



Infomat

A Weekly Review

MAY 21 1996

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Friday, May 17, 1996

OVERVIEW

◆ Manufacturing shipments lose ground

A U.S. brake-plant strike and growing weakness in paper and allied product prices combined to push Canadian manufacturing shipments down in March.

◆ Labour force grows faster than jobs

In April, labour force expansion outpaced job growth, pushing the unemployment rate up to 9.4%.

◆ Provincial economies cool off in 1995

Economic growth slowed in most provinces in 1995, the result of weak consumer demand, depressed housing markets and government restraint.

◆ New motor vehicle sales fall

In March, new motor vehicle sales fell from the month before, due to a large drop in the sales of cars.

◆ New housing prices decline yet again

In March, new housing prices fell for the 21st straight month, but the outlook for future housing construction seemed to be showing some signs of improvement.

◆ Foreigners continue to visit Canada in rising numbers

Overseas residents made a record number of overnight trips to Canada in March, continuing the upward trend in this type of travel.

Readership survey...on page 11.

Thank you to all those who responded to our survey. For those of you who haven't yet done so, it's not too late!

Manufacturing shipments lose ground

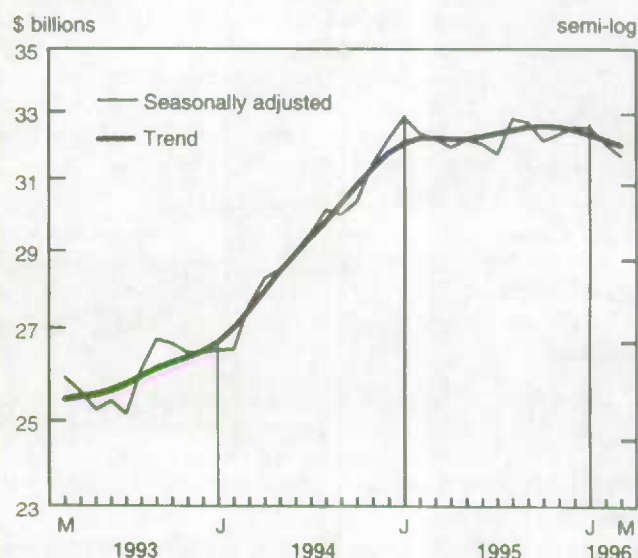
The repercussions of a strike at a U.S. brake plant and growing weakness in paper and allied product prices combined to push Canadian manufacturing shipments down in March (-1.2% to \$31.7 billion). Twelve of the 22 major groups, accounting for 65.7% of total shipments, recorded decreases. Unfilled orders also declined, while inventories increased slightly.

The U.S. strike at a General Motors brake plant effectively forced the closure of GM's manufacturing activities in Canada. The strike affected the motor vehicle industry the most (-10.7%), but declines also occurred in the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry (-2.0%). All of GM's Canadian plants were back in operation by the end of March.

The rest of manufacturing fared better, posting a small 0.4% increase. This was largely due to strong performances in the food (+3.5%) and the wood (+6.5%) industries. These gains were almost offset by another significant fall in the paper and allied products industry, where prices continued to decline.

(continued on page 2)

Shipments



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

... Manufacturing shipments lose ground

Inventories increased slightly for a second month in a row, rising 0.3% to \$45.2 billion. Rising inventories and declining shipments pushed the inventories-to-shipments ratio up to 1.43, its highest level since July 1993. The ratio has been on an upward trend for over a year. (When rising, the ratio points to a possible oversupply and suggests that output may have to be curbed in the future.)

Most of the increase in inventories came from the aircraft and parts industry, but advances were also recorded in the refined petroleum and coal products, and the motor vehicle industries.

Manufacturers' shipments, March 1996

Unadjusted data (adjusted data not available by province)

Province	\$ millions	% change, previous year
Canada	32,641	-5.4
Newfoundland	114	-0.6
Prince Edward Island	45	-3.7
Nova Scotia	513	-4.1
New Brunswick	644	-0.6
Quebec	7,847	-5.6
Ontario	17,430	-6.1
Manitoba	736	6.7
Saskatchewan	416	3.0
Alberta	2,314	1.8
British Columbia	2,579	-11.2

Note to readers

Unfilled orders are a stock of orders which will contribute to future shipments, assuming that orders are not cancelled.

