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A Weekly Review

CANADA

Friday, November 13, 1998

OVERVIEW

◆ Employment grows for a fourth consecutive month

Employment grew for a fourth consecutive month in October, as the unemployment rate fell to 8.1% — the lowest rate since July 1990.

◆ Manufacturers expect to increase production

With the effects of several labour disputes behind them, manufacturers expect to increase production between October and December.

◆ Residential building permits slow for a second consecutive quarter

In the third quarter, municipalities issued \$4.3 billion worth of residential building permits. It was the second consecutive quarterly decline and the lowest level since the fourth quarter of 1996.

◆ Canadians are changing their eating habits

Canadians are including more vegetables, fruits, grain products, rice, poultry and cheese in their diets than ever before, as their consumption red meat, milk and alcohol declines.

◆ Homicide rate falls to lowest since 1969

In 1997, the homicide rate in Canada continued to decline, falling to its lowest point since 1969.

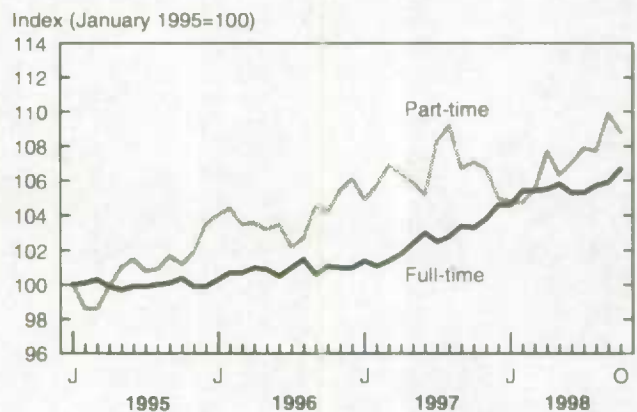
Employment grows for a fourth consecutive month

Employment grew for a fourth consecutive month in October (+57,000). The increase brought overall job growth so far this year to 322,000 (+2.3%). Unemployment declined by 36,000 in the month, causing the unemployment rate to fall by 0.2 percentage points to 8.1% — the lowest rate since July 1990.

Full-time employment jumped by 84,000, with adults aged 25 and over accounting for all of it. Full-time employment has grown by 2.0% (+227,000) in 1998, slightly below the 2.4% growth observed during the same period last year. Part-time employment fell by 27,000 in October. Nevertheless, the strong 3.6% growth in part-time employment this year has accounted for about 30% of the year-to-date job growth in the country. Over the same period in 1997, when growth was predominantly in full-time jobs, part-time employment grew by just 1.0% and accounted for less than 10% of employment growth.

Employment among adult women rose by 27,000 in October, bringing growth to 2.6% since the start of the year. The increase was accompanied by little change in the labour force, so unemployment among adult women fell by 26,000 and their unemployment rate slipped to 6.6%. Among adult men, employment climbed by 45,000, which accounts for more than

Index of full-time and part-time employment



(continued on page 2)

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Canada

... Employment grows for a fourth consecutive month

half the gain so far this year (+95,000 or +1.4%). However, the employment gain in October was nearly matched by growth in the labour force (+40,000). As a result, the unemployment rate for adult men only ticked down to 7.0%. Among youths, meanwhile, employment dipped slightly in October after three months of strong growth. The number of youths participating in the labour force also declined (-20,000), dampening the impact of the job losses and leaving the youth unemployment rate unchanged at 14.7%.

In October, the number of employees in the private sector rose by 40,000. This increase recovered half the jobs lost in the private sector between May and September (-82,000). Growth in the number of employees in the private sector now stands at 142,000 this year (+1.5%). The number of self-employed Canadians edged up in October, bringing the year-to-date increase to 117,000 (+4.7%). The number of public-sector employees was unchanged in October.

October's employment gains were spread widely among industries (goods-producing, +38,000; services, +19,000). Manufacturing employment increased by 43,000, almost all in non-durables. This increase followed three consecutive monthly declines that totalled 110,000. Manufacturing employment is now back to where it started the year. This year's lack of growth sharply contrasts the 5.0% job growth achieved during the same period in 1997.

