



Infommat

A Weekly Review

Friday, February 19, 1999

OVERVIEW

◆ Income taxes take largest share of household spending

In 1997, the largest share of household spending went to pay personal income taxes. In order, spending on shelter, transportation and food came next.

◆ Department store sales advance

Department stores rang in the holidays in December with a 1.2% sales advance. For 1998 as a whole, the stalling of sales in the spring limited the year's overall growth.

◆ Sales of new vehicles fall despite incentives

Despite incentives offered by dealers, the number of new vehicles sold fell from November to December. In 1998 as a whole, the number of vehicles sold was virtually unchanged from 1997.

◆ New Housing Price Index up for 22 months

The New Housing Price Index has now registered an annual increase for 22 consecutive months. However, the price changes in December varied considerably among the cities surveyed.

◆ Television viewing continues to decline

Except for when new specialty cable channels were introduced in 1995, television viewing in Canada has undergone a small but steady decline since 1988.

Income taxes take largest share of household spending

Personal income taxes continue to make up the largest share of household spending. In 1997, an average of 21 cents of every dollar went to pay personal income taxes, followed by 20 cents for shelter, 12 cents for transportation and 11 cents for food. That year, households spent, on average, \$49,950 on everything from childcare to travel to communications, an amount virtually unchanged from 1996. The remaining 36 cents went to a variety of items such as recreation, personal insurance and pension contributions, household operations, clothing, gifts and contributions to charity.

Looking at different income groups or quintiles, the one-fifth of households with the lowest incomes spent on average \$16,700 in 1997, compared with \$97,930 spent by the one-fifth of households

Household spending, 1996 and 1997

	1996 ¹	1997
	\$	
Total expenditure	49,900	49,900
Personal income taxes	10,700	10,600
Shelter	9,800	9,900
Transportation	6,000	6,200
Food	6,000	5,700
Personal insurance payments and pension contribution	2,600	2,800
Recreation	2,600	2,800
Household operation	2,300	2,300
Clothing (excludes gifts of clothing)	2,100	1,900
Household furnishings and equipment	1,300	1,300
Gifts of money and contributions	1,200	1,200
Health care	1,000	1,200
Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages	1,100	1,100
Miscellaneous ²	700	800
Personal care ²	840	660
Education	560	660
Reading materials and other printed matter	250	280
Games of chance expense	260	250

¹ The 1996 data have been adjusted for 1997 survey changes.

² The change in spending on personal care and miscellaneous is due mainly to changes in survey methodology. Miscellaneous includes legal services, financial services, union dues and equipment purchased for work.

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... Income taxes take largest share of household spending

with the highest incomes. After adjusting for differences in household size, the average expenditure per person was \$10,250 in the lowest income quintile, about 36% of the \$28,800 spent per person in the highest income quintile. Among households in the lowest income quintile, nearly one-third (32%) of all money spent in 1997 went for shelter, 18% for food, 11% for transportation, and only 3% went to pay personal income taxes. By contrast, households in the highest income quintile spent 16% on shelter, 9% on food, 11% on transportation and 30% on personal income taxes.

There were some shifts in household spending patterns in 1997. Higher average spending on health care (+15% from 1996) was chiefly due to higher outlays on medicines, pharmaceutical products, and health insurance premiums. Households in the lowest income quintile increased their spending on health care by 23%, compared with 12% for the highest income quintile. These figures represent out-of-pocket spending on everything from dental care to vitamins, expenses not covered or reimbursed by an insurance plan.

A 19% jump in average household spending on education (to \$660) was due largely to a rise in spending on post-secondary tuition fees. In contrast to health care spending, which is reported by most households, only 44% of all households reported spending on education in 1997. For these households, the average amount spent was \$1,500.

More and more households are spending money to lease cars and trucks, perhaps because the monthly lease payments are lower than the loan payments for vehicle purchases. In 1997, 8% of households reported expenses on leased vehicles, compared with 6% in 1996. For these households, spending on leased vehicles grew 8% to an average of \$4,780.

Recreation expenditures—everything from playground equipment to movie admissions—rose 5% in 1997 to an average of \$2,780 per household. However, spending on gambling and other games of chance declined 7% to \$250. (This is the average expenditure after any winnings are deducted.) Household spending on government-run pool and lottery tickets and on bingo contributed to this decline, while spending on casinos, slot machines, and video lottery terminals increased from \$60 in 1996 to \$80 in 1997.

Spending on food declined in 1997 by 4% to \$5,700, mainly due to lower spending in restaurants. Spending also declined on clothing and on personal care items (for example, haircuts, shampoo and razors). However, as a result of trying to reduce reporting burden in the survey, fewer detailed spending questions were asked for these categories in 1997. This may have been a contributing factor to the slight percentage decrease.