New orders represent orders received whether shipped in the current month or not. They are measured as the sum of shipments for the current month (i.e. orders received this month and shipped within the same month) plus the change in unfilled orders.

These upturns were partly offset by declines in the primary metals and the electrical and electronic products industries. Paper and allied products recorded only a small decrease.

According to the most recent Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers were not happy with the level of finished product inventories at the beginning of April and, as a result, did not expect to raise employment or production in the second quarter.

The backlog of unfilled orders, a key determinant of future shipments, fell 1.4% to \$32.5 billion in March. The decline came on the heels of three increases, and erased the gains that were made during that time. Unfilled orders now stand 5.9% below the all-time high in April 1995. New orders decreased by 3.1%, to \$31.2 billion.

For further information, order *Monthly survey of manufacturing* (catalogue 31-001-XPB) or contact Robert Traversy, Industry Division at (613) 951-9497. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

Labour force grows faster than jobs

Employment rose by an estimated 40,000 in April, following little change in March. Employment has grown by 169,000 since November 1995, an average gain of 34,000 jobs per month. In April, labour force expansion outpaced job growth, increasing the unemployment rate to 9.4%.

Despite monthly fluctuations (+14,000 in April), employment levels among youths aged 15 to 24 have remained little changed since 1992, with no recovery from the large losses sustained during the recession. Higher youth employment in April was matched by the increase in the size of the labour force, leaving the youth unemployment rate unchanged at 15.3%.

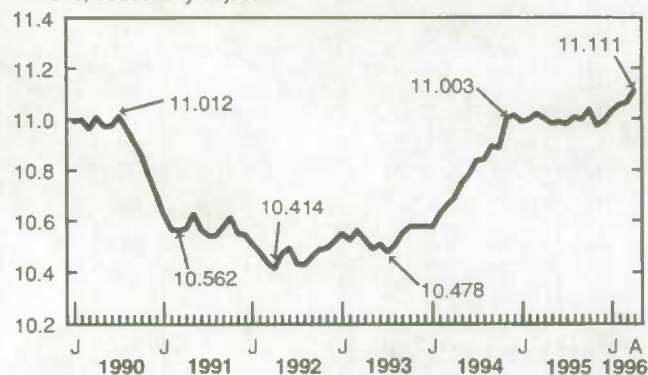
The difficult labour market conditions experienced by youths in recent years have also extended to students entering the labour market in search of summer employment. Between the summer of 1989 and the summer of 1995, the student unemployment rate rose from 9.4% to 16.1%. Students aged 15 to 19 fared worse than those aged 20 to 24.

Employment among adults rose for the fifth straight month in April (+26,000). Over this period adult employment rose by 147,000, accounting for 87% of total employment growth. April's unemployment rate for adults edged up to 8.3% as 12,000 more adults were looking for work.

All of April's job gains were full-time, bringing the increase in full-time employment over the past five months to 138,000. Despite small declines over the past two months (-24,000 in total), part-time employment has grown by 123,000 since January 1995.

Full-time employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



After an eight-month pause, employment in the goods-producing industries rose 1.0% in April (+37,000). Employment in the service-producing industries — which have accounted for 82% of employment growth over the past five months — continued to rise (+18,000 in April).

Across the country, employment levels rose in the Atlantic provinces. This increase, however, was outpaced by growth in labour force participation, pushing the unemployment rate up in each province. In Quebec, employment has edged down by 15,000 since January, following gains of 59,000 over the previous six months, mostly in service-producing industries. Employment in Ontario has changed little since February, after advances of 76,000

(continued on page 3)

... Labour force grows faster than jobs

over the previous six months, mostly in trade and manufacturing. In Manitoba, employment showed little change over the past two months; employment increased in Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia.