Employment in construction has grown for four months. With October's increase of 16,000, the gain in 1998 stands at 43,000. This represents a growth rate of 5.7%, more than triple the 1.7% seen last year. In health and social services, employment rose by 16,000 in October, similar to the increase in September, bringing the gain so far this year to 56,000. The number of jobs in finance, insurance and real estate grew by 27,000. Increases over the past few months have offset losses earlier in the year, bringing the growth so far in 1998 to only 5,000 (+0.7%). Following eight months of little change, the number of workers in transportation, storage and communications jumped by 44,000.

In the "other primary industries", the number of jobs fell for a third consecutive month, bringing the losses over the three months to 38,000 (-13.1%) — more than half the jobs lost were in mining, quarrying and oil wells. Following a large increase in September (+84,000), employment in business and personal services fell by 28,000. Employment in this industry has grown by 5.0% since the start of the year, in line with the growth in 1997. Trade employment, which fell by 31,000 in October, is up 1.7% so far this year, still ahead of the 1997 growth rate (+1.0%).

Employment in Ontario grew strongly (+33,000) for a second month. The increase brought the gain over the past two months to 95,000, accounting for more than half the employment growth in the province this year. Quebec's employment was little changed (+13,000), bringing the gain this year to 53,000 (+1.6%). Quebec's unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since July 1990. In Newfoundland, employment jumped by 10,000, so that the gains over the past two months have more than offset all of the losses during July and August. Employment in Newfoundland has now grown by 4.2% since the start of the year, back on track with the growth observed before this summer.

Employment grew in New Brunswick for a third consecutive month, while in Nova Scotia employment climbed by 4,000. In Nova Scotia, October's increase recovered about half the losses that occurred between June and September, leaving employment up by 7,000 so far this year. In Prince Edward Island, employment is at about the same level as at the start of the year. In Alberta, recent job losses have eroded the year-to-date job growth to 30,000 (+2.1%).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3450-3471, 3483-3502 and table 00799999.

*For a summary of the latest labour-market conditions, **Labour force information, for the week ending October 17, 1998** (71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Household Surveys Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Labour Force Survey, October 1998¹

Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	15,701.5	0.1	14,436.4	0.4	1,265.0	8.1
Newfoundland	249.6	4.4	204.5	5.1	45.1	18.1
Prince Edward Island	69.7	-2.0	59.9	-2.0	9.8	14.1
Nova Scotia	452.3	0.1	404.0	0.9	48.4	10.7
New Brunswick	370.7	1.0	328.5	1.3	42.1	11.4
Quebec	3,715.6	-0.2	3,355.1	0.4	360.4	9.7
Ontario	6,091.8	0.4	5,667.2	0.6	424.5	7.0
Manitoba	581.3	-0.3	546.2	-0.2	35.2	6.1
Saskatchewan	508.3	0.0	475.9	-0.1	32.4	6.4
Alberta	1,615.6	-0.5	1,512.2	-0.7	103.3	6.4
British Columbia	2,046.7	0.1	1,882.9	0.4	163.8	8.0

¹ Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.

Manufacturers expect to increase production

In October's Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers indicated that they expected to increase production during the coming three months. Overall they were more satisfied with the level of orders received than they were in the previous survey. Less positive, they were a bit more concerned this survey about finished-product inventories, and they did not anticipate major changes in their workforce in the coming three months.

Manufacturers indicated that they had overcome the uncertainty relating to the summer's labour dispute in the United States. The expected increases were not very widespread, however, with large gains limited to the transportation equipment industries. The balance of opinion regarding production prospects in the next three months jumped 38 points to +27 in October. The transportation equipment industries were the major contributors. (To obtain the +27 balance of opinion, subtract the 16% of manufacturers who stated that production prospects for the next three months are "lower" from the 43% who said prospects are "higher".)

Concerning employment prospects for the next three months, some 73% of manufacturers stated that their workforce would change little. The share of manufacturers expecting to downsize their workforce remained even at 13%, whereas the share planning to increase the size of their workforce fell from 17% in July to 14% in October. The balance of opinion concerning employment prospects was down three points to +1 in the October survey. According to the Labour Force Survey, 53,200 fewer people were employed in manufacturing in September.

