



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, June 28, 1996

OVERVIEW

◆ Shipments bounce back

Manufacturing shipments bounced back in April as the motor vehicle industry recovered from a March slowdown caused by two U.S. brake-plant strikes.

◆ Foreign investment in Canadian securities continues to climb

In April, foreigners added to their holdings of Canadian securities for a third straight month. Meanwhile, Canadians acquired a significant amount of foreign securities, especially stocks.

◆ Composite index maintains its growth

Rising final demand, higher housing starts, and rebounding exports contributed to the continued steady growth of the composite index in May.

◆ Number of UI beneficiaries declines

In April, the number of regular unemployment insurance beneficiaries was the lowest since 1981. However, the amount of benefit payments increased from March.

◆ Industrial prices edge forward

In May, industrial prices increased from both April 1996 and May 1995.

◆ Prices for raw materials fall

The price manufacturers paid for raw materials fell between April and May, due almost entirely to crude oil prices, which dropped for the first time this year.

◆ Wholesale trade virtually unchanged

Following three straight months of growth, sales by wholesalers remained practically unchanged in April.

Shipments bounce back

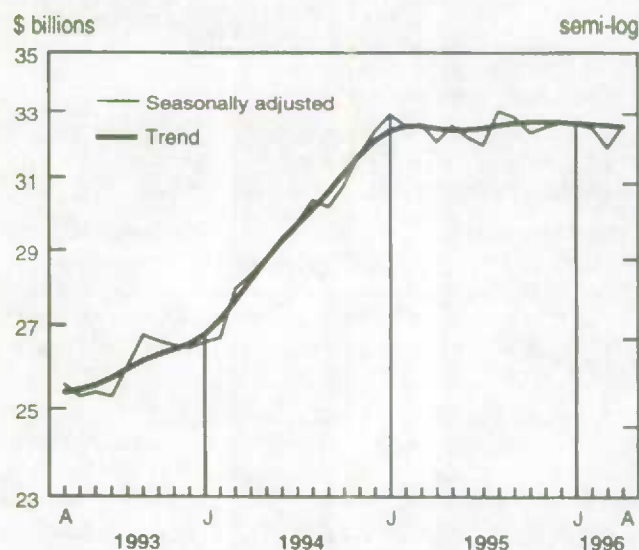
Manufacturing shipments bounced back in April as the motor vehicle industry recovered from a March slowdown caused by two U.S. brake-plant strikes. Despite the large April increase, shipments have shown little sustained upward momentum since January 1995, and are still below the level reached at that time.

Total manufacturing shipments rose 2.2% in April, to settle at \$32.5 billion. The advances were widespread and occurred in 14 of the 22 major industry groups, accounting for 68.5% of total shipments. April's increase was due mostly to rising motor vehicle (+12.3%) and motor vehicle parts and accessories (+7.2%) shipments. Other significant increases occurred in the primary metals and the chemical products industries. These gains were partly offset by decreases in the paper and allied products and the machinery industries.

The value of inventories edged down slightly in April, falling 0.1% to \$45.6 billion. April's flat result confirms that inventory growth has come to a standstill in recent months, after a prolonged accumulation over the last three years. The largest decrease came

(continued on page 2)

Shipments



... Shipments bounce back

from the wood industry, but declines were also recorded in the primary metals and the paper and allied products industries. These drops were counterbalanced by increases in the refined petroleum and coal, and the motor vehicle industries.

The inventories-to-shipments ratio fell to 1.40 from 1.43 in March. 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.)

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

Manufacturers' shipments, April 1996 Seasonally adjusted

Province	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	32,547	2.2
Newfoundland	122	-6.6
Prince Edward Island	60	14.4
Nova Scotia	510	5.1
New Brunswick	615	-4.7
Quebec	7,804	1.7
Ontario	17,362	3.8
Manitoba	739	-1.7
Saskatchewan	393	-4.9
Alberta	2,345	-2.3
British Columbia	2,590	0.4

Note to readers

The estimated values of shipments, inventories and orders have been revised back to January 1994. For the first time, seasonally adjusted provincial data are available (see table).

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.