For further information, order *The labour force* (catalogue 71-001-XPB) or contact Doug Drew, Household Surveys Division at (613) 951-4720. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

Labour Force Survey, April 1996 Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	Rate (%)
Canada	15,111	0.4	13,690	0.3	1,421	9.4
Newfoundland	238	3.5	191	2.7	47	19.7
Prince Edward Island	71	1.9	60	1.2	10	14.7
Nova Scotia	443	1.6	383	0.5	60	13.5
New Brunswick	356	2.0	318	1.3	38	10.7
Quebec	3,643	0.2	3,238	0.0	405	11.1
Ontario	5,822	0.2	5,299	0.2	523	9.0
Manitoba	565	-0.2	523	-0.4	42	7.4
Saskatchewan	498	0.4	464	0.9	34	6.8
Alberta	1,521	0.3	1,417	0.5	104	6.8
British Columbia	1,961	0.1	1,800	0.5	161	8.2

Provincial economies cool off in 1995

Economic growth slowed in most provinces in 1995, the result of weak consumer demand, depressed housing markets and government restraint.

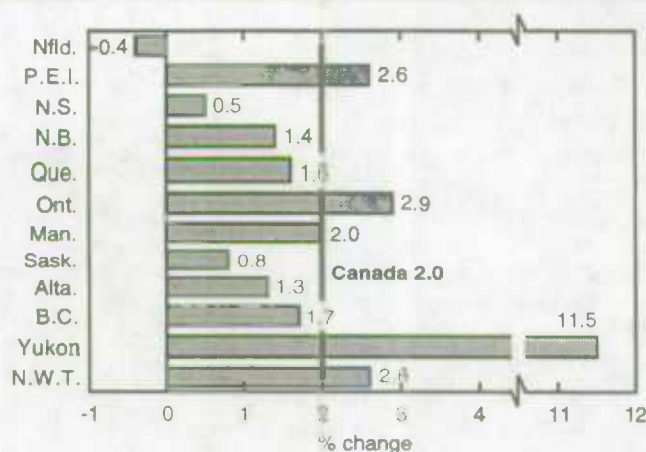
Only three provinces — Prince Edward Island, Ontario and Manitoba — and the two territories recorded growth rates at or above the national average of 2.0%, as measured by gross domestic product at factor cost (GDP) at 1986 prices. And only the territories performed better than they had in 1994.

Due to strong foreign exports, Ontario's output grew by 2.9%, markedly slower than in 1994, but higher than the national average for the second straight year. Also for the second consecutive year, output of electronic products rose substantially, accounting for more than one-third of the aggregate increase in production. On the downside, new housing construction fell 13% as housing starts plunged to a 43-year low. Government services declined, led by an 8% drop in defence services.

Quebec's economy slowed down considerably, as the worst housing slump in Canada offset robust export activity. Aggregate output still grew 1.6%, sufficient to employ 48,000 more people, mostly in the expanding export sector. The collapse in new dwelling construction affected all types of new homes: residential construction fell to half its 1987 level; housing starts plunged to a 44-year low.

Prince Edward Island again led growth in Atlantic Canada at 2.6%. Construction of the P.E.I.-New Brunswick bridge and a record potato crop contributed substantially to the gain. This economic vitality was responsible for the highest job creation rate in Canada. The major dampening effect came from a reduction of government services at both the federal and provincial levels. In Nova Scotia, cutbacks at defence bases and continued weaknesses

GDP at factor cost at 1986 prices, 1995



in fisheries kept economic growth at a marginal 0.5%. New Brunswick's economy grew moderately but steadily (+1.4%). Output fell in only one province, Newfoundland (-0.4%), as the construction phase of the Hibernia project began to wind down.