Although the manufacturers' balance of opinion about finished-product inventories stood at -17 in October, down five points from July, they were not overly worried compared with the January (-37) and April (-38) surveys of 1991. In October, 79% of manufacturers said their current inventory level was about right, 19% said it was too high and 2% said it was too low. The Monthly

Note to readers

Most responses to the Business Conditions Survey, which is conducted in January, April, July and October, are recorded in the first two weeks of those months. The survey's results are based on replies from about 5,000 manufacturers and are weighted by a manufacturer's shipments or employment. Consequently, larger manufacturers have a correspondingly larger impact on the results.

Except for the data on production difficulties, the data are seasonally adjusted.

Survey of Manufacturers found that manufacturers were holding some \$16.8 billion in finished-product inventory in August, 4.2% more than at the end of 1997.

Manufacturers remain optimistic about the level of new orders received, as the balance of opinion rose six points to +6. The major factor behind the rise was a five-point increase, to 19%, in the share of manufacturers stating that new orders are rising. As for unfilled orders, 73% of manufacturers said their current level is about right (down 7 points), 10% said theirs were higher than normal, while 17% said theirs were lower than normal. The balance of opinion stood at -7, one point lower than the balance in the July survey.

A shortage of skilled labour continued to concern 7% of manufacturers. Only 3% were concerned by a shortage of raw materials in October, down from 13% in July. This drop was mostly attributable to the end of strikes in the United States, which returned the flow of parts in the auto industry to more normal levels. Finally, shortages of working capital were a concern for 2% of respondents, down from 4% in July.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2843-2845.

For further information, contact Claude Robillard (613-951-3507; robilcg@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.

Manufacturers' expectations and business conditions

Seasonally adjusted

	October 1997	January 1998	April 1998	July 1998	October 1998
% of manufacturers who said					
Volume of production in next three months will be:					
About the same as in previous three months	61	68	60	45	61
Higher	26	23	22	22	43
Lower	13	9	18	33	16
Employment in next three months will:					
Change little from previous three months	72	74	70	70	73
Increase	19	17	19	17	14
Decrease	9	9	11	13	13
Finished-product inventory is:					
About right	75	79	80	84	79
Too low	10	6	3	2	2
Too high	15	15	17	14	19
Orders received are:					
About the same	57	60	59	72	68
Rising	35	27	18	14	19
Declining	8	13	23	14	13
Backlog of unfilled orders is:					
About normal	78	74	77	80	73
Higher than normal	11	14	10	7	10
Lower than normal	11	12	13	13	17

Residential building permits slow for a second consecutive quarter

Municipalities issued building permits worth \$8.4 billion during the third quarter of 1998, up 0.9% from the second quarter. An increase in the value of non-residential permits, especially for commercial projects, was enough to offset the drop in residential permits by a slight margin.

Permits for new housing projects decreased 1.6% to \$4.3 billion. It was the second consecutive quarterly decline and the lowest figure since the fourth quarter of 1996. A second quarterly decline in the multi-residential component of the sector (-8.7% to \$1.2 billion) more than offset increased plans for single-family dwellings (+1.4% to \$3.1 billion). As a result, the cumulative value of residential permits issued since January 1998 is now lagging behind the same period in 1997 by 3.3%. This lag has doubled since the end of the preceding quarter.

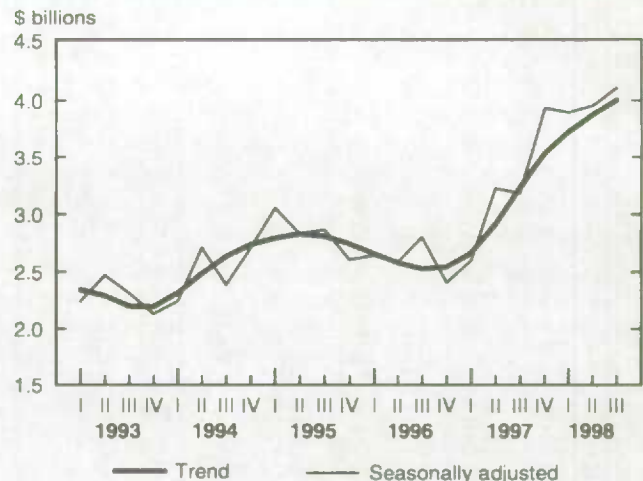
The slower quarterly performance of residential permits is attributable to the strong activity that was seen in the resale market in the January-to-September 1998 period, as well as to the high vacancy rates in the rental markets of most urban centres. High resale activity and high vacancy rates tend to compete against new housing construction. These factors, combined with a number of labour strikes (GM, construction workers, teachers), reduced the demand for new houses. However, some market indicators remain encouraging. Steady new house prices and the continuing low interest rates on mortgages should have a positive effect on new construction activity.