The backlog of unfilled orders, a key determinant of future shipments, fell 1.0% to \$33.6 billion. This is the second decline in a row, and leaves unfilled orders 5.3% below the all-time high in April 1995. Significant decreases were recorded in the motor vehicle and the fabricated metals industries. Partly offsetting these were increases in the electrical and electronic products industry, which continues to see strong growth in orders.

New orders increased by 2.7%, to \$32.2 billion.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9582 and 9583-9593 (new seasonally adjusted provincial data).

The April 1996 issue of *Monthly Survey of Manufacturing* (31-001-XPB, \$19/\$190) will be available shortly. Data for shipments by province in greater detail than normally published are available on request. For further information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9834), Industry Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

Foreign investment in Canadian securities continues to climb

Foreigners continued to purchase Canadian securities for a third straight month, buying a further \$2.9 billion in April. They resumed their investment in bonds while sharply stepping up their purchases of stocks. After two months of heavy buying of Canadian money market instruments, they redeemed some of their investments in April.

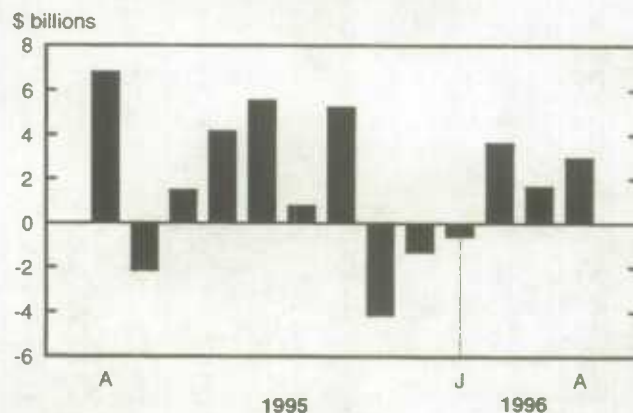
Meanwhile, Canadian residents acquired a significant amount of foreign securities, especially stocks. They have invested \$5.6 billion so far this year, as much as during all of 1995.

Foreigners purchased \$3.1 billion of Canadian bonds in April after selling a similar amount over the previous two months. While continuing to purchase new issues of Canadian bonds, they also acquired existing bonds after three months of withdrawals from that market. April's total net investment went into federal and corporate bonds.

Foreign investors, mostly Americans, bought \$1.3 billion of Canadian stocks in April, their largest monthly investment in three years. So far this year, they have consistently bought Canadian stocks after selling them off in 1995. In fact, April saw them trade the largest amount ever — nearly \$12 billion. This corresponded to a sharp increase in Canadian share prices as measured by the TSE 300 index.

Canadians invested a further \$1.2 billion in foreign stocks in April, in addition to the \$4.1 billion purchased in the first three months of 1996. The pattern of recent years continued, as over

Foreign investment in Canadian securities*



* Includes bonds, stocks and money market paper.

80% of April's investment went to stocks from countries other than the United States. Canadians purchased \$0.6 billion of foreign bonds, all of which went to U.S. government bonds.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2330.

The April 1996 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (67-002-XPB, \$17/\$170) will be available in July. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments Division.

Composite index maintains its growth

The composite index maintained its steady growth, rising 0.6% in May. Eight of its 10 components continued to expand (compared with nine in April), while two decreased. The upswing in final demand continued to spread, with housing starts rising and exports to the United States rebounding.

The housing index bounced back by 2.2%. The recent pickup in existing housing sales seems to have trickled down to the new housing market, as housing starts regained all of the ground lost so far this year. At the same time, existing home sales returned to their solid growth posted at the start of the year, reflecting low interest rates and prices. Sales of other durable goods continued to gradually recover.

Manufacturing demand was restrained by strikes in the auto industry and slumping pulp and paper sales. Capital goods, how-

ever, remained a source of strength. Manufacturers met their growing manpower needs by increased hiring, rather than through a longer workweek.

The economy was still receiving a good dose of monetary stimulus, to judge by the ongoing rise in the money market supply in May. Meanwhile, the stock market was driven higher by real estate and consumer goods.