Manitoba's 2.0% advance — the best performance among the western provinces — was led by sharp increases in government spending on infrastructure. Employment growth reached 2.0% and over 10,000 jobs were created, mostly in manufacturing and in business services. Cutbacks in construction of oil and gas facilities and the effects on spin-off industries restrained growth in Alberta (+1.3%) and Saskatchewan (+0.8%). British Columbia (+1.7%) recorded its 11th straight year of growth but failed to surpass the national average for the first time since 1986. B.C. housing markets and retail sales both sagged; all components of domestic demand slowed considerably.

(continued on page 4)

... Provincial economies cool off in 1995

The Yukon economy burst out of its slump as the refurbishment and re-opening of the Faro lead-zinc mine (closed since 1993) spurred the economy (+11.5%). This gain offset about half of the decline of the previous two years when the mine was closed. Output in the Northwest Territories rose for the third

straight year (+2.6%), driven by the performance of the mining sector.

For further information, order **Provincial gross domestic product by industry, 1984-1995** (catalogue 15-203-XPB) or contact Sylvain Venne, National Accounts and Environment Division at (613) 951-3835.

New motor vehicle sales fall

New motor vehicle sales fell 1.1% to 97,171 vehicles in March, primarily due to a 4.2% decrease in car sales. This was partially offset by a 2.8% increase in truck sales. On a year-over-year basis, sales were slightly below the March 1995 level (-0.5%) but close to the 1995 monthly average (97,211). Sales reports released by the automotive industry indicate that both car and truck sales dropped in April.

The monthly decline in passenger car sales came entirely from sales of cars built in North America. It was slightly tempered by a 3.6% rise in the sales of cars built overseas. The Big Three automakers, who primarily sell cars made in North America, were hit the hardest by the decline in car sales, down 6.1% from February. Sales by the other automakers fell 0.6%.

On a quarterly basis, sales have been generally falling since the September 1995 peak. Overall, sales for the first quarter of 1996 were down 0.4% from the last quarter of 1995 and were 1.9% lower than the first quarter of 1995. Truck sales increased 4.1% from the preceding quarter and 3.6% from the year before, while car sales fell 3.8% and 6.0% respectively. Once again, the downward trend in passenger car sales reflects the growing popularity of minivans, light trucks, and sport utility vehicles.

During the first quarter of 1996, the Big Three automakers have been selling a higher proportion of trucks (53%) than passenger cars. Their sales patterns, however, differ across the country with consumers in the Prairie provinces purchasing the highest proportion of trucks: 68% in Saskatchewan, 66% in Alberta and 65% in Manitoba. In contrast, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland consumers prefer cars — trucks accounted for 44% of total sales in Quebec, 44% in Nova Scotia and 49% in Newfoundland.

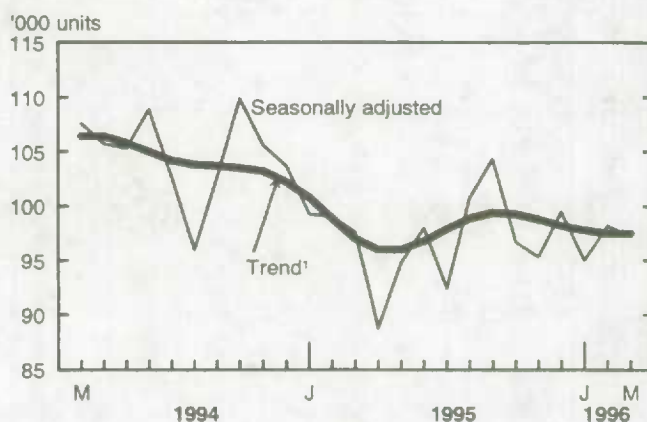
In the first quarter, the average price paid by consumers for trucks (excluding vehicles sold by manufacturers who primarily sell heavy trucks, coaches and buses) was \$28,300 (before taxes), an increase of 12.3% from a year earlier. The national average price, however, varies from coast to coast: Alberta residents spent the most on trucks (\$29,200) while Newfoundland consumers spent the least (\$25,900).

Note to readers

Motor vehicles are divided into two categories: passenger cars and trucks. Passenger cars include cars used for personal and commercial purposes (such as, taxis or rental cars). Trucks include minivans, sport utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

All data have been seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified.

