



# Infommat

## A Weekly Review

Friday, June 21, 1996

### OVERVIEW

#### ◆ Exports, imports advance as labour dispute ends

Exports and imports were both up in April, as the automotive industry recovered from the U.S.-based labour disputes which closed assembly plants across North America in March.

#### ◆ No change in retail sales

Retail sales remained stable at \$17.8 billion in April 1996.

#### ◆ Transportation prices still behind rise in CPI

In May 1996, annual consumer prices climbed by 1.5%, a slightly higher rise than those in the two previous months. Between April and May, the CPI increased by 0.3%.

#### ◆ Canada attracts more American visitors

The rising trend in overnight travel to Canada by foreigners continued in April, resulting mostly from more trips by Americans.

#### ◆ Spending on home renovation plunges

The home renovation market received a significant financial blow in 1995, as spending on home improvement and maintenance plunged to near-recession levels.

#### ◆ Families are becoming more diverse

Canadian families have become more diverse as the once dominant family form — married couples with children — has become less common.

#### Exports, imports advance as labour dispute ends

Higher exports of autos and machinery pushed exports up 0.8% in April, to \$21.5 billion. Increased shipments to the United States and Japan overshadowed decreases with the European Union and other OECD countries.

Imports rose 1.0% to \$18.9 billion, bolstered by gains in automotive and energy products. The growth reflected higher shipments from all trading partners except Japan. Comparable growth in exports and imports left the trade surplus unchanged at \$2.6 billion. The growth in the trade surplus with the United States and Japan offset decreases with all other countries.

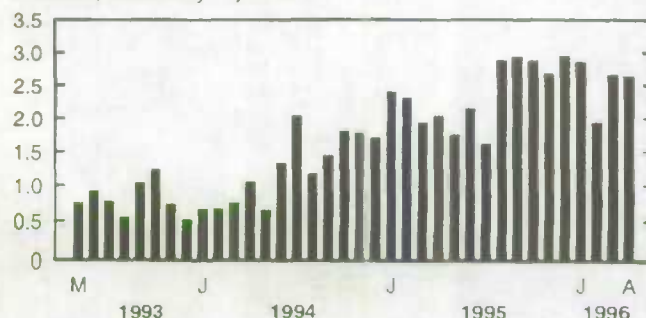
Exports of automotive products rebounded 7.7% in April, following a resolution to the U.S.-based labour disputes which closed assembly plants across North America in March. Parts and truck exports both rose 18.3%, while passenger car exports advanced only marginally (+0.3%). Machinery and equipment exports gained 5.0% on the strength of aircraft sales to the United States and Europe. Telecommunications and office equipment advanced as well, while industrial machinery declined.

Industrial goods exports receded 7.3%, reflecting falling exports of metals and alloys. Forestry products dipped 10.4%;

*(continued on page 2)*

#### Trade balance

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



### ... Exports, imports advance as labour dispute ends

bloated world inventories pulled down exports of woodpulp (-18.7%) and newsprint (-15.6%).

Energy product exports rose 9.0% on the strength of crude petroleum. This advance followed higher prices, and came as the industry continued to replenish storage levels after the colder-than-usual winter. Exports of consumer goods (+5.9%) and agricultural products (+1.1%) also rose.

Imports of motor vehicle parts (+10.7%) recovered from March's dip. Continued price hikes helped increase energy imports by nearly a third in April. Industrial goods imports were little changed. Machinery and equipment imports slipped 4.2%, while agricultural imports fell 5.1%.

### Note to readers

Merchandise trade is only one component of the current account of Canada's balance of payments, which also includes trade in services. In the first quarter of 1996, the overall merchandise trade surplus of \$7.0 billion contrasted with a current account deficit of \$1.9 billion.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3611-3616, 3618-3629, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718-3720, 3887-3913.

