



# IN·F·O·M·A·T

## A WEEKLY REVIEW

Friday, May 22, 1992

### OVERVIEW

#### ■ Retail Sales Remain Weak

Seasonally adjusted retail sales totalled \$15.1 billion in March, down 0.4% from the previous month. This decline follows no growth in January and in February.

#### ■ Exports Continue to Grow and Imports Climb

The seasonally adjusted value of exports rose by 2.9% in March to \$12.8 billion after increasing by 2.1% in February and 5.2% in January. Following a 0.6% decline in February, imports climbed 6.4% in March to \$11.9 billion.

#### ■ Foreign Visits Record Sharper Decrease

After a 1.3% decline in February, the seasonally adjusted number of foreign visitors on trips of one or more nights to Canada fell 4.1% in March.

#### ■ Decline in Sales of New Motor Vehicles Continues

Sales of new motor vehicles fell 3.1% in March after a 4.7% decline in February.

### Retail Sales Remain Weak

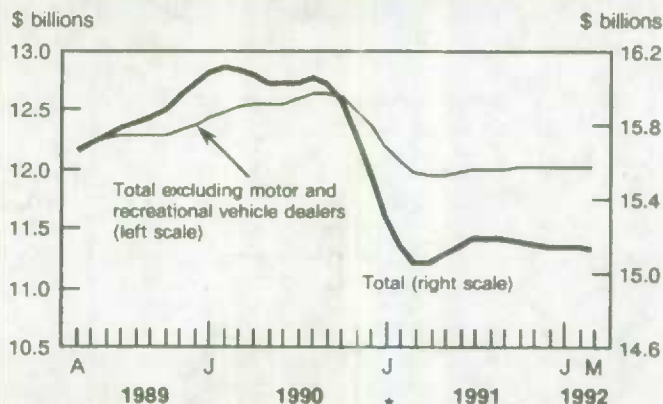
Following no change in January and in February, seasonally adjusted retail sales fell 0.4% in March to a level of \$15.1 billion. Compared to March 1991, retail sales advanced 0.8% as seven of the 16 trade groups recorded increases ranging from 1.1% for other retail stores to 8.9% for household furnishings stores.

After no growth in the third quarter of 1991, retail sales declined 0.6% in the last quarter of 1991 and remained unchanged in the first quarter of 1992.

After declining sharply from August 1990 to March 1991 and rising slightly between April and July 1991, the trend for total retail trade has been decreasing slightly for the last eight months. The decrease since August 1991 is attributable to declining sales of motor and recreational vehicle dealers.

(continued on page 2)

Retail Sales Trends<sup>1</sup> - Canada



<sup>1</sup> Trends represent smoothed seasonally adjusted data.

\* Prior to 1991, data includes Federal Sales Tax. The Goods and Services Tax is not included in the 1991 and later data.

STATISTICS CANADA  
STATISTIQUE CANADA

MAY 22 1992

LIBRARY  
BIBLIOTHÈQUE



Statistics  
Canada

Statistique  
Canada

Canada

### ... Retail Sales Remain Weak

The weak sales in March resulted from a broadly-based decline that was partly offset by an increase of 1.3% reported by supermarkets and grocery stores. Higher sales recorded by that group in March followed a 0.5% gain in February and a 0.9% decline in January. Sales by household furniture and appliance stores were up 0.8% and sales of automotive parts, accessories and services gained 0.6%.

Of the 11 trade groups that reported declines, the most significant drops, in order of dollar impact, were recorded by general merchandise stores, down 2.5%; motor and recreational vehicle dealers, down 0.8%; and gasoline service stations, down 1.4%.

Seven of the 10 provinces and the territories reported higher sales. The March decline was concentrated in three provinces: Newfoundland, Ontario and Manitoba.

For further information, order *Retail Trade* (catalogue number 63-005), or contact Industry Division at (613) 951-3551.