New motor vehicle sales



¹ The short-term trend represents a moving average of the data.

Despite the declining sales of cars, the average price paid for them was \$21,700 (before taxes), a rise of 5.3% from the first quarter of 1995. Regionally, the average price followed a similar pattern to that of trucks — the price increased from east to west. It ranged from about \$19,000 to more than \$23,000. British Columbia residents spent the most on cars, averaging \$23,400.

For further information, order **New motor vehicle sales** (catalogue 63-007-XPB) or contact Mary Beth Lozinski, Industry Division at (613) 951-9824.

New housing prices decline yet again

In March, the new housing price index fell 2.3% from a year earlier, marking the 21st straight month in which the annual change was negative. These decreases were the result of low consumer confidence, which also contributed to a sharp decline in housing construction starts. Since June 1994, the new housing price index has dropped 2.9%.

New housing prices have continued to drop on the West Coast. Between March 1995 and March 1996, housing prices fell 8.3% in Victoria and 6.2% in Vancouver. Builders in these and other cities have reduced prices or offered free appliances, finished recreation rooms, or other upgraded features in order to generate sales. There are, however, indications that market conditions may be poised for improvement. In March 1996, there were no price declines in cities surveyed in Ontario, Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

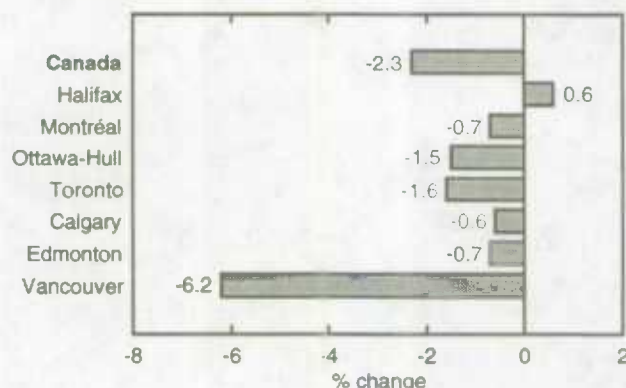
The house-only index for Canada as a whole dropped 2.5% from the year before and 0.2% from the month before. The land-only index declined 1.5% from March 1995 and 0.1% from February 1996.

The outlook for future housing construction seems to be showing some signs of improvement. The value of residential building permits has risen 19.7% in the first quarter of 1996 over the year-earlier period; Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reported a 12.5% increase in the annual pace of housing starts across Canada in March; and the Canadian Real Estate Association reported strong resale housing activity. However, recent mortgage interest rate increases, the relatively high levels of new homes in

Note to readers

The new housing price index measures fluctuations in the prices of new single-family dwellings: detached, semi-detached and townhouses.

New housing price indexes
March 1995 to March 1996



inventory, and concern over job security all combine to make the magnitude and timing of any improvement uncertain.

For further information, order *Construction price statistics* (catalogue 62-007-XPB) or contact Paul-Roméo Danis, Prices Division at (613) 951-3350; fax: (613) 951-2848; Internet: danipau@statcan.ca.

Foreigners continue to visit Canada in rising numbers

The number of foreigners' overnight trips to Canada reached a new high of 1.5 million in March. The increase was the result of a 4.7% rise in trips of one or more nights by overseas residents, who made a record 373,000 trips. Meanwhile, Americans travelled to Canada and stayed for one or more nights 1.1 million times, a decrease from the previous month.

Since mid-1992, overnight trips by people from overseas have risen by more than 50%. Over time, these travellers have represented an increasing share of all visitors to Canada, from 5% in 1972 to 26% in March 1996. Since overseas residents tend to stay longer than Americans, the economic impact of a growth in their numbers is significantly greater than that of a comparable rise in the number of American visitors. Overseas visitors spent an average of \$1,050 per overnight trip during the first quarter of 1995, compared with \$360 for Americans.