The U.S. leading indicator continued to recover, auguring well for Canadian exports which began to rebound in April. Seven of the 11 components were up, led by orders for consumer goods and commodity prices.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.

The June 1996 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$22/\$220) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current trends" on page 8.)

Number of UI beneficiaries declines

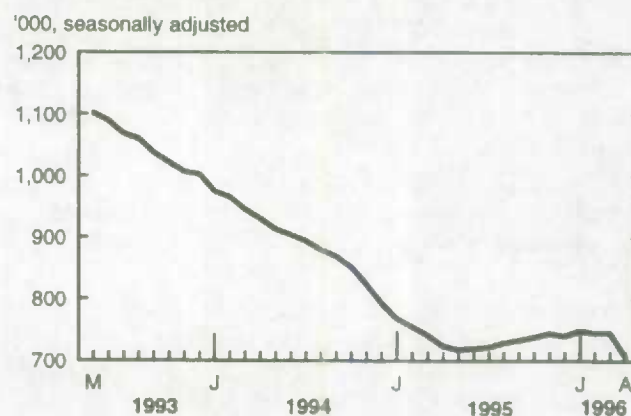
In April, 706,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, a drop of 39,000 (-5.2%) from March. This is the smallest number recorded since November 1981. Declines were widespread, with 25,000 (64%) coming from Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario.

Following two consecutive months of declines, benefit payments increased 1.3% in April, to stand at \$860 million. Eight of the 12 provinces and territories recorded advances, with the largest in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

UI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits, April 1996
Seasonally adjusted

Province/territory	Total ('000)	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	706	-5.2	-2.5
Newfoundland	35	-8.0	-6.7
Prince Edward Island	9	-8.7	-15.5
Nova Scotia	36	-5.8	-4.9
New Brunswick	38	-13.3	-12.2
Quebec	246	-5.2	-1.6
Ontario	183	-3.1	1.9
Manitoba	17	-5.7	-12.6
Saskatchewan	14	-1.6	-6.0
Alberta	45	-7.4	-12.7
British Columbia	82	-2.8	5.6
Yukon	1	-4.0	-5.5
Northwest Territories	1	2.9	23.1

Number of UI beneficiaries receiving regular benefits



The number of individuals who applied for unemployment insurance benefits increased 2.5% to 271,000 in April. All provinces and territories reported rises except Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick and the Yukon.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5717, 5735-5736.

For further information, contact Michael Scrim (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; the Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

Industrial prices edge forward

Industrial products cost 0.9% more in May 1996 than they did a year earlier, the third straight month in which the year-over-year change was less than 1%.

Industrial prices have been almost flat since June 1995. Between June 1995 and May 1996, the monthly change has varied between -0.7% and +0.8%. Between April and May, prices rose 0.5% in the wake of increasing prices for softwood lumber, pork, and exported motor vehicles. Lower prices for newsprint and paper products partly offset the advance.

The most significant price advance in May was for softwood lumber (+8.6%). The corresponding rate in the United States was 8.1%. While lumber prices rose across Canada, increases were the steepest on the Prairies (+21%) and in Quebec (+20%).

The outlook for lumber prices is, however, somewhat uncertain. Although housing starts jumped sharply in Canada in May, they fell in the United States, where the decline was attributed to rising mortgage rates. In addition, the value of Canadian building permits dropped in both March and April. It is also of some concern that Canada is rapidly reaching the quarterly quota for lumber exports to the United States, after which an import tariff will be triggered.

The U.S. dollar gained 0.9% in value against the Canadian dollar between mid-April and mid-May, increasing the value of all export prices quoted in U.S. currency. Prices for motor vehicles, pulp, paper, and wood products were particularly affected because producers frequently quote export prices for these items in U.S. dollars. Excluding the effect of the exchange rate, the overall increase in May's industrial prices would have been 0.3% rather than 0.5%.

Prices for pork at the manufacturers' level rose 6.2% and stood 18.4% higher than in November 1995. At the consumer level, pork prices advanced 2.4% in May to stand 8.5% higher than in November.