### Retail Trade, March 1992

Seasonally Adjusted

	Retail Sales		
	\$ millions	% change from previous month	% change from previous year
<b>Canada</b>	<b>15,084</b>	<b>-0.4</b>	<b>0.8</b>
Newfoundland	278	-3.0	0.4
Prince Edward Island	65	1.6	4.0
Nova Scotia	501	4.5	3.9
New Brunswick	385	0.4	2.6
Québec	3,699	0.2	-0.7
Ontario	5,584	-1.1	1.6
Manitoba	531	-1.1	2.8
Saskatchewan	459	2.7	2.2
Alberta	1,607	1.3	2.0
British Columbia	1,977	1.1	2.4
Yukon	15	1.9	5.3
Northwest Territories	30	1.1	2.6

### Exports Continue to Grow and Imports Climb

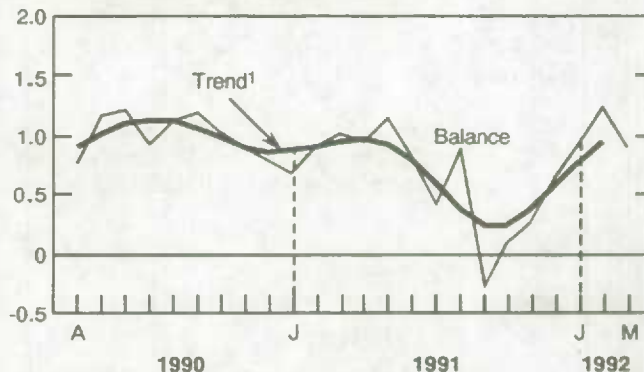
The seasonally adjusted value of exports rose for the third straight month, up 2.9% in March to \$12.8 billion. Contrary to the previous two months, the upward movement came from the more stable commodities. There was an increase of \$220 million for exports of machinery and equipment excluding aircraft and other transportation equipment, and a rise of \$156 million for exports of industrial goods and materials. Among the more volatile commodities, higher exports were recorded for energy products, up \$36 million, and aircraft and other transportation equipment, up \$21 million.

Partly offsetting these increases were lower exports of automotive products, down \$11 million, and wheat exports dropped by \$83 million. Small declines were noted for forestry products and miscellaneous consumer goods.

Seasonally adjusted imports rose 6.4% in March to \$11.9 billion. This increase follows a 0.6% decline in February. As with exports, most of the increase came from commodities noted for their steady month-to-month changes. Increases were recorded in imports of industrial goods (\$430 million), machinery and equipment excluding aircraft and other transportation equipment (\$234 million),

### Merchandise Trade Balance

Billions of dollars, seasonally adjusted



<sup>1</sup> The short-term trend represents a weighted average of the data.

agricultural and fishing products (\$55 million), miscellaneous consumer goods (\$48 million), and forestry products (\$4 million). Among the commodities noted for their monthly swings, imports of aircraft and other transportation equipment increased by \$74 million, and automotive products were up by \$17 million. Energy products fell by \$58 million.

(continued on page 3)



### ... Exports Continue to Grow and Imports Climb

Exports to the United States reached \$9.8 billion, their highest level ever. Increases were registered for imports from all major trading partners except the United Kingdom. Imports from the United States rose to \$8.2 billion, their highest level since last September.

As imports increased faster than exports, the merchandise trade balance declined from the revised February level of \$1.2 billion to \$888 million in March.

For further information, order *Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade* (catalogue number 65-001P), or contact *International Trade Division* at (613) 951-9647. (See also "Current Trends" chart on page 6.)

### Foreign Visits Record Sharper Decrease

The seasonally adjusted number of foreign travellers on trips of one or more nights to Canada fell for the second month in a row in March, this time by 4.1% to 1.2 million. Following gains in December and in January, overnight trips by residents of the United States fell 2.7% in February and 3.5% in March. The number of visitors from other countries recorded a larger decline, falling 6.5% to 238,000 after a 5.0% increase in February.

