

I·N·F·O·M·A·T

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

Friday, May 26, 1989

OVERVIEW

■ Moderate Rise in the Consumer Price Index

In April, the consumer price index experienced its smallest rise in recent months (0.3%).

■ Retail Sales Post Slight Decline

Retail sales in March decreased slightly for the third consecutive month.

■ Non-residential Construction Prices Growing Steadily

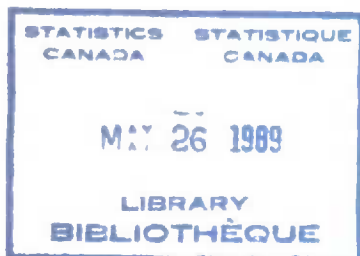
Prices for commercial, industrial, and institutional construction rose 1.9% in the first quarter.

■ Homicide Statistics

Despite an increase in 1987, the homicide rate in Canada has generally declined over the last 14 years.

■ Sales of Natural Gas Rise Sharply

Sales of natural gas in March were up sharply from the previous year's levels.



Moderate Rise in the Consumer Price Index

The consumer price index (1981=100) was up 0.3% in April, the smallest rise in recent months. Six of the seven major component indexes registered moderate increases with the greatest upward pressure coming from housing, food and transportation. The CPI was 4.6% higher than in April 1988. This rate remains unchanged in three months.

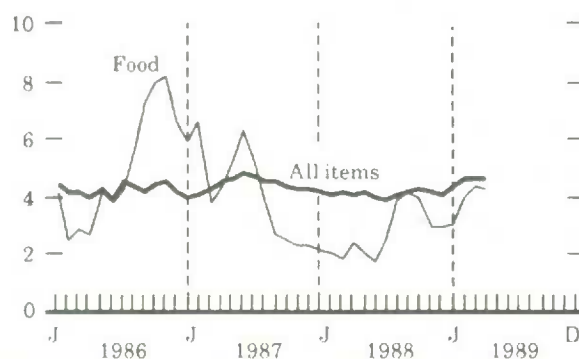
The housing component increased 0.5% largely as a result of higher mortgage costs. Climbing new house prices, maintenance and repair charges and rents also contributed to the April advance.

This component continues to follow the upward movement of the last six months.

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Consumer Price Index

(% change, previous year)



... Moderate Rise in the Consumer Price Index

Higher prices for fresh fruit, vegetables and beef pushed the food index up 0.4%. Price declines in soft drinks, cured meats and breakfast cereal moderated the overall rise in this component, which has risen for four consecutive months.

The transportation component increased 0.4% as gasoline "price wars" ended. Lower air fares helped to counter the overall rise in this component.

The only component to register a decline was clothing (-0.4%) which dropped largely as a result of heavy promotional activities, especially in men's wear.

Consumer Price Index

	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
	% change, previous month				
All items	0.0	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.3
Food	-0.3	1.2	0.8	0.1	0.4
All items, excl. food	0.1	1.2	0.7	0.5	0.3

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

Retail Sales Post Slight Decline

Preliminary estimates for March indicate that retail sales decreased for the third consecutive month. Sales fell 0.6% to \$14.0 billion.

The decline was attributable to decreases reported by motor vehicle dealers (-1.7%) and merchandise stores (-7.0%). The fall was partly offset by small gains in combination stores, service stations, and drug stores.

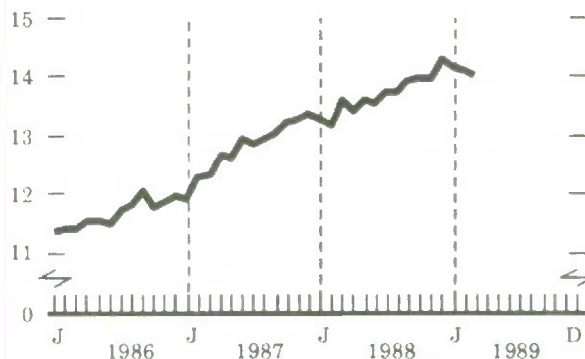
Department store sales advanced slightly in February (0.3%) and March (0.2%); however, the increases did not fully compensate for a sharp 1.9% decline in January. The rate of growth of sales on a year-to-date basis are lagging behind results for 1988 by almost two percentage points.

