



# Infomart

## A Weekly Review

Friday, December 4, 1998

### OVERVIEW

#### ◆ Economic output makes a small advance

Gross domestic product made a small advance in September. This followed August's recovery from a four-month stretch of weakness marked by strikes.

#### ◆ Leading indicator edges up

The leading indicator edged up in October, as manufacturing continued to present a mixed picture and most indicators of household demand continued to improve.

#### ◆ Exchange rate central to rise in industrial prices

In October, the Canada-U.S. exchange rate was central to an increase in industrial product prices, especially for motor vehicles and petroleum products.

#### ◆ Crude oil pulls raw material prices down

Manufacturers paid 0.3% less for raw materials in October than they did in September, thanks mostly to lower prices for crude oil.

#### ◆ Foreign investors unloaded Canadian stocks and bonds in September

Foreign investors retreated from Canadian stocks and bonds in September, while Canadian investors moved a record amount of money into foreign bonds.

#### ◆ Weekly earnings take a dip

In September, average weekly earnings dipped from August's level in just over half the industries.

#### ◆ Canada-U.S. employment rates: A great divergence

The pace of job creation in the United States since 1989 has outpaced that in Canada, while the type of employment created in each country has been vastly different.

### Economic output makes a small advance

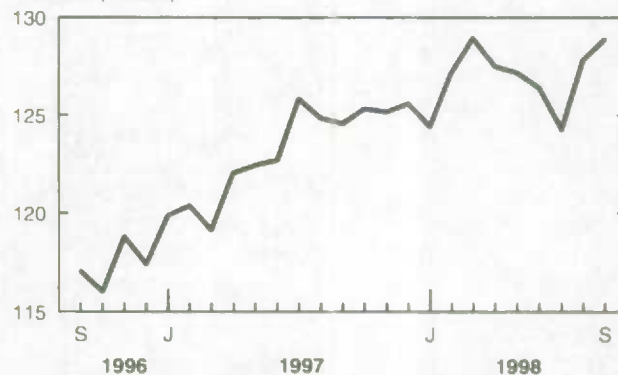
Gross domestic product (GDP) advanced 0.1% in September. This followed August's 0.7% recovery from a four-month stretch of weakness marked by strikes, which were partly responsible for a general slowdown in activity. These developments resulted in a continuation of the slower but positive quarterly growth that has characterized the economy since the start of the year.

Manufacturers led the small September increase in GDP. Manufacturing output rose 0.8% following a 2.9% strike-related rebound in August. (The ripple effects of a strike by GM workers in the United States led to a drop in auto production in both June and July.) Although output in September surpassed the pre-strike levels reached in May, it was still shy of the March 1998 peak.

Motor vehicle production increased 0.8%, while the output of vehicle parts shot up 3.8%. Production of machinery bounced back 3.7% after three consecutive monthly declines. Producers of construction machinery were chiefly responsible for that increase, after output was temporarily restricted by maintenance shutdowns in August.

#### Manufacturing output

\$ billions (1992 \$)



(continued on page 2)



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Canada

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# Canada

### ... Economic output makes a small advance

Output of wood products surged in September, particularly those related to construction (such as lumber and window and door products). Sawmills boosted output 3.2%, bolstered by the restart of a number of mills during the month. Much of this product was destined for export (about half of this industry's output is shipped abroad), since residential construction in the United States has soared to record levels in recent months.

By contrast, pulp and paper production declined 1.1% in September. A strike involving 10 mills in Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland entered its fourth month in September and continued to weigh on the industry. The labour dispute went on until late November. Production of office machinery and equipment dropped 6.5% in September, following seven consecutive months of expansion. September's drop coincided with a period of restructuring in the industry.

Retail sales rose 0.8% in September, more than recouping August's marginal decline, while wholesalers reported a 0.2% rise in activity. Providers of business services also saw increased activity. These gains were partly offset by a strike at Air Canada, where picketing pilots stalled the movement of passengers and cargo. This led to a 1.6% decline in the transportation and storage services industry. Strikes and lockouts within several Ontario school boards led education services lower by 0.6% in September.

September was another lacklustre month for the mining industry (-0.6%). This decline — the sixth in a row — continued the sector's downward course. Weak commodity prices began to hurt the industry early this year. The only bright spot in September was the oil patch. However, even though extraction of oil and gas

#### Note to readers

*The gross domestic product (GDP) of an industry is the value added when labour and capital transform inputs purchased from other producers into outputs. Monthly GDP by industry is valued at 1992 prices. The estimates presented here are seasonally adjusted at annual rates. This release also includes data revisions extending back to January 1992.*

was up, partly due to restored production capacity that had been idled in August, oil prices were at their lowest point in a decade, and this continued to erode drilling and exploration activity.

