$18.50/\$74).

**Farm Input Price Index, First Quarter 1988.** Catalogue number 62-004 (Canada: \$11.25/\$45; Other Countries: \$12.25/\$49).

### TRANSPORT

**Aviation Statistics Centre Service Bulletin, Vol. 20, No. 6.** Catalogue number 51-004 (Canada: \$8.50/\$85; Other Countries: \$9.50/\$95).



## LATEST MONTHLY STATISTICS

			Previous Month	% Change From Year Ago
<b>EMPLOYMENT, INCOME</b>				
Average Weekly Earnings (\$)	Mar.	459.40	455.73	5.2
Labour Income (\$ million)	Feb.	24,221	24,217	6.6
Persons with Jobs (million)	May	12.48	12.08	3.8
Unemployed (thousand)	May	1,035	1,085	-12.1
<b>INVENTORIES</b>				
Department Store (\$ million)	Mar.	4,549	4,172	0.1
Manufacturers' Owned (\$ million)	Apr.*	37,402	36 805	4.7
<b>ORDERS</b>				
Manufacturers' New Orders (\$ million)	Apr.*	23,791	28,017	6.7
Manufacturers' Unfilled Orders (\$ million)	Apr.*	26,746	26,508	17.4
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1981 = 100)	May*	143.4	142.5	4.1
New House Price Index (1981 = 100)	Apr.	128.3	126.0	8.7
Raw Materials Price Index (1981 = 100)	Apr.	97.9	98.3	-1.2
Excl. minerals fuels	Apr.	114.1	113.0	7.8
Industrial Product Price Index (1981 = 100)	Apr.	126.3	125.9	4.2
<b>CONSTRUCTION</b>				
			<b>Year-to-date</b>	
Building Permits (\$ million)	Feb.*	1,915	3,335	23.3
Housing Starts - Urban Centres (units)	Apr.*	17,834	50,277	-13.0
<b>ENERGY</b>				
Coal Production (thousand tonnes)	Mar.	6,275	18,216	15.9
Electricity Generation (gigawatt hours)	Mar.	45,590	140,479	4.4
Natural Gas Production (million cubic metres)	Mar.*	11,184	35,009	15.8
<b>FOREIGN TRADE</b>				
Exports - Customs Basis (\$ million)	Apr.	11,003	44,544	11.5
Imports - Customs Basis (\$ million)	Apr.	10,312	44,973	21
<b>SALES</b>				
Department Store Sales (\$ million)	Mar.	937	2,376	0.1
Manufacturers' Shipments (\$ million)	Apr.*	23,553	93,504	9.3
New Motor Vehicle Sales (\$ million)	Apr.	2,695	8,383	7.7
Refined Petroleum Products (thousand cubic metres)	Apr.	5,960	26,036	37.8
Retail Sales (\$ million)	Mar.	13,184	35,277	11.2

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

## I.N.F.O.M.A.T

### A Weekly Review

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