Retail Trade

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
	% change, previous month				
Combination stores	-1.9	2.3	0.9	-0.9	0.5
Department stores	-0.5	1.5	-2.4	0.3	0.2
Motor vehicle dealers	2.3	5.5	-5.6	0.1	-1.7
All stores	0.0	2.3	-1.0	-0.2	-0.6

Retail Trade

(billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted)



A lack of retail sales growth has characterized 1989, in contrast to considerable advances during the last half of 1988.

For further information, order *Retail Trade for March* (catalogue number 63-005) or contact Industry Division at (613) 951-3552.

Non-Residential Construction Prices Growing Slowly

Prices for commercial, industrial, and institutional construction rose 1.9% in the first quarter. This rise was consistent with those registered in the previous four quarters. The index was up 7.9% from one year ago to 133.7.

In the West, price increases in Calgary (3.4%) and Edmonton (9.0%) were significant. Both cities are in the process of catching up from the effects of the 1982/83 slump. Calgary has registered sizeable advances in each of the last two quarters, while the increase in Edmonton represented the first significant rise in five years. Vancouver construction prices continued to grow, rising 8.2% from a year ago.

Non-Residential Construction

	89 Q1	88 Q1	% change
Halifax	127.5	124.3	2.3
Montreal	141.8	135.5	4.6
Ottawa	144.9	133.0	8.9
Toronto	162.2	149.0	8.9
Calgary	105.8	96.4	9.8
Edmonton	105.7	95.8	10.3
Vancouver	122.6	113.3	8.2
Canada	133.7	123.9	7.9

Prices in Toronto rose 1.9% in the first quarter reflecting the continuing high level of activity in the Toronto market. This advance was comparable to those

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... Non-Residential Construction Prices Growing Slowly

posted in the previous six quarters. Although the Ottawa market was not as busy, the 2.0% advance in non-residential construction prices was in line with the quarterly increases in 1988.

On the East coast, Halifax posted a marginal year-over-year increase of 2.6%.

Construction prices in Montreal rose moderately (4.6%).

For further information, order *Construction Price Statistics* (catalogue number 62-007) or contact *Prices Division* at (613) 951-9607.

Homicide Statistics

The homicide rate in Canada has generally declined over the past 14 years. Falling from a high of 3.1 per 100,000 population in 1975 and 1977, it reached a low of 2.2 in 1986 before rising slightly in 1987.

Homicides involving family members accounted for approximately 40% of solved homicide offenses in Canada between 1974 and 1987. The annual number of family-related homicides was 212 over this 14-year period.

- Men who killed their wives or common-law partners represent the single largest group of offenders (37%) in family-related homicide offences.
- Native people are vastly over-represented in family-related homicides, and in other types of homicide offences, relative to their representation in the Canadian population.

- One-half of all solved homicide offences involving Native victims occurred among family members. In the case of Caucasian and other races, this figure drops to 37% and 36% respectively.
- Men who killed their spouse or children were more likely than any other category of suspect in domestic homicides to commit suicide immediately following the incident.
- The percentage of domestic homicide offences involving alcohol consumption showed a marked overall decline between 1975 and 1987, from one-half (47%) to one-fifth (21%) of all cases.
- The most frequent method of killing in family-related homicides was shooting: 37% of victims died of gunshot wounds.

For further information, order the *Juristat Bulletin Homicide in the Family* (catalogue number 85-002) or contact *The Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics* at (613) 951-0152.

Sales of Natural Gas Rise Sharply

Sales of natural gas in March totalled 6.5 billion cubic metres, a 14.5% increase over the previous year. The increase was evenly distributed among residential sales (+15.1%), commercial sales (+15.0%) and industrial sales (+13.9%).