Total construction activity edged down 0.1% in September, the sixth decline in seven months. Most of the recent weakness is attributable to a marked decline in new housing construction. In other industries, providers of computer and miscellaneous business services reported increased activity in September, while output of electricity fell 2.0%, as unusually low water levels reduced hydro-electricity production in Quebec.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 4677-4681.**

*The September 1998 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (15-001-XPB, \$15/\$145) will be released shortly. For analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; [evanric@statcan.ca](mailto:evanric@statcan.ca)). For information about purchasing data, contact Kim Lauzon (613-951-9417; [lauzonk@statcan.ca](mailto:lauzonk@statcan.ca)), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. See also "Current trends" on page 9.*

## Leading indicator edges up

**F**ollowing no change in August and September, the leading indicator edged up 0.1% in October. Aside from the stock market, the index's growth remained modest as 6 of the 10 components rose. Conditions on financial markets firmed after this summer's turbulence. However, the growth rate of the money supply slowed markedly in October.

Manufacturing continued to present a mixed picture. New orders turned up as labour disputes ended in the auto industry. The average workweek remained unchanged for a second time in three months, after having fallen rapidly throughout the previous year. However, the ratio of shipments to inventories of finished goods fell for a fourth straight month, undercut by the weakness in natural resource industries. At the same time, manufacturing has also been the major source of weakness in the U.S. leading indicator, as export demand from Asia slumped.

Most of the indicators of household demand continued to improve in October. Demand for personal services buttressed the overall growth of services employment. This accompanied strong activity related to providing services to tourists, as the net inflow of travellers from the United States reached its highest level in 20 years. Spending for durable goods expanded again, in line with the gains in the job market. Only the housing market remained insulated from the growth in household spending.

**Available on CANSIM: matrix 191.**

*The November 1998 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. See also "Current trends" on page 9.*



## Exchange rates central to rise in industrial prices

In October, industrial product prices rose 0.7% from September. The effect of the exchange rate on export prices quoted in U.S. dollars was central to the increase. The most significant price increases were for motor vehicles and petroleum products. Prices were down for pork and softwood lumber. October's Industrial Product Price Index stood at 120.2 (1992=100), up from 119.4 in September. Compared with October 1997, industrial prices were 0.7% higher.

Between mid-September and mid-October, the dollar weakened against the U.S. dollar as the value of the U.S. dollar rose to C\$1.55 in mid-October, up from C\$1.50 in mid-September. In mid-October 1997, it had been C\$1.39. Ignoring the effect of these changes on export prices quoted in U.S. dollars, industrial prices would have edged down 0.2% from September to October, and the 12-month change would have been -2.4%.

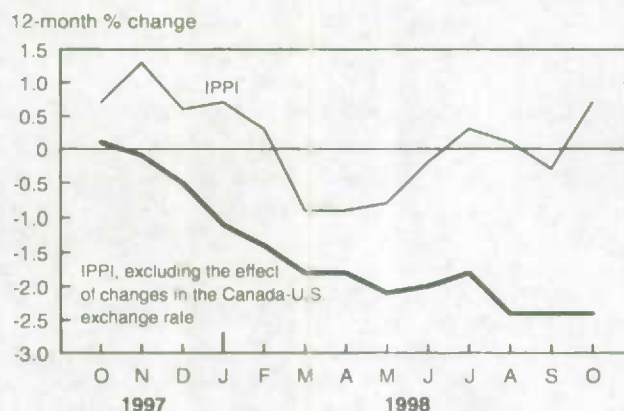
The overall price level for motor vehicles was up 3.7% in October because 1999 models replaced the 1998 vehicles and the value of the U.S. dollar rose in terms of the Canadian dollar. Export prices for automobiles rose 3.8% from September to October, while export prices for trucks climbed 4.8%.

Prices in the refined petroleum product industries continued to increase in October, rising 1.9% after advancing 1.4% in September. However, the price level remained 17.1% lower than a year earlier. For consumers, as noted in the Consumer Price Index, gasoline prices halted their decline and rose 2.2% in October. Meanwhile, crude oil prices retreated 2.6% in October after a strong rally in September, and remained 26.8% lower than in October 1997.

Pork prices tumbled again in October, falling 13.8% from their September level. Pork prices have deflated by 38.0% since peaking in May 1997. Oversupply, in large part due to the economic situation in Asia, remains a serious problem for the industry.