On the other hand, the non-residential sector has remained active since the beginning of 1998. Non-residential construction intentions during the first three quarters of 1998 were 32.8% above the same period of 1997. This is in line with Statistics Canada's most recent Private and Public Investment Survey, which reported high levels of planned private and public investment for 1998. The value of non-residential building permits rose 3.7% from the second quarter to \$4.1 billion in the third. This was the first time since the first quarter of 1990 that the value of non-residential permits has exceeded \$4.0 billion.

The commercial component was the only one to increase in the third quarter. The value of permits for commercial buildings jumped 13.5% to \$2.2 billion. This is the highest quarterly level since the first quarter of 1990. Most of the activity came from building permits for hotels, recreational facilities and warehouses.

The industrial component registered the largest drop, falling 8.7% from the second quarter to \$1.0 billion. However, this

Value of non-residential building permits



decline came after the second quarter hit the highest quarterly figure (\$1.1 billion) since the last quarter of 1989. Most of the decline came from decreased building intentions among factories and plants, which were very active in the preceding quarter.

The institutional component also fell in the third quarter, down 2.7% from the preceding quarter to \$838 million. Even so, this quarterly level compares favourably with most of 1997. The decline in the third quarter was due to slowdowns in building projects at educational institutions; these slowdowns almost completely offset the increased construction intentions at medical, welfare and public administration institutions.

In September, after three monthly increases, municipalities issued building permits worth \$2.8 billion — 4.0% less than in August. Housing construction intentions fell 2.9% to \$1.4 billion. The value of non-residential permits also declined in September, falling 5.2% to \$1.3 billion.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3-7 and 33-48), 129, 137, 443, 989-992, 994, 995 and 4073.

The September 1998 issue of Building permits (64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) is now posted on the Internet at www.statcan.ca. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; burejoa@statcan.ca) or Michel Labonté (613-951-9690; labomic@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

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... Residential building permits slow for a second consecutive quarter

Building permits¹, Third quarter 1998 Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter
Canada	8,432.2	0.9	4,329.1	-1.6	4,103.1	3.7
Newfoundland	57.4	31.6	33.0	18.4	24.4	55.1
Prince Edward Island	35.4	29.8	13.8	-2.2	21.6	64.0
Nova Scotia	155.5	1.8	89.0	11.3	66.5	-8.7
New Brunswick	153.2	32.8	65.0	9.3	88.2	57.8
Quebec	1,469.3	12.8	669.1	4.8	800.2	20.4
Ontario	3,363.0	-0.6	1,849.7	-5.6	1,513.3	6.4
Manitoba	257.2	-26.3	86.3	-3.4	170.8	-34.2
Saskatchewan	159.3	-18.7	74.1	3.6	85.2	-31.5
Alberta	1,445.5	-5.4	751.0	6.8	694.5	-15.9
British Columbia	1,295.8	7.2	672.9	-8.3	623.0	31.4
Yukon	11.3	15.4	5.9	46.1	5.3	-6.3
Northwest Territories	29.4	-20.3	19.4	23.8	10.0	-52.8

¹ Data may not add to totals due to rounding. Some percentage changes should be interpreted with caution because of the small numbers involved.

Canadians are changing their eating habits

At the dinner table, Canadians reach for the humble potato more than any other vegetable. The potato is the principal vegetable crop grown in Canada. Last year, each Canadian ate on average more than 72 kilograms of potatoes, either fresh or as processed products such as french fries and potato chips. In fact, potatoes account for 40% of all the vegetables eaten each year in Canada.