The April 1996 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (65-001-XPB, \$19/\$182) will be available shortly. For further information on this release, contact Suzie Carpentier, International Trade Division (613-951-9647). (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

## No change in retail sales

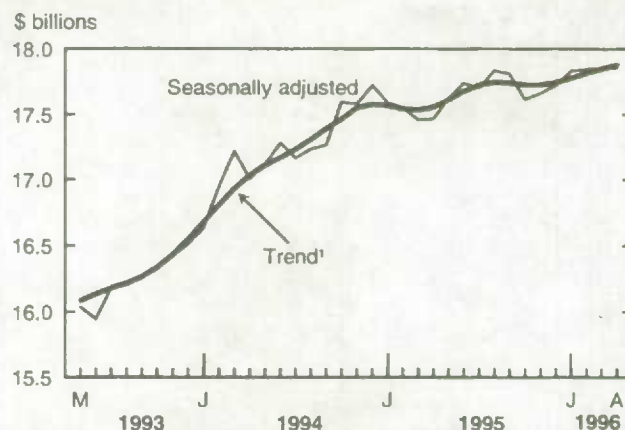
**R**etail sales remained stable in April 1996 at \$17.8 billion. This was slightly higher than sales in January 1996, but essentially the same as the mid-1995 level. This contrasts with the sustained sales growth of the three previous years.

Sales rose in four of the seven sectors (accounting for almost 60% of total sales), led by the automotive, clothing and general merchandise sectors. Sales in the automotive sector (which includes new and used car dealers, gasoline service stations, and parts, accessories and service outlets) rose for a sixth straight month (+0.7%). This advance was due to higher sales by gasoline service stations, which were the result of increased gas prices.

A 1.6% advance in the clothing sector almost offset March's 1.8% loss. Sales by other clothing stores and women's clothing stores both grew, while purchases in men's clothing stores remained weak.

Furniture retailers' sales fell 4.3%, more than offsetting increases in February and March. The trend in this sector has been falling since February 1995, following strong and steady

### Retail sales



<sup>1</sup> Trend represents smoothed seasonally adjusted data.

### Retail trade, April 1996 Seasonally adjusted

	Retail sales	
	\$ million	% change, previous month
<b>Canada</b>	<b>17,828</b>	<b>0.0</b>
Newfoundland	289	0.8
Prince Edward Island	81	-0.8
Nova Scotia	543	-2.7
New Brunswick	449	1.3
Quebec	4,137	-0.3
Ontario	6,516	0.1
Manitoba	634	1.0
Saskatchewan	585	0.9
Alberta	1,902	0.4
British Columbia	2,628	0.0
Yukon	23	6.6
Northwest Territories	41	0.8

growth in 1994. Food store sales have been experiencing a downward trend since April 1995. Drug store sales have risen since April 1995, offsetting poor sales between September 1994 and March 1995. General merchandise sector sales have been rising steadily since mid-1993.

Among the eight provinces and territories with higher sales, Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick posted the strongest advances in dollar terms. Lower sales in Quebec, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island countered these gains. Sales remained unchanged in British Columbia.

Early estimates of May sales indicate increases in new motor vehicle and department store sales. Trade employment rose 0.1% in May. Retail sales in the United States increased 0.8% after falling 0.1% in April.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299, 2398-2417 and 2420.

The April 1996 issue of *Retail trade* (63-005-XPB, \$20/\$200) will be available soon. For further information on this release, contact Louise G  n  reux, Industry Division (613-951-3549).

## Transportation prices still behind rise in CPI

In May 1996, consumers paid 1.5% more for the goods and services measured by the consumer price index (CPI) than they had twelve months before. This increase was marginally higher than the 1.4% annual rise in both March and April.

More than half of May's annual increase was due to higher transportation charges, especially for new vehicles, gasoline, auto insurance and air fares. Consumers also faced significant price increases for telephone services, rental accommodation and restaurant meals. On the other hand, they gained some relief from lower fresh vegetable prices, mortgage interest charges, and new house prices.

Between April and May, the cost of goods and services climbed 0.3%. While this rise was dominated by a jump in gasoline prices, traveller accommodation charges also increased significantly. Lower food prices, however, offset some of the advance.

Gasoline prices climbed 6.2%, following rises of 3.5% and 3.9% in March and April respectively. Higher crude oil prices were mostly responsible for the increase. According to the raw materials price index, the price of crude oil rose 41% between November 1995 and April 1996. Small inventories, increases in world demand, and uncertainty concerning the impact of Iraq's re-entry into the international market contributed to the rising prices. Traveller accommodation charges rose 8.1%, reflecting the introduction of summer rates in several cities. This was an unusually large increase for this time of year.