Softwood lumber prices edged down 0.7% in October after having fallen 4.0% in September. Domestic prices slipped 1.3%, while export prices (buoyed by the rising U.S. dollar) edged down 0.5%. Softwood lumber prices declined everywhere but Atlantic Canada. The decline was largest on the Prairies and in the interior of British Columbia. In that province, lower prices for Douglas fir contributed most to the decline. East of the Rockies, spruce and pine prices were down in many areas. In the United States,

## Industrial Product Price Index



softwood lumber prices edged down 1.8%. The weakness in housing construction in Canada and in the United States in late summer and early fall contributed to the decline in lumber prices. However, both countries benefited from a surge in housing starts in October.

In the United States, Canada's major trading partner, industrial production edged down 0.1% in October. The U.S. manufacturers saw prices rise 0.3% from September to October; however, prices were down 0.9% from a year earlier. In Japan, Canada's second largest national export market, industrial production rose in September for the first time in three months. Nonetheless, production remained 8.4% below its level of a year earlier, and it is expected to show a decline for both October and November. The 12-month change in Japanese domestic wholesale prices was -2.1% in October, little changed from September. Collectively, the European Union is an even larger export market for Canada than Japan. The EU is dominated by the four G7 members. For these countries, the most recent figures for the 12-month change in industrial prices were +0.1% in the United Kingdom (October), -0.5% in Italy (September), -1.2% in Germany (October) and -1.2% in France (September).

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 1870-1878.**

The October 1998 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of this month. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-1539; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)), Prices Division.

## Crude oil pulls raw material prices down

Manufacturers paid 0.3% less for raw materials in October than they did in September, thanks mostly to lower crude oil prices. Non-ferrous metal prices also moved lower in the month. Prices were higher for vegetable and animal products and for wood, but that only partly softened the overall decline. The Raw Materials Price Index stood at 107.9 in October (1992=100), down from 108.2 (revised) in September. Compared with October 1997, manufacturers paid 14.0% less for raw materials this October.

If mineral fuels (90% of which is crude oil), were excluded, raw material prices would actually have risen 0.6% from

### Note to readers

The Raw Materials Price Index (RMPI) reflects prices that manufacturers paid for key raw materials, including some that were not produced in Canada. Prices for many of these commodities are set in world markets.

September. Excluding mineral fuels, prices were 9.3% lower than in October 1997. Prices for crude oil fell 2.6% from September to October, as inventories remained high. Compared with 12-months earlier, crude oil prices were down 26.8%.

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### ... Crude oil pulls raw material prices down

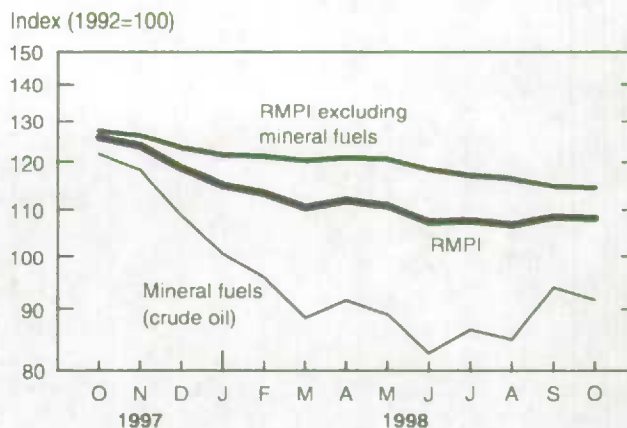
Non-ferrous metal prices slipped 1.3% in October, after holding stable over the preceding three months. Lower prices for copper and nickel concentrates, aluminum materials, zinc and radioactive concentrates led the way. Gold prices climbed 5.7% in the month. Compared with October 1997, non-ferrous metal prices were down 12.3%.

Vegetable product prices rose 3.4% on higher prices for wheat (+13.5%), unrefined sugar (+11.3%) and oilseeds (+4.7%). Lower raw tobacco prices (-10.0%) somewhat offset those increases. Compared with October 1997, vegetable product prices were down 12.7%. Wheat prices strengthened on news of a U.S. food-aid package for Russia. Also, weather worries in major wheat growing countries lifted prices. Coffee prices firmed 3.9% after having fallen in six of seven preceding months. Still, coffee prices remained 38.1% lower than a year earlier. Higher prices for unrefined sugar were supported by poor weather in Australia and Central America. Australia is one of the top three sugar exporters in the world.