The number of overnight trips abroad by Canadian residents advanced 2.6% in March, resuming an upward trend interrupted by declines

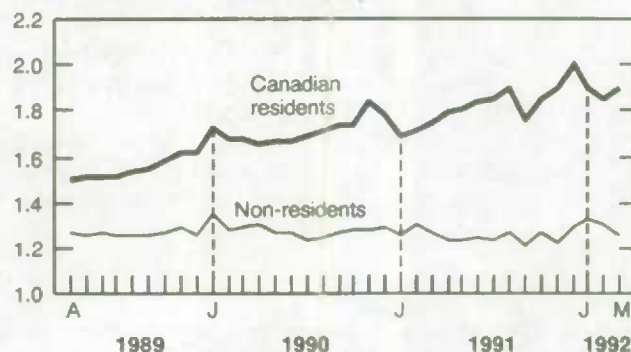
### International Travel Between Canada and Other Countries

March 1992

	('000)	% change previous month	%change previous year
<b>One or More Night Trips</b>			
<b>Non-resident Travellers:</b>			
United States	1,007	-3.5	-0.4
Other Countries	238	-6.5	-3.5
Total Travellers	1,245	-4.1	-1.0
<b>Residents of Canada:</b>			
United States	1,642	2.6	8.9
Other Countries	258	2.4	12.5
Total Travellers	1,900	2.6	9.4

### Trips of One or More Nights between Canada and Other Countries

Millions, seasonally adjusted



in January and February. The number of overnight trips by Canadians to the U.S. (by all modes of travel) advanced for the first time in three months, up 2.6% to 1.6 million trips. Similar trips to other countries rose for the second straight month, up 2.4% to 258,000 trips.

Same-day automobile trips to the U.S. by Canadian residents decreased 0.8% from February to 5.0 million trips, while the upward trend in overnight automobile trips by Canadians to the U.S. continued, increasing 0.4% to 1.3 million.

For further information, order *International Travel - Advance Information* (catalogue number 66-001P), or contact *Education, Culture and Tourism Division* at (613) 951-8933.

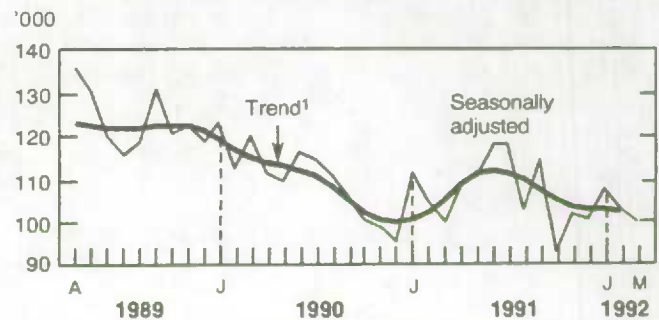
## Decline in Sales of New Motor Vehicles Continues

Seasonally adjusted new motor vehicle sales totalled 99,000 units in March, a 3.1% decrease that represented a second straight monthly decline. Compared with March 1991, sales were 0.6% lower. Although sales of new motor vehicles have posted large fluctuations, the trend increased in the first six months of 1991 then declined in the following eight months.

March's decline was attributable to weaker sales of both passenger cars and trucks. Passenger car sales fell 3.2% to 65,000 units, a smaller decrease than the 7.2% drop recorded in February. Commercial vehicle sales were down 3.1% to 35,000 units in March, the first decline after four consecutive monthly increases. Car sales for the first quarter of 1992 totalled 204,000 units, down 6.9% from the level registered in the first quarter of 1991 while commercial vehicle sales, for the same period, were up 9.0% to a level of 106,000 units.

After decreasing 8.6% in February, sales of North American-built cars declined further, down 10.1% in March to a level of 39,000 units. Partly offsetting this decline, imported car sales were up 9.6% and amounted to 26,000 units. This increase follows a 4.5% drop in February. On a quarterly

Sales of New Motor Vehicles,  
Canada, in Units



<sup>1</sup> The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

basis, sales of North American-built cars totalled 130,000 units in the first quarter of 1992 and sales of imported cars amounted to 74,000 units. Compared to the same period in 1991, sales were down 10.6% for North American-built cars and up 0.3% for imported cars.

For further information, order *New Motor Vehicle Sales* (catalogue number 63-007) or contact Industry Division at (613) 951-9693.