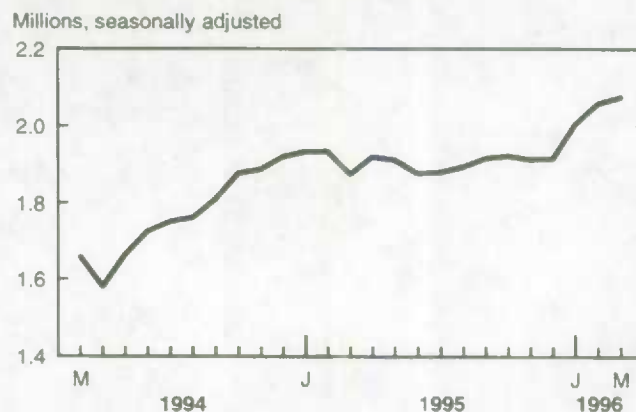
After having been relatively stable in 1995, same-day car trips between Canada and the United States have increased in both directions during each of the first three months of 1996. In March, Americans made 2.1 million car excursions to Canada, up 0.8% from February. Meanwhile, Canadians' car excursions to the United States were also up 0.8%, to 3.1 million.

Note to readers

Month-to-month comparisons use seasonally adjusted data, while year-over-year comparisons use unadjusted data (the actual traffic counts).

Overseas countries are countries other than the United States. Excursions are same-day trips.

Americans' same-day car trips to Canada



(continued on page 6)

**International travel between Canada and other countries,
March 1996**

	('000) % change, previous month		('000) % change, previous year	
	seasonally adjusted		unadjusted	
Canadian trips abroad				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same day	3,129	0.8	3,041	5.2
One or more nights	822	2.0	850	8.7
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,313	-0.5	1,468	13.5
Other countries	310	-0.2	454	10.9
Travel to Canada				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same day	2,075	0.8	1,738	18.0
One or more nights	691	-3.1	375	-4.3
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States ¹	1,086	-1.1	618	1.1
Other countries ²	373	4.7	207	21.5

¹ Estimates for the United States include counts of cars and buses, and estimated numbers for planes, trains, boats and other methods.

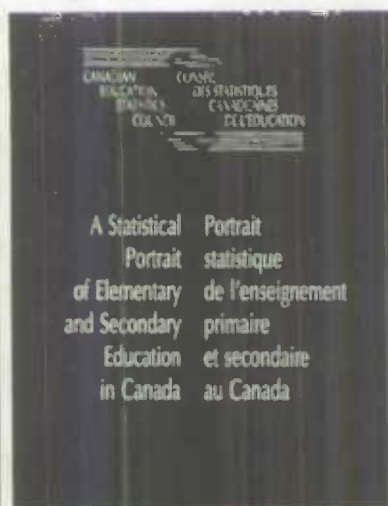
² Figures for other countries exclude same-day entries by land only, via the United States.

Canadians made 1.6 million trips of at least one night outside the country, 0.5% fewer than in February. The majority of these trips were to the United States, down 0.5% from the previous month.

Overnight trips to the United States by Canadians dropped from the December 1991 high of 1.8 million to their most recent low of 1.1 million in August 1994. Since then, this type of travel has been inching upward. Meanwhile, Canadians' overseas trips of at least one night remained stable at 310,000 trips.

For further information, order *International travel, advance information* (catalogue 66-001-PPB) or contact Ruth Martin, Education, Culture and Tourism Division at (613) 951-1791, fax: (613) 951-2909, the Internet: martrut@statcan.ca.

New from Statistics Canada



A statistical portrait of elementary and secondary education in Canada

Third edition

Statistics Canada and the Council of Ministers of Education are pleased to announce the release of the third edition of a joint publication titled *A statistical portrait of elementary and secondary education in Canada*. This publication presents comparable baseline statistics on elementary and secondary education for all provinces and territories.

The publication follows the format used in the second edition (July 1992 release containing 1989-90 data), and provides updates using 1992-93 data for each of the following major categories: demography of the school-aged population, student participation, student outcomes, educators and finance. In addition, the document provides an overview of the structure of education in Canada and a description of each province/territory's financial system.