Prices for animals and animal products edged up in October (+0.5%; -7.0% from October 1997). Higher prices for hogs (+3.2%; -32.7%) and cattle and calves for slaughter (+1.4%; -1.2%) were partly offset by lower prices for chickens (-1.6%; -6.1%). October hog prices rebounded somewhat, partly due to the potential of pork being included in any food aid program for Russia. The hog supply remains in a surplus position.

Wood prices have levelled off. In October, prices rose 0.8% for logs and 0.3% for pulpwood. Compared with October 1997, log prices were down 14.2%, whereas, pulpwood prices were up a marginal 0.5%. Log prices have been depressed for many months. Pulpwood prices, supported by demand for newsprint and other paper, should remain relatively strong. Over the six months to October, pulpwood prices have risen 3.1%.

### Raw Materials Price Index



Ferrous material prices were down 0.5% compared with September. Iron ore prices increased 3.1%, due mainly to the U.S. dollar, whereas iron and steel scrap prices fell 3.4%. Compared with October 1997, iron ore prices were 13.2% higher, but iron and steel scrap prices were down 13.0%. Again, prices for iron ore were up due to the Canada-U.S. exchange rate.

**Available on CANSIM: matrices 1879.**

The October 1998 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of this month. For further information, contact the Client Services Unit (613-951-3350; fax (613-951-1539; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)). Prices Division.

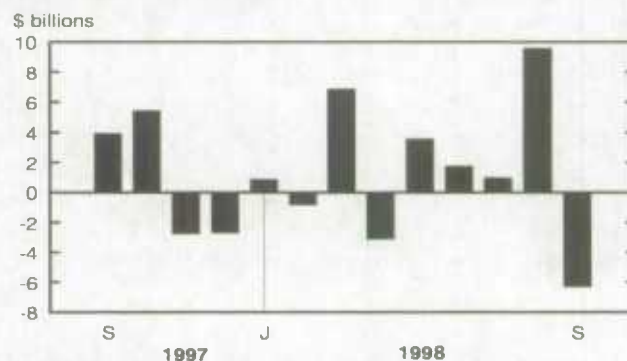
## Foreign investors unloaded Canadian stocks and bonds in September

**F**oreign investors moved \$6.3 billion out of Canadian securities in September as the Canadian dollar rose, selling large amounts of stocks and bonds in the process. Meanwhile, Canadian investors put \$2.1 billion into foreign securities, including a record amount that went into foreign bonds.

Foreign investors reduced their holdings of Canadian bonds by a large \$5.4 billion, matching the record set in April 1998. This disinvestment was widespread geographically. Foreigners also sold off a record \$2.9 billion of Canadian stocks in September, compared with net sales of \$2.2 billion in August. However, secondary market sales in August were overshadowed by a \$10 billion investment in newly issued shares of a Canadian company, as part of the takeover of a major U.S. firm in the high-tech industry. In September, the sellers continued to be mainly U.S. investors.

Canadian investors renewed their demand for securities denominated in foreign currencies in September. They bought a record \$2.4 billion of foreign bonds, consisting of U.S. treasury securities (\$1.9 billion) and U.S. corporate and overseas bonds. This reversed a similar reduction in their holdings of foreign

### Foreign Investment in Canadian stocks, bonds and money market paper



**Note:** Bars below the zero line represent an outflow of money from Canada – in other words, a decrease in foreigners' investment in Canadian securities.

bonds in August. Meanwhile, sales of foreign equities in September largely offset the small purchases made in August. Since October 1997, Canadian residents have accumulated an additional \$13 billion of foreign stocks, two-thirds of which are in U.S. dollars in the form of shares invested in U.S. corporations.

(continued on page 5)



### ... Foreign investors unloaded Canadian stocks and bonds in September

Responding to the favourable (for Canada) shift in interest-rate differentials in September, foreign investors bought \$2.1 billion (net) of Canadian short-term money market paper, bringing their investment in August and September to \$3.9 billion. In September, foreigners were buyers of federal treasury bills (\$3.4 billion) and sellers of corporate paper (-\$1.3 billion). Investors residing in the United States accounted for the bulk of the buying activity in August and September.

**Available on CANSIM:** matrices 2328-2330, 2378-2380 and 4195.

The September 1998 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments and Financial Flows Division.

### Note to readers

In September, for the first time in 18 months, the differential between Canadian and U.S. short-term interest rates shifted marginally in favour of Canada. On long-term rates, the differential remained in favour of Canada for a second consecutive month.

Staging a small comeback in September, Canadian stock prices (as measured by the TSE 300 composite index) regained 1.5% of the almost 29% lost since April 1998. In the United States, stock prices (as measured by Standard and Poor's 500 index) also rebounded, regaining 6.2% of the 14% lost since April 1998.