Canadians' overall consumption of vegetables has soared during the past 25 years, as eating habits and lifestyles changed to include healthier foods. In 1997, vegetable consumption amounted to more than 181 kilograms per person, 27% more than in the early 1970s. In terms of fresh vegetables, excluding potatoes, consumption grew from 41 kilograms per person 25 years earlier to just over 68 kilograms in 1997. The growing use of fresh-cut products in the food service industry and in retail grocery outlets is one factor behind this growth. Lettuce, onions, carrots, tomatoes and cabbage were all popular choices last year.

Bananas again topped the list of favourite fruits last year, as consumption averaged almost 14 kilograms per person. Bananas were followed by apples and oranges (including mandarins and clementines), each at 10 kilograms per person. The growing popularity of cantaloupe and watermelon pushed the consumption of all melons to more than 7 kilograms per person in 1997 — double the amount consumed 25 years earlier. The average Canadian ate almost 128 kilograms of fruit in 1997 — a jump of more than 50% compared with the early 1970s. This is due in large measure to higher juice consumption.

A trend toward lower milk consumption is occurring in both Canada and the United States. In 1997, the average Canadian

Note to readers

These data represent the amount of food that is available for consumption from the Canadian food supply, not the actual quantities of food consumed in Canada. This is because the collected data do not allow for the losses that occur in stores, households, private institutions or restaurants.

Statistics Canada now has data on consumption trends of selected products in the United States that can be compared with Canadian data.

consumed 89 litres of fluid milk, a decline of about 8% from the early 1970s; this compared with 91 litres consumed per person in the United States last year, a drop of 23% over the same period. A shift toward lower-fat varieties has also occurred in both countries. However, the trend away from homogenized milk is more pronounced in Canada. In the United States, whole milk accounted for about 34% of all fluid milk consumed in 1997, compared with only 17% in Canada. Reasons for the drop in milk consumption may include an ageing population that drinks less milk, a more ethnically diverse population that does not normally include milk in its diet, and increased competition from juices, bottled water and soft drinks.

Canadians are indeed drinking more soft drinks: 106 litres per person in 1997, an increase of 10 litres per person compared with 1988. Meanwhile, consumption of alcoholic beverages averaged almost 74 litres per person in 1997 — down 22 litres per person from 1987. Of that amount, beer still remains the most popular choice at 62 litres per person. By comparison, Canadians drank almost 5 litres of spirits and 7 litres of wine per person in 1997.

Both Canadians and Americans are increasing their consumption of poultry and are shifting away from red meats. However, Americans are eating more red meat and poultry than Canadians.

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... Canadians are changing their eating habits

The greater demand for poultry was large enough last year to offset the decline in red meat consumption. Processed poultry products, which are convenient and quick to prepare, have become more popular with consumers. Even so, red meat (mainly beef and pork) still accounts for almost two-thirds of all the meat eaten by Canadians. In 1997, consumption of red meat and poultry was 90 kilograms per person. There are several reasons for the shift from red meat. An increasing number of busy families are choosing pre-packaged foods that often contain less red meat. As well, new immigrants from Asia and the Middle East tend to include less meat in their diet. And seniors, who represent a growing share of the population, eat less meat.

Canadians are consuming more cereal grain products: 85 kilograms per person in 1997. Historically, most wheat flour was used in the production of traditional bread and baked goods. In recent years, pasta, cereal-based snack foods and specialty bread products (pita bread, tortilla shells and bagels) have become increasingly popular among consumers. Rice is also gaining popularity, with consumption peaking at 7 kilograms per person in 1997.

Canadian cheese remained in high demand last year as consumption of all cheeses exceeded 11 kilograms per person for a seventh consecutive year. Most of the growth came from the expanding popularity of variety cheeses. Promotional campaigns, the popularity of take-out and/or pre-packaged meals, and versatile cheese products have all contributed to this growth.

Last year, Canadians consumed more than 32 kilograms of oils and fats per person, compared with 21 kilograms 25 years earlier. The growing use of salad and shortening oils is a factor.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2260-2272.