Other monthly price advances that affected consumers included increasing home maintenance and repair charges across Canada, rising electricity rates in Quebec, and higher course fees and memberships for golfers in Ontario. In addition, the prices of household textiles (e.g., towels, window coverings, bedsheets, comforters) rose noticeably and, for the first time this year, cigarette prices climbed as well.

On the good-news side, consumers benefitted from price declines for fresh vegetables, beef, bakery products, and fresh fruit. Clothing and footwear prices were also down, although by a smaller amount than what is normal for May.

Across Canada, annual increases in provincial CPIs varied from 1.2% in New Brunswick and British Columbia to 2.3% in

### The Consumer price index, May 1996

% change, previous year\*

Province/ territory	All- items	Food	Energy	Housing	Transportation
<b>Canada</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>4.4</b>
Newfoundland	1.4	1.7	0.3	0.2	3.3
Prince Edward Island	2.0	0.5	0.8	0.9	3.7
Nova Scotia	1.8	0.4	5.4	1.8	3.5
New Brunswick	1.2	-1.2	2.3	1.5	2.4
Quebec	1.7	1.7	5.8	1.0	4.0
Ontario	1.3	0.0	2.1	-0.1	4.7
Manitoba	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.5	5.4
Saskatchewan	1.5	0.9	2.5	2.5	2.6
Alberta	2.3	1.8	3.4	1.5	4.2
British Columbia	1.2	0.3	7.0	-1.3	5.3
Whitehorse	1.5	-0.1	5.2	-0.2	5.7
Yellowknife	2.3	2.6	5.1	1.5	5.4

\* Data are not seasonally adjusted.

Alberta. A drop in the prices of food, alcoholic beverages and tobacco products, and a less-than-average rise in transportation charges explained the low rate in New Brunswick. Steeper-than-average price declines in clothing and footwear, owned accommodation, and household furnishing held down inflation in British Columbia. The large rise in Alberta resulted from above-average price increases for food purchased from stores, utilities, household operations, traveller accommodation and tuition fees.

Between April and May, movements in provincial CPIs varied from no change in Prince Edward Island to an increase of 1.2% in Nova Scotia. A very small change in gasoline prices and a larger-than-average decline in food prices contributed to PEI having the lowest rate. Meanwhile, a large jump in gasoline prices and increasing telephone service charges were responsible for Nova Scotia's highest rate.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 7440-7454, 7477 and 7478.

The May 1996 issue of *The consumer price index* (62-001-XPB, \$10/\$100) is now available. For further information, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-2848; the Internet: shadsan@statcan.ca), Prices Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

## Canada attracts more American visitors

The rising trend in overnight travel to Canada by foreigners continued in April with a new high of 1.5 million overnight trips.

Americans contributed most to this increase, as they made 1.1 million overnight stays in Canada. Overnight trips by overseas residents decreased slightly compared with March's peak of 373,000.

Canadians made 1.6 million trips of at least one night outside the country in April, 2.4% fewer than the month before. Overnight trips to the United States dropped to 1.3 million. Mean-

### 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.

while, Canadians' overnight trips overseas remained stable at 310,000 trips.

Canadians made 3.1 million same-day cross-border car trips to the United States in April, a 0.6% decrease from March. The number of car excursions by Americans to Canada was stable at 2.1 million.

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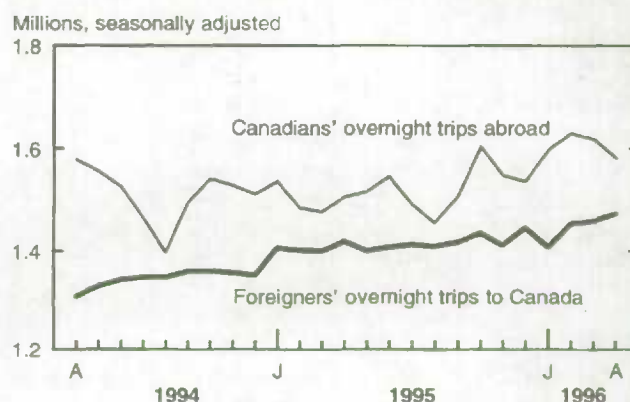
## International travel between Canada and other countries, April 1996

	% change, previous month		% change, previous year	
	'000		'000	
	seasonally adjusted		unadjusted	
<b>Canadian trips abroad</b>				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same-day	3,110	-0.6	3,014	-1.4
One or more nights	804	-1.8	780	-6.6
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States <sup>1</sup>	1,271	-3.0	1,302	1.5
Other countries	310	0.1	298	1.8
<b>Travel to Canada</b>				
Auto trips to the United States				
Same-day	2,066	-0.2	1,757	4.4
One or more nights	698	1.2	444	-12.5
Total trips, one or more nights				
United States <sup>1</sup>	1,101	1.5	735	-1.5
Other countries <sup>2</sup>	372	-0.3	237	11.1

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

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

## Overnight trips between Canada and other countries



Available on Cansim: matrices 2661-2697, 5780-6046 and 8200-8328.