The Canadian dollar bounced up in terms of the U.S. currency in September, gaining 1.55 U.S. cents or 2.43%. This occurred after it had lost 6.67 U.S. cents, or nearly 9% of its value, since March 1998.

## Average weekly earnings take a dip

In September, average weekly earnings declined in 9 of the 16 industry groups and stood at \$604.28, down \$1.36 or 0.2% from August. On a year-over-year basis, earnings were up \$7.30 or 1.2% compared with September 1997. The year-over-year increases in the first nine months of 1998 have averaged 1.3%, half the average increase of 2.6% seen in the same period in 1997.

Annual growth in average hourly earnings remained at 2.0% in September for a second consecutive month. Average hourly earnings growth is up slightly compared with last year: It was 1.8% in the first nine months of 1998, up from 1.4% for the first nine months of 1997. Average paid hours for hourly-rated employees were virtually unchanged in September at 31.1 hours per week. Compared with September 1997, average paid hours were down 0.2 hours due to a decline in overtime hours.

**Average weekly earnings, all industries, September 1998**  
Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
<b>Canada</b>	<b>604.28</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>1.2</b>
Newfoundland	526.84	-0.2	1.3
Prince Edward Island	478.65	0.6	4.0
Nova Scotia	507.02	-0.8	1.8
New Brunswick	524.71	-1.4	0.8
Quebec	564.67	-0.8	-0.2
Ontario	643.54	0.0	0.8
Manitoba	544.73	0.4	4.6
Saskatchewan	541.34	0.9	2.9
Alberta	610.74	-0.8	1.7
British Columbia	618.79	-0.2	0.7
Yukon	684.20	1.1	-5.4
Northwest Territories	735.76	2.3	3.1

The number of employees on payrolls surged by 39,000 in September following a small gain in August. Nearly two-thirds of the employees added to payrolls in September were employed in durable goods manufacturing, wholesaling and business services. Within durable goods, the main contributors to employment growth were manufacturers of motor vehicle parts and assemblers of motor vehicles. This is consistent with the strong growth in shipments from those industries. The growth in payroll employment at wholesalers was not concentrated in a specific industry. The increase in business services payrolls occurred particularly at employment agencies and in computer services.

These estimates are now derived from administrative records; in addition, a new sample was drawn for the Business Payrolls Survey to produce estimates of paid hours, average weekly earnings and average hourly earnings. Estimates derived from administrative records may show a different seasonal pattern than the previous data, which were derived from survey questionnaires. This can only be assessed within the context of a longer time period. Statistics Canada will continue to monitor these impacts and will help users interpret its data. It is recommended that data from the Survey of Employment, Payrolls and Hours, particularly the employment data, be used in the context of longer time periods for detailed industry distributions. A description of the methodological changes and their impacts on the data was published in the May 1998 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours*.

**Available on CANSIM:** matrices 4285-4466, 9438-9452, 9639-9664 and 9899-9911.

The September 1998 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours* (72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320) will be available shortly. The historical publication *Annual estimates of employment, earnings and hours 1985-1997* (diskette: 72F0002XDB, \$120) is on sale now. Custom tabulations of the data are available on demand. For further information, contact Jean Leduc (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division.

## Canada-U.S. employment rates: A great divergence

Since the recession of the early 1990s, the pace of job creation has been stronger south of the border. Between 1989 and 1997, employment expanded by 10.4% in the United States, compared with only 6.5% growth in Canada. The type of jobs created in the two countries during that nine-year period was also quite different. In the United States, 70% of net job creation since 1989 has come in the form of full-time paid employment; part-time paid employment has contributed only 20%. By contrast, self-employment has been the engine of job growth north of the border. It accounted for 80% of the jobs created in Canada between 1989 and 1997, whereas self-employment accounted for only 10% of the new jobs in the United States. Although this stark difference is not well understood, it may reflect differences in tax policy, as well as the higher payroll taxes and unemployment rates in Canada.

As the pace of job creation has been moving along more rapidly in the United States, the size of the working-age population has been growing more rapidly here (+13% versus just +9%). Meanwhile, GDP grew by 19% in the United States between 1989 and 1997, compared with 13% in Canada. The combination of these factors has led to the emergence of a large gap between the U.S. and Canadian employment rates (proportion of the working-age population with a job or a business).