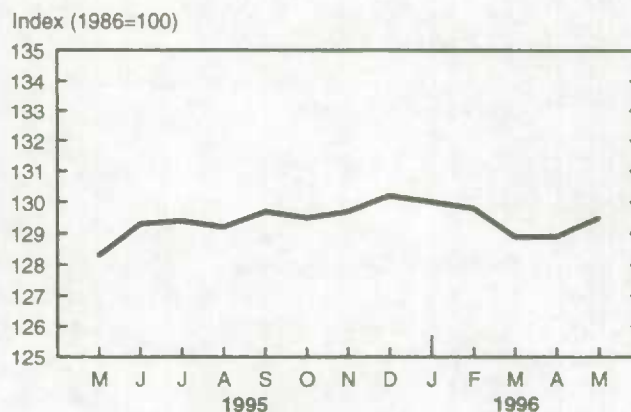
The decline in pulp prices almost came to a halt. The index edged down only 0.1%. However, prices continued to fall for both newsprint (-1.6%) and paper products (-0.8%). In the United States, the drop in newsprint prices was much steeper (-6.0%).

Note to readers

The industrial product price index (IPPI) reflects the prices producers receive as goods leave their plants. It does not reflect what consumers pay. Unlike the consumer price index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all costs (including transportation, wholesale, and retail) occurring from the time a good leaves a plant and a final user takes possession.

Since Canadian export producers often quote their prices in foreign currencies, changes in the exchange rate affect the IPPI. A 1.0% change in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar has been estimated to change the IPPI by about 0.2%.

Industrial product prices



Available on CANSIM: matrices 2000-2008.

The May 1996 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPE, \$21/\$210) will be available at the end of July. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; the Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Note to readers

The raw materials price index (RMPI) reflects the prices paid by Canadian manufacturers for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in world markets. Also, unlike the industrial product price index, the RMPI includes goods not produced in Canada.

Between April and May, animal and animal product prices were up 3.6%. Higher prices for hogs, furs, hides and skins, and chickens led the increase. Compared with the year before, animal and animal product prices advanced almost 9% on the strength of hog, fish, and chicken prices.

(continued on page 5)

Prices for raw materials fall

The price manufacturers paid for raw materials fell 0.9% in May due almost entirely to crude oil prices, which dropped for the first time this year.

The cost of crude oil, which had been rising all year, fell 9% between April and May, largely because of increasing supplies. Prices for wood, aluminum materials and sugar also dropped, but these declines were largely offset by higher costs for hogs, copper grains and oilseeds. If mineral fuels — 90% of which is crude oil — were excluded, raw material prices for May would have actually increased 2.5%.

On a 12-month basis, manufacturers paid 3.4% more for raw materials than in May 1995. Again, excluding mineral fuels, the year-over-year rise would have been 1.3%.

... Prices for raw materials fall

Vegetable product prices rose more than 6% from April and almost 22% compared with 12 months earlier. May's price increase was due to grains, oilseeds, potatoes, tobacco, and coffee. Compared with May 1995, higher prices for grains and oilseeds were slightly offset by lower prices for potatoes, unrefined sugar, coffee and rubber.

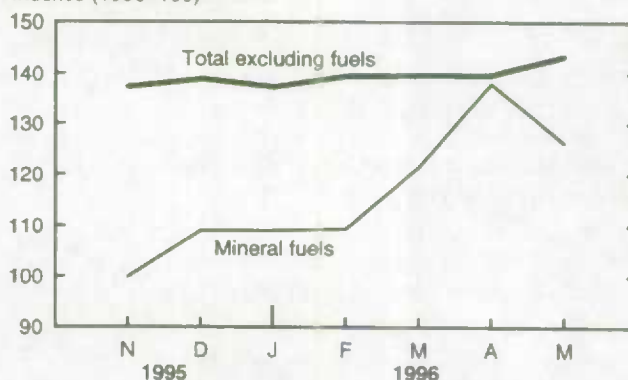
In May, non-ferrous metal prices were up 2.3% from the month before, mostly on the strength of copper concentrates. From May 1995, these prices slipped by more than 1%, the result of falling prices for aluminum materials and metals used for alloys.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2009.