Sales in the first quarter of 1989 amounted to 19.8 billion cubic metres, an 8.1% increase over the first quarter of 1988.

For further information, order the *March issue of Gas Utilities* (catalogue number 55-002) or contact the *Industry Division* at (613) 951-3567.

Sales of Natural Gas in Canada

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
	% change, previous year				
Residential	13.7	9.9	2.1	4.4	15.1
Commercial	9.6	7.1	1.3	5.9	15.0
Industrial*	9.9	16.9	3.7	11.8	13.9
Total	10.8	12.5	2.3	8.0	14.5

* includes direct sales

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED FROM MAY 19 TO May 25

AGRICULTURE

Survey of Canadian Nursery Trades Industry, 1986 and 1987. Catalogue number 22-203 (Canada: \$21; Other Countries: \$25).

CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS

Juristat Service Bulletin, Vol. 9, No. 1, Homicide in the Family, 1974-1987. Catalogue number 85-002 (Canada: \$3.70/\$37; Other Countries: \$4.40/\$44).

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

System of National Accounts - Provincial Economic Accounts. Preliminary Estimates 1988. Catalogue number 13-213P (Canada: \$25; Other Countries: \$30).

INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATION AND FINANCE

Financial Institutions, Financial Statistics, Fourth Quarter 1988. Catalogue number 61-006 (Canada: \$42/\$168; Other Countries: \$50.50/\$202).

PUBLICATIONS (Cont'd)

INDUSTRY

Coal and Coke Statistics, February 1989. Catalogue number 45-002 (Canada: \$9.50/\$95; Other Countries: \$11.40/\$114).

Electric Power Statistics, February 1989. Catalogue number 57-001 (Canada: \$9.50/\$95; Other Countries: \$11.40/\$114).

Oil Pipe Line Transport, January 1989. Catalogue number 55-001 (Canada: \$9.50/\$95; Other Countries: \$11.40/\$114).

Oils and Fats, March 1989. Catalogue number 32-006 (Canada: \$4.70/\$47; Other Countries: \$5.60/\$56).

INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS

System of National Accounts, Gross Domestic Product by Industry, February 1989. Catalogue number 15-001 (Canada: \$12.10/\$121; Other Countries: \$14.50/\$145).

INTERNATIONAL AND FINANCIAL ECONOMICS

The Canadian Economic Observer, May 1989. Catalogue number 11-010 (Canada: \$21/\$210; Other Countries: \$25.20/\$252).

LABOUR

Employment, Earnings and Hours, February 1989. Catalogue number 72-002 (Canada: \$38.50/\$385; Other Countries: \$46.20/\$462).

Perspectives on Labour Income, Summer 1989. Catalogue number 75-001E (Canada: \$12.50/\$50; Other Countries: \$15/\$60).

Unemployment Insurance Statistics, February 1989. Catalogue number 73-001 (Canada: \$13.70/\$137; Other Countries: \$16.40/\$164).

PRICES

Consumer Prices and Price Indexes, October-December 1988. Catalogue number 62-010 (Canada: \$17.25/\$69; Other Countries: \$20.75/\$83).

SMALL AREA DATA

Demographic and Income Statistics for Postal Areas, 1987. Catalogue number 17-202 (Canada: \$315; Other Countries: \$378).

Income Statistics for Postal Areas - Atlantic, 1987. Catalogue number 17-203 (Canada: \$116; Other Countries: \$139).

Income Statistics for Postal Areas - Ontario, 1987. Catalogue number 17-205 (Canada: \$116; Other Countries: \$139).

Income Statistics for Postal Areas - Quebec, 1987. Catalogue number 17-204 (Canada: \$116; Other Countries: \$139).

Income Statistics for Postal Areas - West and Territories, 1987. Catalogue number 17-206 (Canada: \$116; Other Countries: \$139).