The U.S. employment rate fell only slightly in the early 1990s, climbing to a new peak of 63.8% by 1997. In contrast, the Canadian rate fell more sharply and has only edged up since then to 58.9%. The diverging employment rate trends have affected all major age and sex groups in this country, particularly young men (aged 15 to 24) and older men and women (aged 55 to 64), whose employment rates are much higher in the United States.

Self-employment accounted for 18% of total employment in Canada by 1997, compared with only 12% in the United States. In addition, almost 19% of all employees (about one in five) in Canada in 1997 worked part time, compared with only 15% south of the border. The gains in paid employment in Canada have come exclusively from a net increase in part-time work. In fact, the number of full-time employees declined in this country during the 1990s. Since work hours are an important factor in annual earnings, this trend undoubtedly contributed to the fact that average annual earnings in Canada were only marginally higher in 1996 than in 1989.

Some notable differences are evident in the employment trends by industry and occupation. Since the recession of the early 1990s, employment in retail and wholesale trade has made more of a recovery in the United States (+11% from 1989 to 1997) than it did here (+4%). Significant cutbacks left employment in public administration 10% lower in Canada in 1997 than it was in 1989. By contrast, job growth was a moderate 3% in public administration in the United States over the same period. Fewer were employed in Canada's construction industry in 1997 than in 1989 (-8%), whereas more people were working in construction in the United States (+8%).

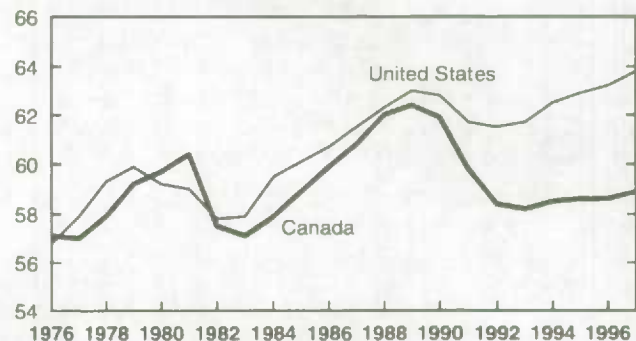
### Note to readers

This article is the first of two that Infomat will derive from the Autumn 1998 issue of *Labour force update*, which features a comparison of labour-market trends in Canada and the United States over the last two decades. Next week, our second article from the report will extend the comparison to unemployment rates.

For the Canadian data, the analysts drew heavily on data from the *Labour Force Survey*. Statistics on employment and unemployment in the United States were compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics using data from the *Current Population Survey*. The definition of self-employment is based on the Canadian definition and includes incorporated, unincorporated and unpaid family members. The definitions of part- and full-time employment are based on the American definitions (part-timers work less than 35 hours per week; full-timers work 35 or more hours per week).

### Employment rates

% of working age population employed



Sources: Labour Force Survey, Current Population Survey

High-skill occupations grew strongly on both sides of the border between 1989 and 1997. North of the border, the number people employed in white-collar occupations (managerial, professional and technical) climbed by 22%, which was close to the 24% growth in the same occupational group in the United States. Contrary to the notion that the United States has been churning out only low-quality jobs throughout the 1990s, growth in industry and occupational groups that tend to pay high wages outnumbered growth in those associated with low earnings by a factor of two to one.

The Autumn 1998 edition of *Labour force update* (71-005-XPB, \$29/\$96) is now on sale. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740; [suntdeb@statcan.ca](mailto:suntdeb@statcan.ca)), Household Surveys Division, or Dan Charrette (604-666-4842; [chardan@statcan.ca](mailto:chardan@statcan.ca)), British Columbia and the Yukon Regional Office.

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## ... Canada-U.S. employment rates: A great divergence

### Employment growth in the 1990s

	Canada			United States			Canada	US
	1989	1997	1989 to 1997 % change	1989	1997	1989 to 1997 % change	% of job growth from:	
Total employment ('000)	13,086	13,941	6.5	117,342	129,559	10.4		
Self-employment ('000)	1,809	2,488	37.5	13,862	15,025	15.6	79.4	9.5
% of total employment	14	18	12	12				
Employees							20.6	90.5
Part-time ('000)	2,286	2,690	17.7	17,327	19,816	14.4	47.3	20.4
% of total employment	18	19	15	15				
Full-time ('000)	8,991	8,763	-2.5	86,153	94,718	9.9	-26.7	70.1
% of total employment	69	63	73	73				

## New from Statistics Canada



### Labour Force Update



### Labour force update: Canada-U.S. labour market comparison Autumn 1998

The Autumn 1998 issue of *Labour force update* compares labour markets in Canada and the United States. Taking the last two decades, it examines trends in employment, labour force participation and unemployment rates. A regional perspective is included in the comparisons. The analysis also looks at differences between the way the two countries measure unemployment.