The May 1996 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$21/\$210) will be available at the end of July. For further information, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; the Internet: danipau@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Raw material prices

Indexes (1986=100)



Wholesale trade virtually unchanged

Following three straight months of growth, sales by wholesalers remained practically unchanged in April. Despite this pause, wholesalers have recuperated the losses accumulated in 1995 — monthly sales for the past two months are the highest since the February 1995 peak.

Wholesale trade, April 1996 Seasonally adjusted

	Sales	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	20,739	-0.1
Newfoundland	169	-4.8
Prince Edward Island	48	-0.4
Nova Scotia	525	4.0
New Brunswick	305	0.1
Quebec	4,692	1.1
Ontario	8,863	-3.4
Manitoba	754	2.3
Saskatchewan	626	5.1
Alberta	1,971	1.8
British Columbia	2,759	5.1
Yukon	13	15.6
Northwest Territories	15	-1.3

Total sales for April amounted to \$20.7 billion, down slightly (-0.1%) from March. Sales increases in 6 of the 11 trade groups were offset by declines in the 5 other groups. The largest gains in dollar terms occurred in lumber and building materials and in metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies. Wholesalers of motor vehicles, parts and accessories, and other products recorded the most significant losses.

Since October 1995 (with the exception of one or two months), monthly housing starts have been rising regularly, partly contributing to the growing sales of building materials. Low interest rates, falling prices for existing houses and the surge in job creation since August 1995, also helped stimulate sales in this sector.

Following increases during the previous months, sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories declined steeply in April. While inventories rose 0.3%, sales slumped 4.8%, the strongest downward movement since October 1995. Falling sales of motor vehicles were mostly to blame.

Wholesalers continued to reduce their inventories in April (-0.5% to \$31.6 billion). As a result, the inventories-to-sales ratio decreased for the fifth consecutive month, to 1.53.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 59, 61, 648 and 649.

The April 1996 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008, \$18/\$180) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Catherine Mamay (613-951-9683), Industry Division.

New from Statistics Canada

Energy statistics handbook on diskette

The *Energy statistics handbook* is a comprehensive source of detailed information on the energy field. Data is organized and presented in an easy-to-use manner by energy type: total energy, petroleum, natural gas, electricity, uranium and coal. It also provides supportive sections on prices and conversion factors, such as how to change natural gas and crude oil volumes to a heat equivalent measure. Economic indicators – such as employment, automobile sales and investment expenditures – are included to help understand energy data in a global context.

The electronic format offers many advantages over the print copy. Access to data and reference material is easy: you can search by key word or topic and copy and paste data from tables into spreadsheet applications such as Lotus or Excel. Moreover, with a few keystrokes, entire tables from the *Handbook* can be loaded directly into spreadsheets to allow easy data manipulation.

Energy statistics handbook (57-601-XDE, \$275) is available on diskette. To order this electronic product, contact the Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre nearest you, or order via the Internet at order@statcan.ca. For further information, contact Irfan Hashmi (613-951-3501, hashirf@statcan.ca), Energy Section, Industry Division.

Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics on CD-ROM

1993

The *Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID)* has released its first comprehensive labour market and income data, including new measures of the employment patterns of Canadians. Its public use microdata files on CD-ROM, along with the SLID microdata user's guide, are now also available.

The topics covered by this longitudinal survey include income, labour related information (job characteristics, jobless periods and absences from work), demographics, family relationships and educational activity.

The vol.5, no. 2 issue of *Dynamics* (75-002-XPB, free) is now available. It contains a description of the data available on CD-ROM, and of data which can be obtained on a cost recovery basis. For further information about custom data retrievals, or to order the SLID public use microdata (75M0001XCB, \$1700), or *Dynamics*, contact the Dissemination Unit (613-951-4633; fax: 613-951-3012; the Internet: dynamics@statcan.ca), Household Surveys Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Services indicators

First quarter 1996

The first quarter 1996 issue of *Services indicators* features an article entitled "Access to the information highway". The information highway has grown rapidly in recent years and is expected to grow even more in the near future. To gain a better understanding of how well Canadian households are positioned to join the information society, the article examines household access to telephone, cable, computer and modem technology, focusing on the role of income, employment, education and demographic characteristics.