Food consumption in Canada, part II (paper: 32-230-XPB, \$33; Internet: 32-230-XIB, \$25) carries historical data for the 1983-to-1997 period on the consumption of fruits, vegetables, oils and fats, and fish. It also presents related statistical information on production, stocks, international trade and supplies used by manufacturers. Similar information on the consumption of dairy products, beverages, eggs, pulses and nuts, sugars and syrups, cereals, and meats and poultry can be found in **Food consumption in Canada, part I** (paper: 32-229-XPB, \$33; Internet: 32-229-XIB, \$25). For further information, contact Debbie Dupuis (613-951-2553) or Patricia Chandler (613-951-2506; fax: 613-951-3868), Agriculture Division.

Homicide rate falls to lowest since 1969

The national homicide rate dropped 9% in 1997 to 1.92 for every 100,000 population — its lowest point since 1969. The homicide rate has generally been decreasing since the mid-1970s, following rapid growth during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Last year, 581 people were murdered in Canada, 54 less than in 1996. One-third (33%) of the victims were shot, while 29% were stabbed, 20% beaten, 9% strangled and suffocated, and 5% were burned to death (arson).

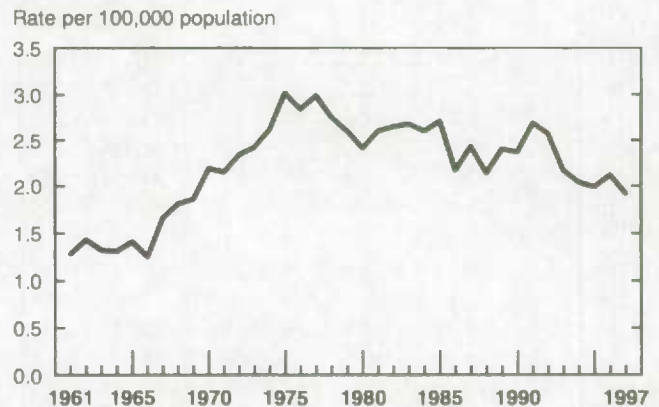
Homicides continue to be committed primarily by someone known to the victim. In 1997, only 13% of all victims, or 58 people, were killed by a stranger, 10 less than in 1996. The proportion of homicides committed by strangers has remained relatively stable in recent years at around 14%.

Women are far more likely to be killed by their spouse than by a stranger. In all, 128 women were murdered in Canada in 1997, slightly more than half were killed by a spouse, ex-spouse, boyfriend or ex-boyfriend. In 1997, 61 women were killed by a current spouse or an ex-spouse, compared with 12 killed by a stranger. Another 12 women were killed by a boyfriend or an ex-boyfriend.

The number of spousal homicides totalled 75 in 1997. Four out of five victims of spousal homicide in 1997 were women. Including both husbands and wives, the number of spousal homicides has gradually been declining from more than 100 each year in the early 1990s. (Spousal homicides include people in registered marriages and common-law relationships, as well as those who were separated or divorced.)

Other homicides involving families in 1997 included 62 children who were killed by a parent, which was higher than the annual average of 51 children during the past 10 years. Almost one in

Canada's homicide rate



three of these homicides was a murder-suicide, most of which were committed by the father. In addition to these children, 18 individuals were killed by a son or by a daughter, 9 by a sibling, and 22 by another relative.

Fewer homicides involved firearms last year. Last year, 193 murders were committed with a firearm of some kind, a 9% decline from the previous year. These represented one-third of all homicides, consistent with previous years. Handguns were used in 99 murders in 1997, down 7% from 1996. Since 1991, handguns have accounted for about 1 in 6 homicides, whereas handguns were used in only 1 in 10 homicides between 1974 and 1990. Actually, most firearm-related deaths in Canada are a result of suicide. In fact, each year there are about five times as many suicides as homicides involving firearms.