TRANSPORT

Aviation Statistics Centre Service Bulletin, Vol. 21, No. 5, February 1989. Catalogue number 51-004 (Canada: \$8.90/\$89; Other Countries: \$10.70/\$107).

Fuel Consumption Survey - Passenger Cars, Light Trucks and Vans, July-September 1987. Catalogue number 53-007 (free).

NEW FROM STATISTICS CANADA



Perspectives on Labour and Income

The inaugural edition of a new quarterly journal on labour and income issues is now available.

The five articles in this first issue of *Perspectives on Labour and Income* examine the growing regional disparities in unemployment, today's youth in the labour market, the earnings of bilingual workers in three cities, maternity leave trends and the changing face of the temporary help industry.

Canada's Unemployment Mosaic: The unemployment rate and other labour market measures for 40 sub-provincial areas were used in this study of the increase in regional unemployment disparities in recent years.

Youth for Hire: A comparison of youth labour market conditions in 1977 and 1987 shows several important changes.

Bilingualism and Earnings: This study compares the earnings of bilingual and unilingual workers in three urban centres: Montreal, Toronto and Ottawa-Hull.

On Maternity Leave: This article looks at maternity absences among working women by age, education and province. It also explores the links between the fertility rate and maternity absences, and between compensation and length of absence.

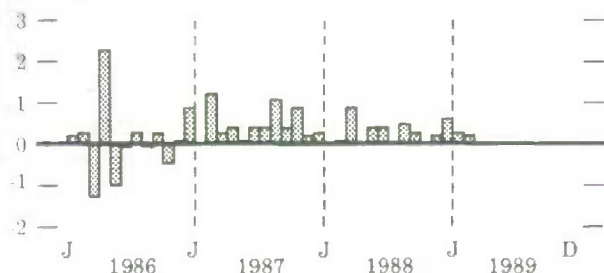
The Changing Face of Temporary Help: This profile covers characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, education, occupation and earnings, with some surprising results.

For further information, order *Perspectives on Labour and Income* (catalogue number 75-001E) or contact Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division at (613) 951-6894.

CURRENT TRENDS*

Gross Domestic Product

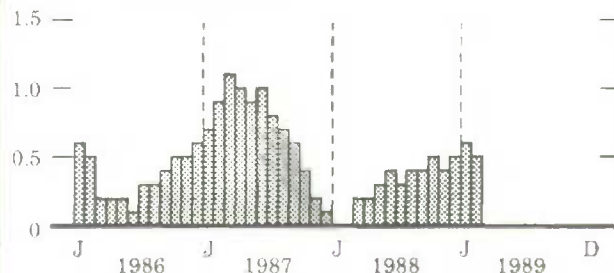
(% change, previous month)



Gross domestic product was up 0.2% in February, one of the smallest of four consecutive increases.

Composite Leading Indicator

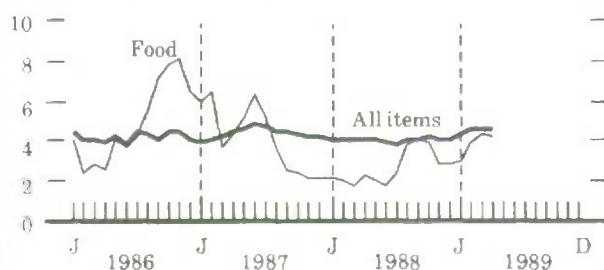
(% change, previous month)



In February, the composite leading indicator rose 0.5%, similar to the monthly increases posted since September.

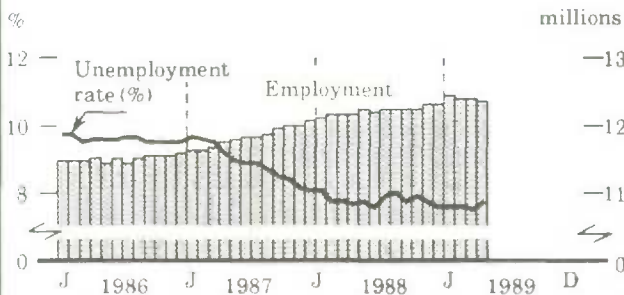
Consumer Price Index

(% change, previous year)



The CPI was 4.6% higher than in April 1988. This rate remains unchanged in three months.