Each quarter, *Labour force update* features the latest information and relevant trends relating to a particular labour-market issue. Analytical commentary, charts and tables provide concise and up-to-date information — a useful starting point for further research.

The Autumn 1998 issue of *Labour force update* (71-005-XPB, \$29/\$96) is now available. For further information, contact Jeannine Usalcas (613-951-4720), Household Surveys Division.

## New from Statistics Canada

### Insights on . . .

#### Fall 1998

The Fall 1998 issue of *Insights on . . .* profiles small businesses in Canada. Small businesses represent more than 90% of all businesses in the country and are more important in some sectors than others. This report looks at the financial characteristics of small businesses and how they vary from one province to another.

*Insights on . . .* is a free newsletter on emerging trends in business and trade. It documents developments in Canadian industry and shows how businesses are responding to new challenges and opportunities. Also included is information on new Statistics Canada products and services that pertain to business and industry.

The Fall 1998 issue of *Insights on . . .* (61F0019XPE, free) is now available. For further information, contact Penny Basset (613-951-3217; [basspen@statcan.ca](mailto:basspen@statcan.ca)), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.

### 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.

Five themes have just been released: *Age, sex, marital status, and common-law status/common-law union and marriage: A portrait* (94F0032XDB, \$60); *Languages* (94F0034XDB, \$60); *Occupation profile* (94F0026XDB, \$60); *Industry profile* (94F0027XDB, \$60); and *Education/labour-market experience of graduates* (94F0015XDB, \$60). For further information, contact your nearest Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centre.

### Dangerous goods accident information system

#### 1997

Statistics Canada, in co-operation with Transport Canada, has just released the *Dangerous goods accident information system*. This is a database of the reports of accidents involving the transport of dangerous goods. It is current up to 1997.

These reports are filed if an accident involving a dangerous good results in a release (spill, emission, etc.) that presents a danger to health, life, property or the environment. Reports are also filed for accidents involving death or injury, or damage to containment due to impact stress or fatigue. The data are presented on an annual basis.

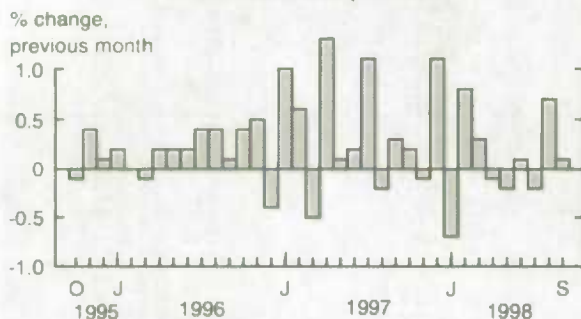
Great detail is available for each accident, ranging from the date, time, and location of the accident to the emergency personnel who responded at the scene. Also, any additional written comments that were provided with the report are included on the diskette and are accessible to FoxPro users.

To order the database called *Dangerous goods accident information system* (50F000XDB, \$100), contact Carole Stuart (613-951-5936; fax: 613-951-4513; [stuacar@statcan.ca](mailto:stuacar@statcan.ca)), Dissemination Division. For information about the data, contact Jonathan Rose (613-990-1142; fax: 613-993-5925; [rosej@tc.gc.ca](mailto:rosej@tc.gc.ca)), Transport Canada.



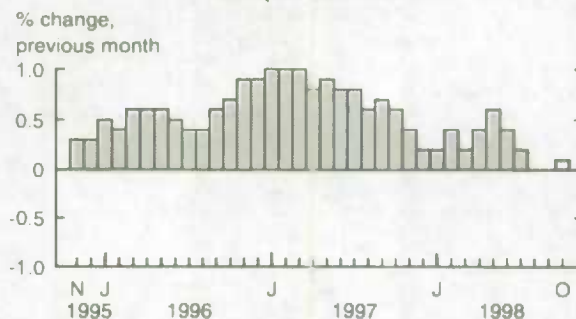
## Current trends

### Gross domestic product



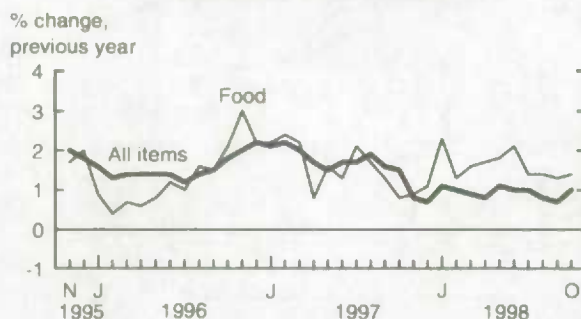
Economic activity edged up 0.1% in September. This followed August's 0.7% recovery.