(continued on page 7)

... Homicide rate falls to lowest since 1969

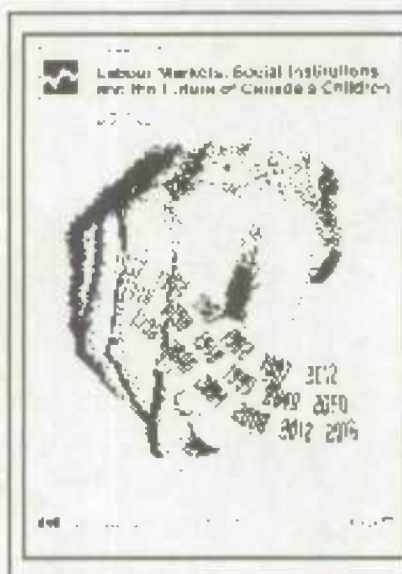
The elderly are at low risk of being murdered despite their fears. Surveys have shown that the elderly have the highest levels of fear of being a crime victim. However, in terms of homicides, Canadians aged 60 and older are really at low risk. In 1997, 72 people aged 60 and older were murdered, a rate of 1.46 for every 100,000 population. By contrast, the rate is 1.92 for all age groups. People aged 18 to 29 had the highest homicide rate last year at 3.39 for every 100,000 individuals in that age group. The lowest rate was 1.16 for children and young people aged 18 and under. Compared with other industrialized countries, Canada's 1997 homicide rate of 1.92 was less than one-third that of the United States (6.70), but higher than most European countries, such as England and Wales (1.00) and France (1.66).

In 1997, one police officer was murdered in Canada, compared with 64 in the United States, which has a population 10 times larger than Canada's. Nine other persons were murdered on the job in Canada last year: three gas bar attendants, three store clerks or managers, two hotel managers or owners, and one bar manager or owner. In addition, 14 known drug dealers and 6 known prostitutes were reported murdered.

Available on CANSIM: tables 00160401 to 00160405.

Juristat vol. 18, no. 12: Homicide in Canada, 1997 (paper: 85-002-XPE, \$10/\$93; Internet: 85-002-XIE, \$8/\$70) is now available. For further information, contact Information and Client Services (613-951-9023 or 1 800 387-2231), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

New from Statistics Canada



Labour markets, social institutions, and the future of Canada's children

Labour markets, social institutions, and the future of Canada's children will be a valuable resource to anyone interested in how Canadian children get ahead in life, and the role that labour markets, families and public institutions (like education, health care, and income transfers) play in the process.

Labour markets, social institutions, and the future of Canada's children is divided into 11 chapters of reports by leading academic researchers and senior analysts from Statistics Canada. These studies examine how Canadian families have responded to changes in employment opportunities and the availability of social benefits. In addition, the analysts look at the extent to which low-income is transmitted across the generations, as well as the impact of parental divorce, education, and low-income on the health, education, and labour market prospects of children.

Labour markets, social institutions, and the future of Canada's children (89-553-XPB, \$35) is now available. For further information, contact Miles Corak (613-951-9047; coramil@statcan.ca), Analytical Studies Branch.

Dimensions series 1996 Census

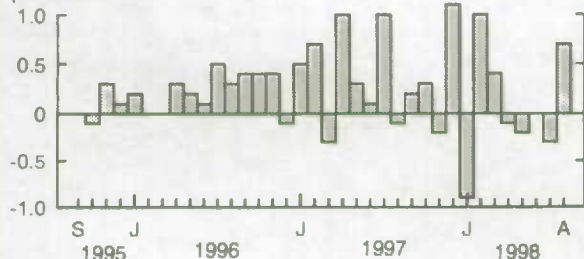
The *Dimensions series* from the 1996 Census demonstrates the analytical potential of census information. The tables in the series are organized into 26 themes that address a specific topic or population group. Seven CD-ROMs, each containing a collection of themes grouped by subject area and each costing \$60, will make up the series when it is completed. These CD-ROMs include the powerful features of the Beyond 20/20 browser, making it a snap to search and sort data and to copy tables and charts to other Windows applications.