A statistical portrait of elementary and secondary education in Canada — third edition (catalogue 81-528-XPB, \$20) is now available. For further information, contact Education, Culture or Tourism Division, Statistics Canada (613) 951-8356, fax: (613) 951-9040, the Internet: coterej@statcan.ca. Or, you may contact Council of Ministers of Education Canada (416) 964-2551, fax: (416) 964-2296.

Agricultural financial statistics

1994

Agricultural financial statistics, 1994 gives a picture of the financial performance of Canadian farms using information from a survey of tax returns of unincorporated and incorporated farmers, and of communal farming organizations.

The publication provides key statistics such as operating revenues and expenses by province, type of farm and revenue class, as well as income distribution. Data on off-farm income for operators and farm families involved in a single unincorporated farm add perspective to this financial picture.

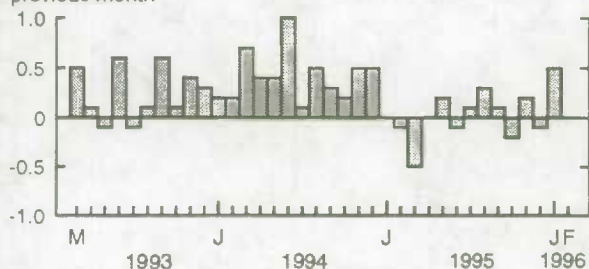
Agricultural financial statistics, 1994 (catalogue 21-205-XPB, \$45), a product of a joint venture between Statistics Canada and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, is now available. For further information, contact Lina Di Piètra, Agriculture Division at (613) 951-3171.



Current trends

Gross domestic product

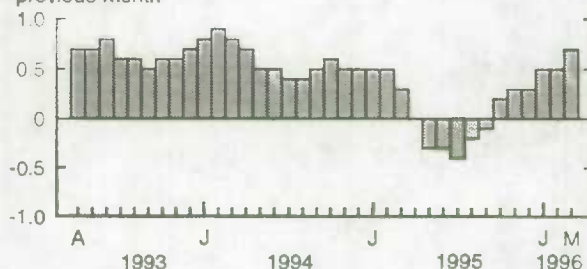
% change,
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost stayed unchanged in February.

Composite index

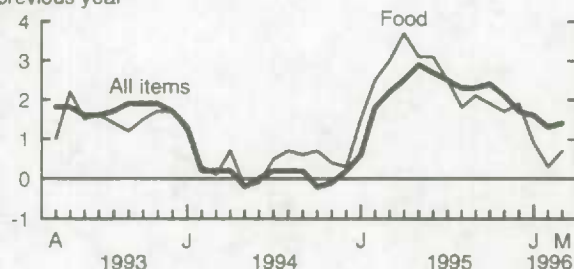
% change,
previous month



The composite index continued to pick up steam in March, growing 0.7% from the preceding month.

Consumer price index

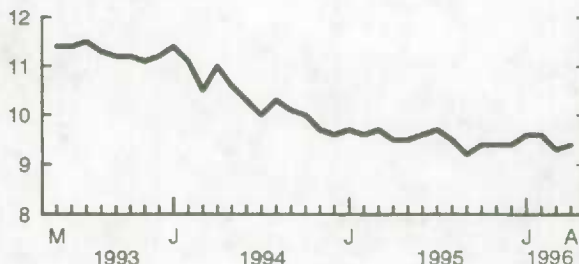
% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 1.4% more for goods and services in March 1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 0.7%.

Unemployment rate

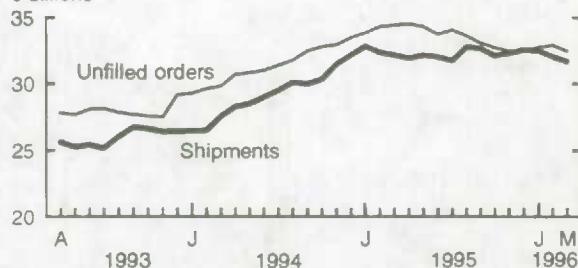
%



In April, the unemployment rate rose 0.1 percentage points to 9.4%.