### Composite Index



In October, the leading indicator edged up 0.1% after two months of no change.

### Consumer Price Index



Consumers paid 1.0% more for goods and services in October 1998 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.4%.

### Unemployment rate



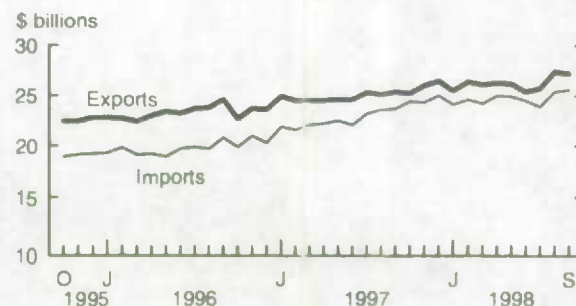
In October, the unemployment rate fell to 8.1%, its lowest level since July 1990.

### Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments edged up 0.1% in September to \$37.4 billion. The level of unfilled orders increased 1.1% to \$47.8 billion.

### Merchandise trade



In September, the value of merchandise exports dipped 0.6% from August to \$27.2 billion. Imports advanced a slight 0.4% to \$25.6 billion.

**Note:** All series are seasonally adjusted except the Consumer Price Index.

## Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	September*	719.2	0.1%	2.1%
Composite Index (1981=100)	October*	207.3	0.1%	3.3%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1998	25.6	3.7%	- 9.1%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1998	85.6	- 0.1†	1.3†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	September	21.0	1.1%	4.9%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	September	127.2	5.3%	7.5%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
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)	September*	38.9	0.1%	3.0%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	September*	604.28	- 0.2%	1.2%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	September	27.2	- 0.6%	7.2%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	September	25.6	0.5%	7.9%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	September	1.6	- 0.3	- 0.1
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	September	37.4	0.1%	2.9%
New orders (\$ billion)	September	37.9	- 2.4%	2.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	September	47.8	1.1%	19.7%
Inventory/shipments ratio	September	1.34	0.01	0.04
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	October	109.0	0.4%	1.0%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	October*	120.2	0.7%	0.7%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	October*	107.9	- 0.3%	- 14.0%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	September	100.1	- 0.1%	0.9%

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

\* new this week

† percentage point

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## Publications released from November 26 to December 2, 1998

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription	
			Canada (C\$)	Outside Canada (US\$)
<b>AGRICULTURE</b>				
Farm cash receipts	January-September 1998	21-001-XIB	15/48	15/48
The dairy review	July-September 1998			
Internet		23-001-XIB	27/89	27/89
Paper		23-001QXPB	36/119	36/119
<b>DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES</b>				
Retail trade	September 1998	63-005-XPB	21/206	21/206
<b>INPUT-OUTPUT</b>				
The input-output structure of the Canadian economy	1961-1992 (revised)	15-201-XPB	68	68
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Imports by commodity	September 1998			
Microfiche		65-007-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper		65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
<b>MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY</b>				
Construction type plywood	September 1998	35-001-XPB	7/62	7/62
Consumption of containers and other packaging supplies by the manufacturing industries	1996	31-212-XPB	29	29
Crude petroleum and natural gas production	August 1998	26-006-XPB	19/186	19/186
Electric lamps (light bulbs and tubes)	October 1998	43-009-XPB	7/62	7/62
Energy statistics handbook	November 1998			
Diskette		57-601-XDE	284	284
Paper		57-601-UPB	387	387
Gas utilities	August 1998	55-002-XPB	17/165	17/165
Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation	October 1998	44-004-XPB	7/62	7/62
Production and disposition of tobacco products	October 1998	32-022-XPB	7/62	7/62
Sawmills and planning mills	September 1998	35-003-XPB	12/114	12/114
Shipments of plastic film and bags manufactured from resin	Third quarter 1998	47-007-XPB	10/33	10/33
<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY REDESIGN PROJECT</b>				
Science statistics service bulletin, vol. 22, no. 8: R & D expenditures of private non-profit organizations	1997	88-001-XIB	6/59	6/59
<b>SERVICES</b>				
Traveller accommodation statistics	1996-97	63-204-XPB	28	28

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions (B signifies bilingual, E signifies English); those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote the paper version. XDB means the electronic version on diskette or compact disc.

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