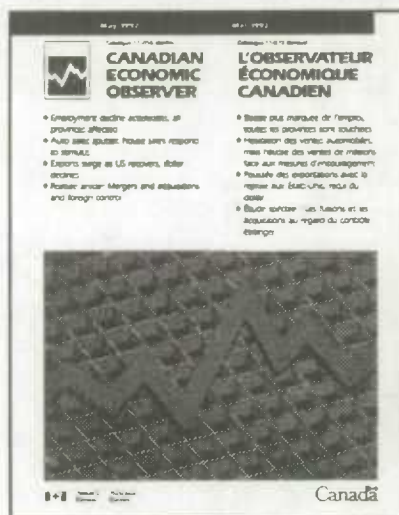
## NEW FROM STATISTICS CANADA

### Canadian Economic Observer

The May issue of *Canadian Economic Observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, is now available.

This issue contains a monthly summary of the economy, major economic events in April, and a feature article on mergers and acquisitions and foreign control. A statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

*Canadian Economic Observer* (catalogue number 11-010) can now be ordered from Publication Sales (613-951-7276). For more information, call Philip Cross (613-951-9162), Current Analysis Section.





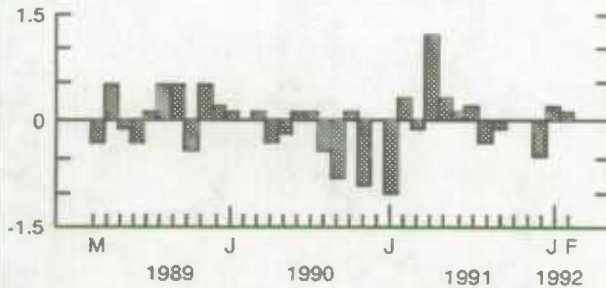
# PUBLICATIONS RELEASED FROM MAY 15 TO 21, 1992

Division/title	Period	Catalogue Number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (\$Cdn.)	United States	Other Countries
				\$US	
AGRICULTURE					
Farm Product Price Index	March 1992	62-003	7.10/71	8.50/85	9.90/99
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS					
Canadian Economic Observer	May 1992	11-010	22/220	26/260	31/310
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM					
Touriscope: International Travel	March 1992	66-001P	6.10/61	7.30/73	8.50/85
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS					
The Labour Force	April 1992	71-001	17.90/179	21.50/215	25.10/251
INDUSTRY					
Footwear Statistics	March 1992	33-002	5/50	6/60	7/70
Oils and Fats	March 1992	32-006	5/50	6/60	7/70
Particleboard, Waferboard and Fibreboard	March 1992	36-003	5/50	6/60	7/70
INTERNATIONAL TRADE					
Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade	March 1992	65-001P	10/100	12/120	14/140
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK					
Capital and Repair Expenditures – Manufacturing Sub-Industries	1992 Intentions	61-214	17	20	24
PRICES					
Consumer Price Index	April 1992	62-001	9.30/93	11.20/112	13/130

## CURRENT TRENDS

### Gross Domestic Product

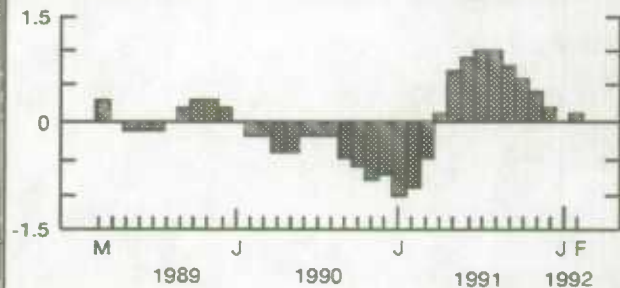
% change,  
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost crept up 0.1% in February after a 0.2% gain in January and a 0.5% drop in December.

### Composite Leading Indicator

% change,  
previous month



The composite leading indicator crept up 0.1% in February. The rate of growth started to decelerate in September 1991 to no change in January 1992.

### Consumer Price Index

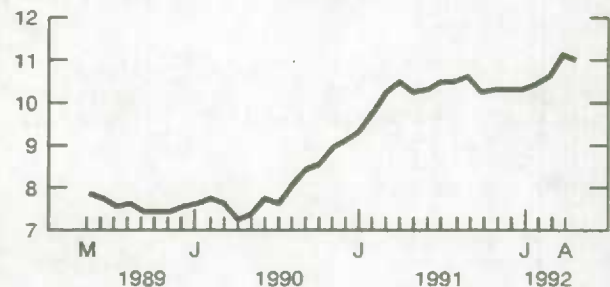
% change,  
previous year



In March, the year-over-year increase in the all-items CPI stood at 1.6% while the food index declined for the third straight month, this time by 0.7%.