Manufacturing

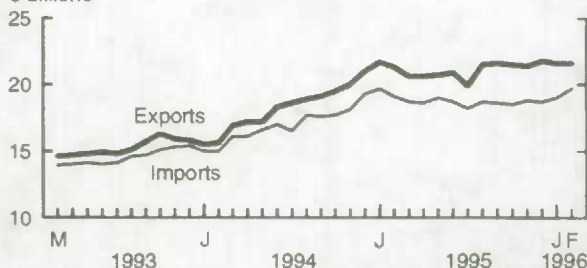
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments fell 1.2% to \$31.7 billion in March. The level of unfilled orders dropped 1.4% to \$32.5 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In February, the value of merchandise exports remained virtually unchanged from January at \$21.6 billion. Imports, however, increased by 3.3% to \$19.7 billion.

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

Latest monthly statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1986)	February	545.5	-0.0%	0.4%
Composite index (1981=100)	March	175.6	0.7%	1.1%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	4th quarter	23.7	0.5%	0.8%
Capacity utilization (%)	4th quarter	82.9	-0.7†	-2.8†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	February	17.8	0.1%	1.6%
New motor vehicle sales ('000 units)	March*	97.2	-1.1%	-0.5%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	April*	13.7	0.3%	1.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	April*	9.4	0.1†	-0.1†
Participation rate (%)	April*	64.9	0.1†	0.0†
Labour income (\$ billion)	January	35.7	1.1%	3.1%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	February	577.27	0.9%	0.7%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	February	21.6	-0.1%	1.4%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	February	19.7	3.3%	2.9%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	February	1.9	-0.6	-0.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	March*	31.7	-1.2%	-1.5%
New orders (\$ billion)	March*	31.2	-3.1%	-3.2%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	March*	32.5	-1.4%	-5.7%
Inventory/shipments ratio	March*	1.43	0.03	0.10
PRICES				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	April*	135.3	0.3%	1.4%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	March	128.9	-0.6%	0.6%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	March	135.1	3.4%	1.4%
New housing price index (1986=100)	March*	132.2	-0.2%	-2.3%

Note: All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.

* new this week.

† percentage point.

Infomat

A weekly review

Published by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-N, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Editor: Anna Kemeny (613) 951-1197

Head of Official Release: Jacques Lefebvre (613) 951-1088

Catalogue: 11-002E. Price: Canada: \$4.00 per issue, \$140.00 per year; United States: US\$5.00 per issue, US\$168.00 per year; Other countries: US\$5.00 per issue, US\$196.00. Canadian customers please add 7% GST.

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Publications released from May 10 to 16, 1996

Division/title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (Cdn.\$)	United States	Other countries
AGRICULTURE					
Agricultural financial statistics	1994	21-205-XPB	45	54	63
Field crop reporting series: Stocks of Canadian grain	March 31, 1996	22-002-XPB	15/85	18/102	21/119
Livestock statistics updates	May 1996	23-603-UPE	90	108	126
Production of poultry and eggs	1995	23-202-XPB	36	44	51
EDUCATION, CULTURE AND TOURISM					
A statistical portrait of elementary and secondary education in Canada	1992-1993	81-528-XPB	20	20	20
INDUSTRY					
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	March 1996	46-002-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Oils and fats	March 1996	32-006-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Production and shipments of steel pipe and tubing	March 1996	41-011-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS					
Provincial gross domestic product by industry	1984-1995	15-203-XPB	50	60	70
INTERNATIONAL TRADE					
Imports by commodity					
Microfiche version	February 1996	65-007-XMB	35/350	42/420	49/490
Paper version	February 1996	65-007-XPB	75/750	90/900	105/1,050
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK					
Building permits					
Microfiche version	March 1996	64-001-XMB	25/135	30/162	35/189
Paper version	March 1996	64-001-XPB	24/240	29/288	34/336
Capital expenditures by type of asset					
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PRICES					
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