The April 1996 issue of *International travel, advance information* (66-001-PPB, \$7/\$70) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Ruth Martin (613-951-1791; fax: 613-951-2909; the Internet: martrut@statcan.ca), Education, Culture and Tourism Division.

## Spending on home renovation plunges

The home renovation market received a significant financial blow in 1995. Homeowners spent 6% less on improving and maintaining their homes during the year. In total, renovations cost them just over \$12.0 billion, close to the recession level of 1991, and about \$1.8 billion below the pre-recession peak of 1989.

Homeowners spent slightly less on do-it-yourself projects, and far less on contractors. Expenditures on contractors dropped 8.8% to \$7.2 billion, the second straight annual decline. The value of materials that homeowners purchased separately to do their own repairs and renovations fell 1.4% to \$4.8 billion. This decline came on the heels of a substantial 16.6% increase the year before.

Spending on home renovations mirrors, to a certain extent, the housing market. People who move usually do some renovations to tailor their new home to their own tastes. In 1995, both the existing and new housing markets dropped considerably. On the existing home market, the number of units sold with the Multiple Listing Service was down 13.4%. New housing construction performed even worse, as the number of homes built in 1995 fell 26.3%.

## Total homeowner repair and renovation expenditure

	1994	1995	1994 to 1995
	\$ millions, current		% change
<b>Canada</b>	<b>12,814</b>	<b>12,047</b>	<b>-6.0</b>
Newfoundland	295	247	-16.3
Prince Edward Island	55	65	18.2
Nova Scotia	411	401	-2.4
New Brunswick	307	260	-15.3
Quebec	2,971	2,647	-10.9
Ontario	5,103	4,720	-7.5
Manitoba	461	415	-10.0
Saskatchewan	355	386	8.7
Alberta	1,046	1,064	1.7
British Columbia	1,809	1,843	1.9

Homeowners on average spent \$1,660 fixing and upgrading their homes. This was a 7.7% decline from 1994 and the smallest amount since data were first collected.

The average amount paid for contractors hit a record low of \$999.

Across Canada, homeowners in Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Alberta increased their total

(continued on page 5)

### ... Spending on home renovation plunges

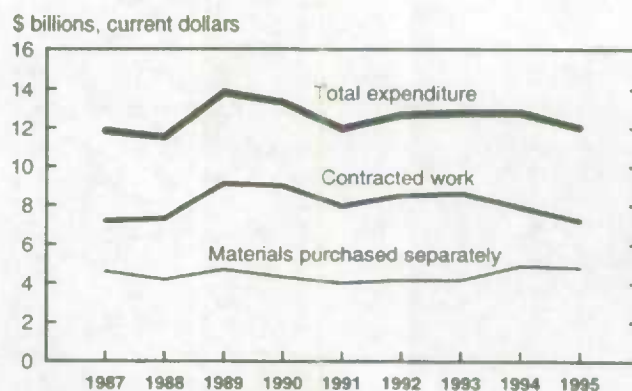
spending on home repairs and renovations. However, in British Columbia and Alberta these increases were merely reflecting a rise in the number of homeowners. In Prince Edward Island and Saskatchewan, projects conducted with materials purchased separately by homeowners were responsible for the rise in total expenditures.

On the other hand, the total amounts spent on renovation activities in each of the two largest markets, Ontario and Quebec, declined by more than \$300 million in 1995. Contractors in these two provinces suffered deeply from these reductions, which were the largest since 1991.

Homeowners in Ontario still preferred contracting out to do-it-yourself projects. They allocated 66.5% of their renovation budget on contracted work, a higher rate than any other province. As for homeowners in Quebec, the decline in contracted work made them second only to Newfoundlanders as the most avid do-it-yourselfers.