The issue also reviews the first-quarter movements in the services sector. Services employment, output, consumer spending, imports and exports all increased, while prices remained virtually unchanged.

The first quarter 1996 issue of Services indicators (63-016-XPB, \$34/\$112) is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sussman (613-951-2582), Services, Science and Technology Division.

Industrial monitor on CD-ROM

Industrial monitor on CD-ROM offers expanded data on 165 manufacturing industries and new data for 33 non-manufacturing industries, including construction, wholesale and retail trade. This extremely current information is offered on 24 sectors, and can be purchased by individual sector or as a complete package.

For each industry, up to 50 variables are organized in the table viewer in five table types that include supply, demand, price, labour/employment and investment/capital stock. The underlying database is also available via the series browser for more extensive time series analyses and inter-industry comparisons.

Industrial monitor on CD-ROM is linked to the *Standard industrial classification manual*, which provides "pop-up" textual descriptions for every series, and embodies consistent data conventions — all features designed to make analysis easy and accurate. State-of-the-art functions offer searching, graphing, viewing, exporting and transforming capabilities, providing you with the exact information you require quickly and easily.

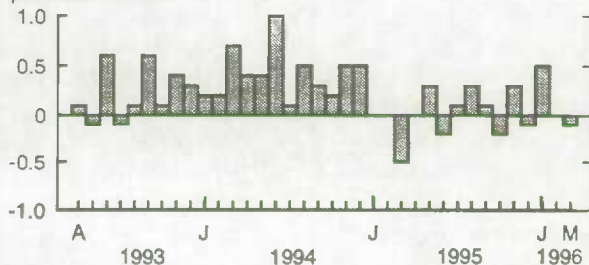
Industrial monitor on CD-ROM is now available. The full package (15F0015XCB) costs \$3,000, a saving of 50% over the annual subscription price of \$250 per individual sector. You will receive an updated CD-ROM once each month. For further information, or to request a CD-ROM demonstration, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre or Milt Ingalls (613-951-9060), Industry Measures and Analysis Division.



Current trends

Gross domestic product

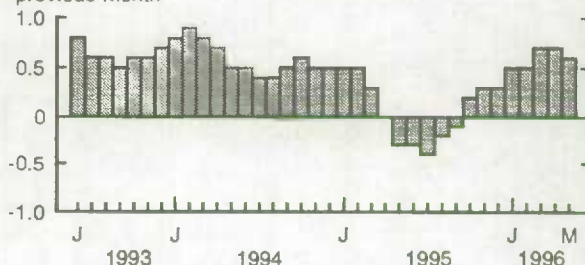
% change,
previous month



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

Composite index

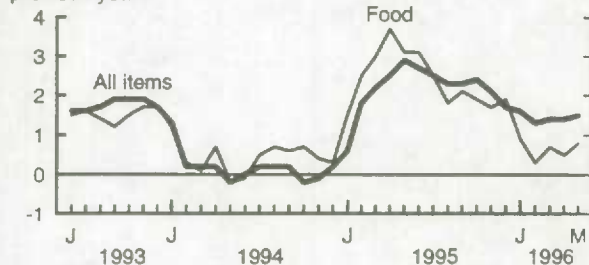
% change,
previous month



The composite index grew by 0.6% between April and May.