### Unemployment Rate

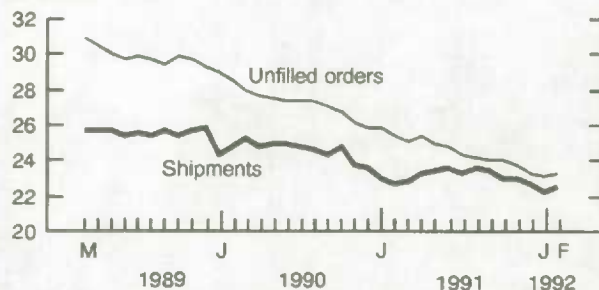
%



In April, the unemployment rate edged down 0.1 percentage points to 11.0 after a 0.5 percentage point increase in March.

### Manufacturing

Billions  
of dollars



Canadian manufacturers' shipments rose for the first time in six months, up 1.1% to \$22.4 billion in February. Unfilled orders were up 0.3% to \$23.1 billion, the first increase in 10 months.

### Merchandise Trade

Billions  
of dollars



Exports rose by 2.9% in March to \$12.8 billion. After a 0.6% decline in February, imports climbed 6.4% in March to \$11.9 billion.

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



## LATEST MONTHLY STATISTICS

	Period	Level	Change Previous Period	Change Previous Year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross Domestic Product (\$ billion, 1986)	February	503	0.1%	1.1%
Composite Leading Indicator (1981 = 100)	February	144.7	0.1%	5.5%
Operating Profits of Enterprises (\$ billion)	4th Quarter	10.3	-18.0%	-29.0%
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail Trade (\$ billion)	March*	15.1	-0.4%	0.8%
New Motor Vehicle Sales ('000 units)	March*	99.4	-3.1%	-0.6%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	April	12.2	-0.5%	-1.3%
Unemployment Rate (%)	April	11.0	0.1	0.8
Participation Rate (%)	April	65.2	-0.4	-1.2
Labour Income (\$ billion)	February	32.5	0.2%	2.7%
Average Weekly Earnings (\$)	February	552.23	-0.1%	4.5%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise Exports (\$ billion)	March*	12.8	2.9%	10.6%
Merchandise Imports (\$ billion)	March*	11.9	6.4%	12.8%
Merchandise Trade Balance (\$ billion)	March*	0.89	-0.36	-0.12
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	February	22.4	1.1%	-0.7%
New Orders (\$ billion)	February	22.5	2.2%	2.0%
Unfilled Orders (\$ billion)	February	23.1	0.3%	-8.4%
Inventory/ Shipments Ratio	February	1.51	-0.02	-0.13
Capacity Utilization (%)	4th Quarter	70.2	-1.5	-2.5
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1986 = 100)	March	127.5	0.3%	1.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1986 = 100)	March	108.3	0.3%	-1.4%
Raw Materials Price Index (1986 = 100)	March	101.8	1.0%	-4.2%
New Housing Price Index (1986 = 100)	March	133.8	0.2%	-0.1%

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

\* New this week.

## I·N·F·O·M·A·T

### A Weekly Review

Published by the Communications Division Statistics Canada.

Senior Editor: Greg Thomson (613) 951-1116

Editor: Louise Larouche (613) 951-1197

R.H. Coats Building, Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0T6.

Catalogue: 11-002E. Price: Canada: \$2.50 per issue, \$125.00 per year; United States: US\$3.00 per issue, US\$150.00 per year; Other Countries: US\$3.50 per issue, US\$175.00. Canadian customers please remember to add 7% GST. To subscribe: send money order or cheque payable to the Receiver General for Canada/Publication Sales, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6. To order by telephone dial: 1-800-267-6677 within Canada or 613-951-7277 from all other countries.

Published by authority of the Minister responsible for Statistics Canada. © Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, 1992. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission from Chief, Author Services, Publications Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1A 0T6.

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences - Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48 - 1984.



Statistics Canada Library  
Bibliothèque Statistique Canada



1010091658