Household spending reflects local conditions. Consistent with household income patterns, households in Ontario had the highest average spending in 1997 among all provinces; households in Newfoundland had the lowest. Average household payments for personal income taxes were highest in Ontario. Average household spending on food was highest in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. Alberta households also had the highest average expenses for transportation. Among selected metro areas, households in

Note to readers

This article presents 1997 data from the Survey of Household Spending, a new annual survey. This new survey integrates much of the content of the old Family Expenditure Survey and the Household Facilities and Equipment Survey. Collected between January and March 1998 in all the provinces and territories, the 1997 data on household spending captures details on spending and housing characteristics from almost 18,000 households—a sample size 50% larger than that of the FAMEX survey.

However, the number of questions asked in the new survey is considerably lower than in the previous surveys. As a result, for some categories of spending, fewer details can now be presented. Nevertheless, the integration of facilities and equipment data with spending information will allow for a richer data source. Housing characteristics such as the number of bedrooms, the type of heating equipment and fuel, and the presence of equipment such as computers, modems, and cell phones can now be studied along with the spending patterns of different household types.

Readers should be cautious when comparing these new data with previous expenditure data. To give a better picture of household spending, new data categories have been added. Examples include new and used computer hardware, financial services, direct sale purchases, and the value of purchases made outside Canada. As well, some important changes have been made to the data concepts. For instance, the concept of shelter expenses has changed. Prior to 1997, mortgage principal was not considered an expenditure. Now, regular mortgage payments—both principal and interest—are included as expenditures. Revised data for previous years reflecting this and the other conceptual changes will be made available later this year. All figures in this article have been rounded. Comparisons are not adjusted for inflation.

Yellowknife had the highest annual average spending (\$73,170), followed by those in the Ottawa area (\$61,530) and Toronto (\$60,340). Average household spending was lowest in the Charlottetown-Summerside metro area (\$42,870). Households were between those averages in St. John's (\$46,780), Halifax (\$49,920), Saint John (\$46,990), Quebec City (\$48,930), Montreal (\$46,310), Winnipeg (\$48,210), Regina (\$51,580), Saskatoon (\$46,650), Calgary (\$59,080), Edmonton (\$55,130), Vancouver (\$56,830), Victoria (\$49,670) and Whitehorse (\$60,060).

*Summary data for 1997 household spending are available free of charge on Statistics Canada's web site (www.statcan.ca). The menu path is "Canadian statistics", then "The people", "Families, households and housing" and "Expenditures". Detailed Tables (62F0031XDB) are now available for Canada, the provinces, and selected metropolitan areas. Custom tabulations can also be ordered. The publication **Family expenditures, household facilities and equipment** (62F0031XPB) will be released this spring. For further information from the Survey of Household Spending, contact Client Services (1 888 297-7355 or 613-951-7355; income@statcan.ca), Income Statistics Division.*

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... Income taxes take largest share of household spending

Average household spending by province and territory, 1997

	Total	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Personal income taxes
	\$				
Newfoundland	38,400	5,600	6,600	5,100	6,600
Prince Edward Island	41,200	5,100	7,600	6,200	6,800
Nova Scotia	42,500	5,100	8,100	5,500	7,800
New Brunswick	41,600	5,200	7,300	5,900	7,500
Quebec	42,900	5,600	8,000	5,000	9,500
Ontario	55,300	5,900	11,700	6,800	12,200
Manitoba	45,800	5,300	8,200	5,900	9,000
Saskatchewan	44,700	4,900	7,300	6,700	8,800
Alberta	54,400	5,800	9,800	7,100	10,900
British Columbia	53,600	5,800	11,200	6,600	11,200
Yukon	58,600	6,900	11,700	7,300	11,000
Northwest Territories	63,200	8,400	12,100	5,100	13,400

Department store sales advance

Department stores rang in the holidays in December with a 1.2% sales advance to \$1.42 billion. This followed declines in October (-0.1%) and November (-0.6%). Year-to-year, sales were 4.0% higher than in December 1997. Generally, sales have been flat since the spring of 1998 after rising since the summer of 1993. (Unless otherwise stated, all data are seasonally adjusted.)

For 1998 as a whole, the stalling of sales in the spring limited the year's overall growth. Department store sales advanced in 1998 by 6.4% to \$16.9 billion, up from \$15.9 billion in 1997. Bear in mind that this followed blistering growth of 10.3% from 1996 to 1997. Restructuring in the department store industry may partly explain the levelling-off in 1998—there were 72 fewer stores in December than in January.

In December, stores in Quebec and Ontario posted the largest year-over-year sales growth (unadjusted), 8.3% and 6.5% respectively. Ontario's department stores posted annual sales

growth of 7.1% last year, while Quebec's registered a gain of 6.2%. Except for 1997, the advance was the largest for stores in Ontario since 1987; for Quebec's stores, it was the best since 1985.