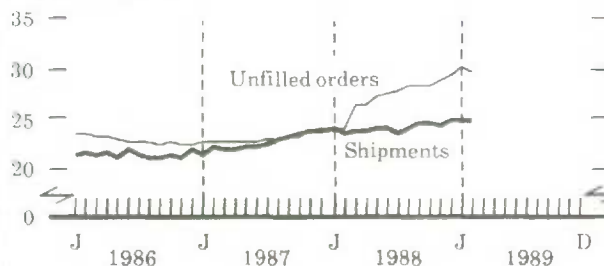
Unemployment Rate and Employment



The employment level fell by 54,000 in April, the largest decline in six months.

Manufacturing

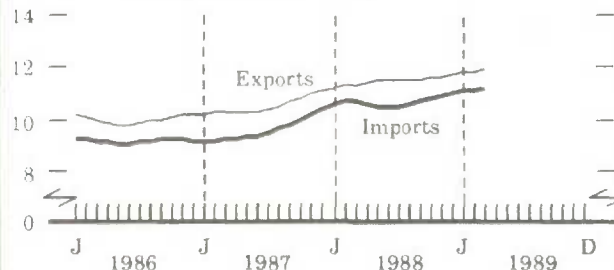
(billions of dollars)



Manufacturing shipments rose in February, but both new and unfilled orders fell, while the level of inventories rose.

Merchandise Trade

(billions of dollars, short-term trend)



In March, merchandise exports remained virtually unchanged from February.

* All series are seasonally adjusted except the consumer price index.



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LATEST MONTHLY STATISTICS

	Period	Level	Change Previous Period	Change Previous Year
GENERAL				
Gross Domestic Product (\$ billion, 1981)	Feb.	404	0.2%	3.7%
Composite Leading Indicator (1981 = 100)	Feb.	144.2	0.5%	4.8%
Profits of Industrial Corporations (\$ billion)	4th Q	9.4	1.2%	-2.1%
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail Trade (\$ billion)	Mar.*	14.0	-0.6%	3.1%
New Motor Vehicle Sales ('000 units)	Mar.	121	-2.3%	-15.9%
Housing Starts ('000, annual rates)	Mar.*	226	2.3%	4.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	Apr.	12.4	-0.4%	1.6%
Unemployment Rate (%)	Apr.	7.8	0.3	0.1
Participation Rate (%)	Apr.	66.9	-0.1	0.3
Labour Income (\$ billion)	Feb.	27.6	1.2%	7.5%
Average Weekly Earnings (\$)	Feb.	474.44	0.0%	4.0%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise Exports (\$ billion)	Mar.	11.8	0.0%	0.1%
Merchandise Imports (\$ billion)	Mar.	11.4	0.3%	0.1%
Merchandise Trade Balance (\$ billion)	Mar.	0.4	-0.5	-0.4
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	Feb.	24.8	0.5%	5.9%
New Orders (\$ billion)	Feb.	24.5	-3.2%	3.5%
Unfilled Orders (\$ billion)	Feb.	29.7	-1.1%	23.9%
Inventory/ Shipments Ratio	Feb.	1.56	0.00	0.01
Capacity Utilization (%)	4th Q	83.0	-0.7	-1.1
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1981 = 100)	Apr.*	149.0	0.3%	4.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1981 = 100)	Mar.	130.9	0.3%	3.6%
Raw Materials Price Index (1981 = 100)	Mar.	100.2	1.4%	2.3%
New Housing Price Index (1981 = 100)	Mar.	147.1	1.7%	16.7%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of average weekly earnings and the price indexes.

* New this week.

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