*Preliminary tables from the 1995 Homeowner Repair and Renovation Survey are now available. Homeowner repair and renovation expenditure in Canada, 1995 (62-201-XPB, \$30) will be released in December. For further information,*

### Homeowner renovation market



contact Data Dissemination Unit (613-951-4633, the Internet: [expenditures@statcan.ca](mailto:expenditures@statcan.ca)) or Paul Gratton (613-951-4165), Household Surveys Division.

## Families are becoming more diverse

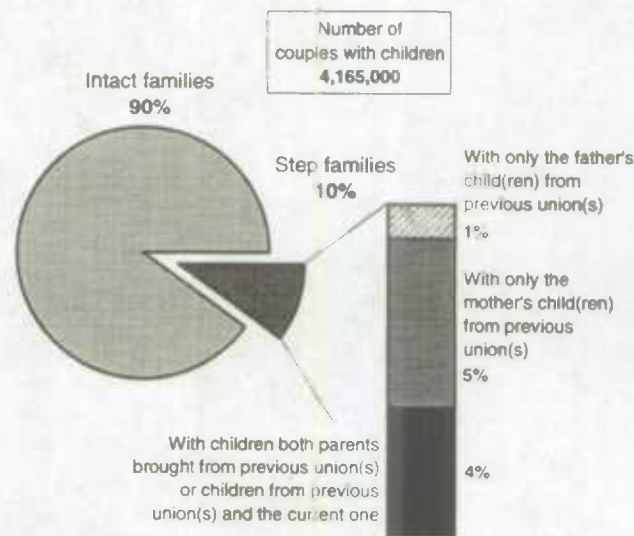
Canadian families have become more diverse as a result of increases in divorce, separation, re-marriage and cohabitation on the one hand, and drops in mortality, fertility and marriage on the other. The once dominant family form — married couples with children — has become less common. The proportion of married couples has fallen from 55% of all families in 1981 to 45% in 1995.

This decline has been balanced by the relative growth of other forms of families. Between 1981 and 1995, the proportion of common-law couples doubled from 6% to 12% of all families. During the same period, lone-parent families rose from 11% to 14%, while the proportion of married couples without children increased from 28% in 1981 to 30% in 1995.

Step-families (families in which at least one of the children in the household is from a previous relationship of one of the parents) are a growing phenomenon. Estimates indicate that in 1995, 10% (about 430,000) of all families made up of couples with children were step — families. Of those, slightly over half consisted of couples who were currently married; the rest were common-law couples. The increase in marriage dissolution and the growth in common-law relationships have made step-families more diverse than years ago, when they were the result of remarriage after the death of a spouse. In 1995, slightly over 50% of step families consisted of children who lived with their biological mother and a stepfather. Step-families consisting only of children living with their biological father and a step-mother represented 13% of all step-families. Some 37% of all step-families were “blended” — each parent brought children to the family.

By contrast, “intact” families, those in which all children live with their biological or adoptive parents, represented 90% of all

### Couples with children, 1995



families consisting of couples with children. The vast majority (94%) were headed by married couples; the remaining 6% were headed by common-law couples.

The growth in common-law relationships (which almost tripled between 1981 and 1995) reflects the changing attitudes of Canadians towards marital union. It appears that common-law union is not only a prelude to marriage, but also an alternative to marriage and remarriage. Quebec continued to lead the country in the number of common-law unions. They accounted for 21% of all families within Quebec in 1995, compared with only 7% in

(continued on page 6)

### ... Families are becoming more diverse

1981. In 1995, for the rest of Canada, the proportion of common-law families was about 9%.

Between 1981 and 1995, the number of lone-parent families grew from 712,000 to more than 1.1 million. Lone-parent families also rose as a proportion of all families with children.

During the 1950s and 1960s, more than 60% of all lone parents were widows or widowers. By 1981, however, 52% of all lone parents were either separated or divorced. This proportion reached 55% in 1995. Widows and widowers made up a smaller share of total lone parents: only 16% in 1995 compared with 33% in 1981.

In 1981, one in 10 lone parents were single, never-married. By 1995, one in four fell into this group. Single, never-married people raising children on their own could have been the result of the breakdown of a common-law union in which children were present, or the result of a woman or man raising children on their own.