Consumer price index

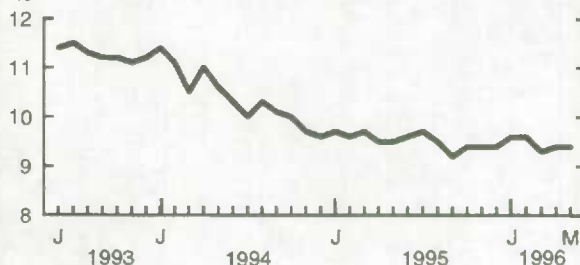
% change,
previous year



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

Unemployment rate

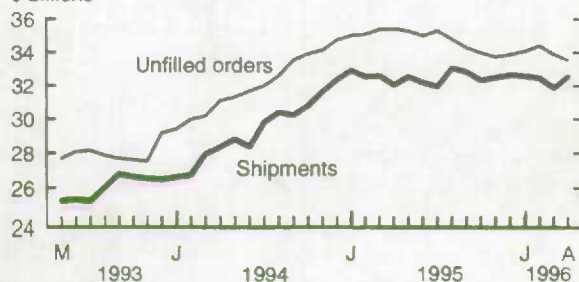
%



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

Manufacturing

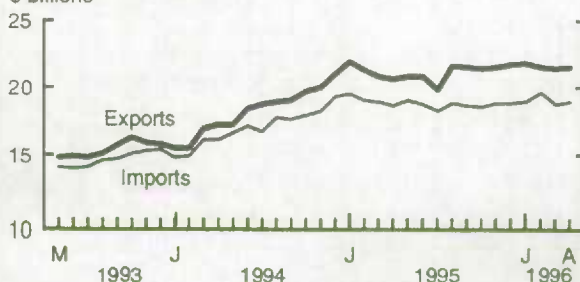
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 2.2% in April to \$32.5 billion. The level of unfilled orders fell 1.0% to \$33.6 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
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1986)	April*	548.1	0.5%	1.3%
Composite index (1981=100)	May*	177.8	0.6%	2.7%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	1st quarter	21.6	-7.5%	-7.2%
Capacity utilization (%)	1st quarter	82.8	-0.1†	-3.0†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	April	17.8	0.0%	2.2%
New motor vehicle sales ('000 units)	April	89.8	-6.5%	1.2%
LABOUR				
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 (\$)	April*	575.48	-0.2%	1.3%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
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
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	April*	32.5	2.2%	1.6%
New orders (\$ billion)	April*	32.2	2.7%	0.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	April*	33.6	-1.0%	-5.3%
Inventory/shipments ratio	April*	1.40	-0.03	0.03
PRICES				
Consumer price index (1986=100)	May	135.7	0.3%	1.5%
Industrial product price index (1986=100)	May*	129.5	0.5%	0.9%
Raw materials price index (1986=100)	May*	137.9	-0.9%	3.4%
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.

Publications released from June 21 to 27, 1996

Division/title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription		
			Canada (Cdn.\$)	United States	Other countries
			US\$		
AGRICULTURE					
Agriculture economic statistics	June 1996	21-603-UPE	25/50	30/60	35/70
Cereals and oilseeds review	April 1996	22-007-XPB	15/144	18/173	21/202
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS					
Juristat - Violent crime in Canada	Vol. 16, no.6	85-002-XPB	10/90	12/108	14/126
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS					
The labour force	May 1996	71-001-XPB	23/230	28/276	33/322
INDUSTRY					
Construction type plywood	April 1996	35-001-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Department store sales and stocks	May 1996	63-002-XPB	16/160	20/192	23/224
Mineral wood including fibrous glass insulation	May 1996	44-004-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Production and disposition of tobacco products	May 1996	32-022-XPB	6/60	8/72	9/84
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	April 1996	25-001-XPB	7/70	9/84	10/98
Sawmills and planing mills	April 1996	35-003-XPB	11/110	14/132	16/154
Wholesale trade	April 1996	63-008-XPB	18/180	22/216	26/252
INTERNATIONAL TRADE					
Canadian international merchandise trade	April 1996	65-001-XPB	19/182	22/219	26/255
Exports by country					
Microfiche version	1st quarter 1996	65-003-XMB	60/200	72/240	84/280
Paper version	1st quarter 1996	65-003-XPB	120/400	145/480	168/560
LABOUR					
Quarterly estimates of trustee pension funds	4th quarter 1995	74-001-XPB	18/60	22/72	26/84
PRICES					
Average prices of selected farm inputs	May 1996	62-012-XPB	9/48	11/58	13/68
SERVICES, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY					
Science statistics - research and development personnel in Canada	1983 to 1993	88-001-XPB	8/76	10/92	12/107
Services indicators	1st quarter 1996	63-016-XPB	34/112	41/135	48/157

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Key release calendar: JULY 1996

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
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* Release dates for International Trade, the Consumer Price Index and the Labour Force Survey are fixed; dates for other data series may change.

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