Two themes have just been released: *Age, sex, marital status and common-law status — Profile of the population aged 55 and over* (94F0031XDB, \$60); and *Mobility and migration (a) Interprovincial migration patterns by language groups; and (b) Mobility, settlement patterns and geographic concentration of immigrants* (94F0033XDB, \$60). For further information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

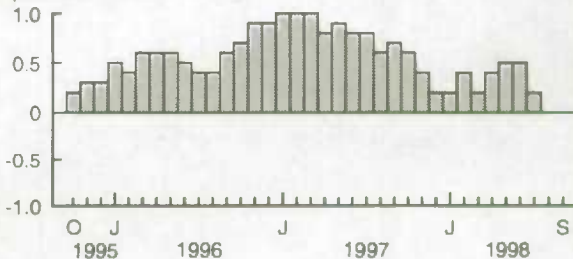
% change,
previous month



Economic activity increased 0.7% in August, recovering lost ground after four months of decline.

Composite Index

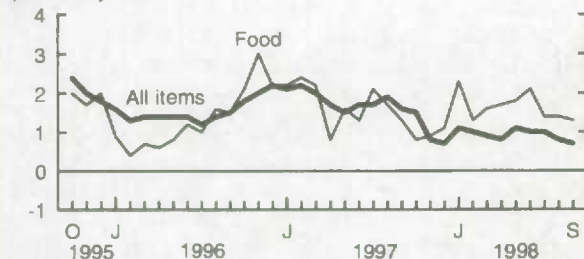
% change,
previous month



In September, the leading indicator continued to show no growth for a second straight month.

Consumer Price Index

% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 0.7% more for goods and services in September 1998 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.3%.

Unemployment rate

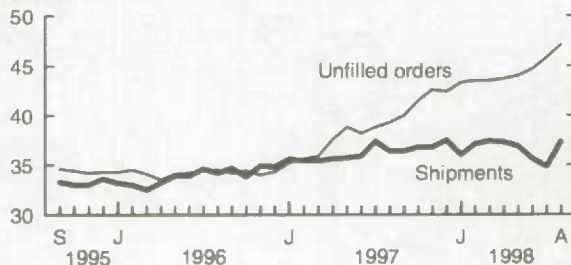
%



In October, the unemployment rate fell to 8.1%, its lowest level since July 1990.

Manufacturing

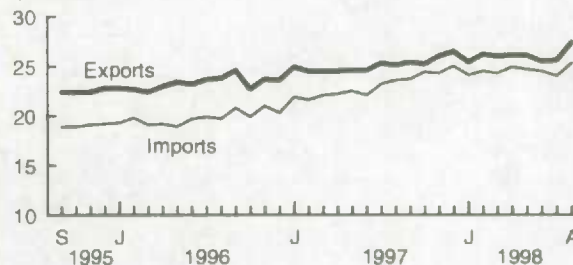
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rebounded a sharp 7.6% in August to \$37.4 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 3.0% to \$47.1 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In August, the value of merchandise exports climbed 7.1% from July to \$27.4 billion. Imports surged 5.3% to \$25.3 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, 1992)	August	710.2	0.7%	2.0%
Composite Index (1981=100)	September	207.2	0.0%	3.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 1998	25.7	- 4.6%	- 4.3%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1998	85.6	- 0.1†	1.3†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	August	20.7	- 0.2%	4.0%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	August	120.1	- 1.2%	- 0.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	October*	14.44	0.4%	2.9%
Unemployment rate (%)	October*	8.1	- 0.2†	- 1.0†
Participation rate (%)	October*	65.2	0.0†	0.3†
Labour income (\$ billion)	June	38.2	- 0.2%	3.1%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	August	607.18	0.2%	1.5%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	August	27.4	7.1%	9.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	August	25.3	5.3%	7.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	August	2.1	0.5	0.6
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	August	37.4	7.6%	2.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	August	38.8	8.2%	5.3%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	August	47.1	3.0%	20.0%
Inventory/shipments ratio	August	1.34	- 0.08	0.05
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	September	108.6	- 0.2%	0.7%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	September	119.4	- 0.6%	- 0.3%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	September	108.1	1.6%	- 13.0%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	August	100.2	0.0%	1.0%

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, 10th floor,
R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

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Price per issue: paper version, \$4; Internet version, \$3. Annual subscription:
paper version, \$145; Internet version, \$109. Prices outside Canada are the same,
but are in U.S. dollars. All prices exclude sales tax.

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