*A fact sheet with additional information on Canadian families is available in paper version (12F0061XPE) and on the Internet (<http://www.statcan.ca>; select "What's New"). To obtain a paper copy, please contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or the General Social Survey Program, Statistics Canada (613-951-2544).*

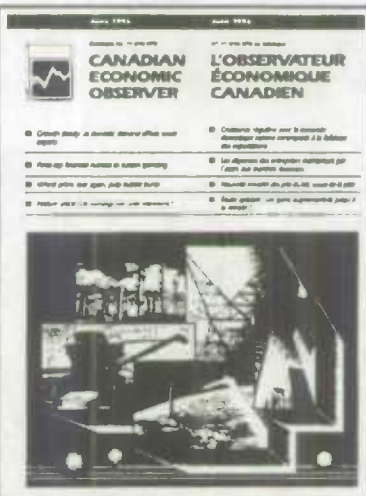
## New from Statistics Canada

### Canadian economic observer

June 1995

The June issue of *Canadian economic observer*, Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, presents a monthly summary of the economy, the major current economic events in May, and a feature article on earnings and age. 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.

The June 1996 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$22/220) is now available. For more information, call Francine Roy (613-951-3627; the Internet: [ceo@statcan.ca](mailto:ceo@statcan.ca)), Current Analysis Group.



### Annual demographic statistics

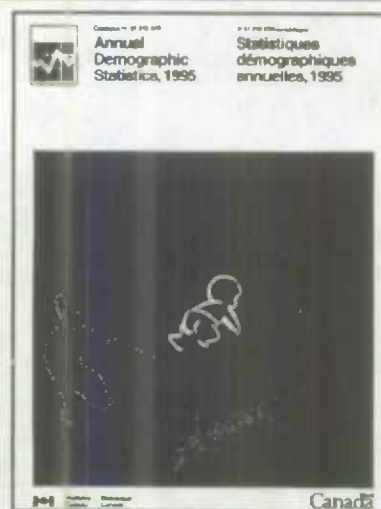
1995

Whether you're an analyst, researcher, planner, decision-maker or simply interested in the evolution of the Canadian population, this report will maximize your efficiency and meet your population data needs. In one volume, you'll get the most recent information on population by age, sex and marital status, census families, vital statistics, international, interprovincial and intraprovincial migration, and population projections up to the year 2000.

New this year are population estimates by age and sex for census divisions and census metropolitan areas, as well as total population projections for census metropolitan areas up to 2000.

If you are familiar with demographic data, then you know that migration plays an important role in population growth. More than one-third of the 70 tables in this publication examine migration according to different variables — geographic level, direction of migratory flow, age and sex. These data will give you a sound understanding of the major factors affecting growth.

The 1995 edition of *Annual demographic statistics* (91-213-XPB, \$65) is now available. For further information, contact Lise Champaign (613-951-2320; fax: 613-951-2307; the Internet: [chamlis@statcan.ca](mailto:chamlis@statcan.ca)), Demography Division.



### StatCan: CANSIM directory disc

June 1996

The *StatCan: CANSIM directory disc* serves as a guide to the data contained in the CANSIM time series database. On-line access to this database is available world-wide through a number of distributors.

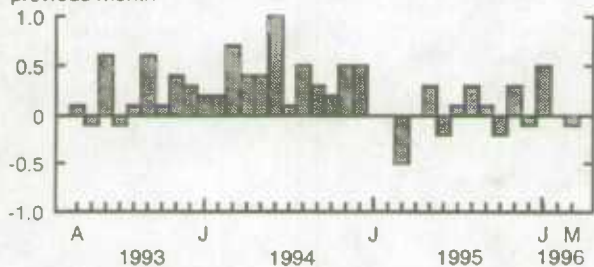
The compact disc makes directory searching fast and easy. You can search by keyword and by topic. The disc also contains a thesaurus of terms used by Statistics Canada and an instructional module called "About Statistics Canada data", which gives you more information on the data and services available from the Agency.

The June 1996 version of the *StatCan: CANSIM directory disc* is now available. An annual subscription to this directory consists of four quarterly issues (Canada: \$100; United States: \$120; other countries: US\$140). For further information about the *StatCan: CANSIM directory disc*, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.

## Current trends

### Gross domestic product

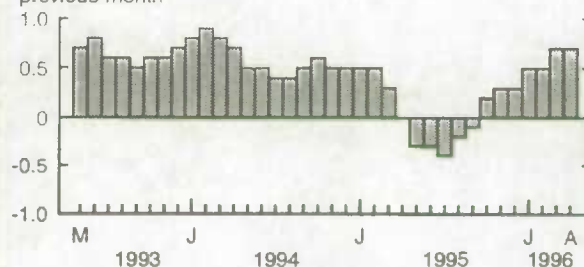
% change,  
previous month



Real gross domestic product at factor cost fell 0.1% in March.

### Composite index

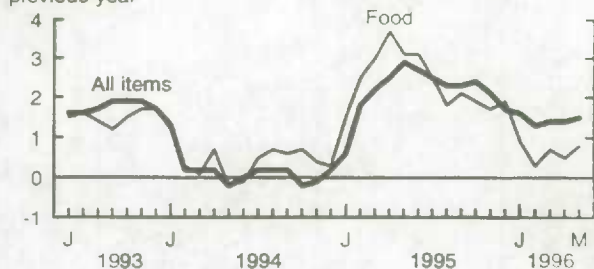
% change,  
previous month



The composite index continued to grow by 0.7% in April, the same rate as in March.

### Consumer price index

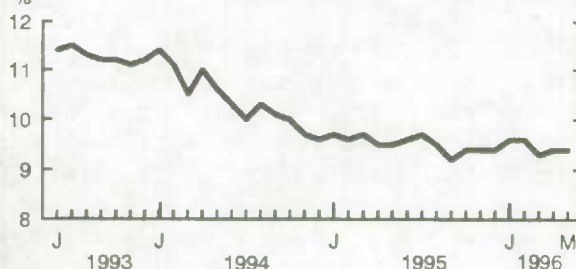
% change,  
previous year



Consumers paid 1.5% more for goods and services in May 1996 than the year before. Food prices rose by 0.8%.

### Unemployment rate

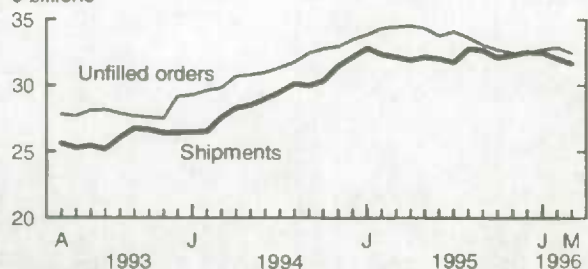
%



In May, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 9.4%.

### Manufacturing

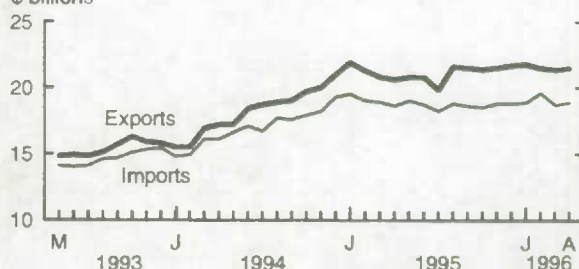
\$ billions



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 April, the value of merchandise exports rose 0.8% from March to \$21.5 billion. Imports advanced 1.0% to \$18.9 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)	March	545.3	-0.1%	0.8%
Composite index (1981=100)	April	176.7	0.7%	1.7%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	1st quarter	21.6	-7.5%	-7.2%
Capacity utilization (%)	1st quarter	82.8	-0.1†	-3.0†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	April*	17.8	0.0%	2.2%
New motor vehicle sales ('000 units)	April	89.8	-6.5%	1.2%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	May	13.7	-0.1%	1.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	May	9.4	0.0†	-0.1†
Participation rate (%)	May	64.8	-0.1†	-0.1†
Labour income (\$ billion)	March	35.2	-1.0%	2.2%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	March	577.45	0.2%	0.9%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	April*	21.5	0.8%	4.4%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	April*	18.9	1.0%	1.6%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	April*	2.6	0.0	0.6
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
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
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	May*	135.7	0.3%	1.5%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	April	128.8	-0.1%	0.6%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	April	139.0	3.0%	3.5%
New housing price index (1986=100)	April	131.6	-0.5%	-2.7%

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

\* new this week.

† percentage point.

## Infomat

### A weekly review

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