Department stores in Alberta and Saskatchewan posted the strongest annual sales growth in 1998 (unadjusted) at 9.0% and 7.7% respectively. However, this was mainly due to strong sales at the start of last year. Sales in department stores in these provinces have been faltering in recent months. Department store sales in British Columbia (includes the Yukon and Northwest Territories) declined 0.2% in 1998. This followed growth in 1997 of 8.0%.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 111-113.

Accounts receivable data for department stores are also now available. To purchase data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; 1 877 421-3067, retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Greg Peterson (613-951-3592; petegre@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Department store sales including concessions

Not seasonally adjusted

	December 1998	December 1997 to December 1998	1998	1997 to 1998
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
Canada	2,649.0	4.7	16,878.3	6.0
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island ¹	49.2	0.5	313.7	5.2
Nova Scotia	89.3	2.7	531.2	5.1
New Brunswick	63.4	-0.3	393.7	3.7
Quebec	449.2	8.3	3,063.8	6.2
Ontario	1,165.8	6.5	7,182.5	7.1
Manitoba	107.6	3.2	703.1	6.2
Saskatchewan	85.0	3.5	557.6	7.7
Alberta	306.1	3.8	1,975.5	9.0
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories	335.5	-1.6	2,157.1	-0.2

¹ For reasons of confidentiality, the data for Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island are combined, as are the data for British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

Sales of new vehicles fall despite incentives

Despite incentives offered by dealers, the number of new vehicles sold fell from November to December by 1.3% to 117,678. That was quite a contrast with a year earlier, when the incentives offered in December 1997 pushed sales up by 14.6% over November 1997. In December 1998, sales were 18.6% lower than in December 1997.

For 1998 as a whole, the number of new vehicles sold was virtually unchanged from 1997 (+0.1%). Sales of new vehicles have generally been declining since the spring of 1998. The number of new cars sold last year fell by 0.2%. Sales of new trucks declined throughout 1998, after posting bold gains in 1996 (+9.6%) and especially 1997 (+26.1%). However, the number of new trucks sold last year was still up 0.4% on the year because of the high number sold at the start of 1998.

Last year, dealers in the Western provinces lagged behind. Dealers in Saskatchewan posted 1998's largest sales decline (-15.2%). In British Columbia and Manitoba, dealers did not fare much better; their vehicle sales were down 10.3% and 9.5% respectively. New vehicle sales in Alberta fell 2.6%. As for sales growth, Nova Scotia's new vehicle dealers posted the strongest advance (+5.1%). Growth was also posted in New Brunswick (+4.3%) and Newfoundland (+2.3%). Dealers made annual sales gains in both Ontario (+3.8) and Quebec (+3.3%), as well.

In December, the number of cars sold (64,331) fell compared with November by 0.7%. Sales of new cars have generally been flat since the spring of 1998 after a marginal increase at the start of the year. Car sales have been unable to regain their last peak that was reached in 1985. Sales of new trucks fell by 2.0% from November to December, down to 53,347 trucks.

The Big Three continued to lose market share in 1998, as their share of new vehicle sales fell to 68.1%, down from 72.0% in 1997 (unadjusted). The market share of the Big Three has been in decline since 1995, when they had 74.9% of the market for all new vehicles sold in Canada. Steep declines in the value of Asian currencies may have contributed to last year's drop. Meanwhile, the market share going to new vehicles imported by companies other than the Big Three climbed from 11.4% in 1997 to 14.4% in 1998. More particularly, new cars built in North America by the Big Three lost market share in 1998. That lost share was translated entirely into higher sales for other automakers' imported cars last year. In contrast, the loss in the Big Three's market share for North American-built trucks last year was mostly offset by sales

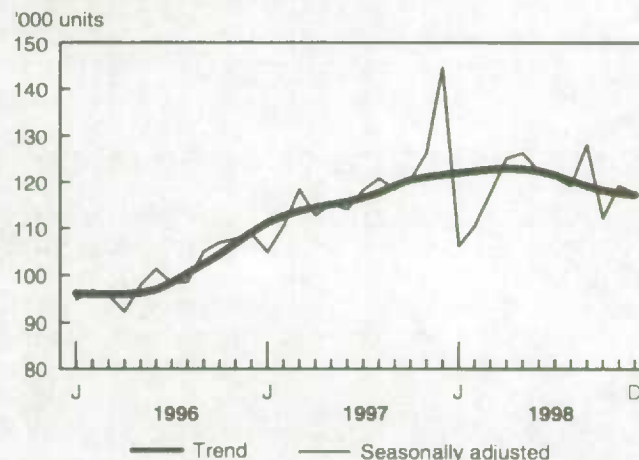
Note to readers

Passenger cars include those used for personal and commercial purposes (such as taxis or rental cars). Trucks include minivans, sport-utility vehicles, light and heavy trucks, vans, coaches and buses.

The Big Three automakers are General Motors, Ford and Chrysler. The Big Three may sell new vehicles manufactured in North America as well as those made overseas (imports).

For reasons of confidentiality, data for the Yukon and Northwest Territories are included with British Columbia data. Unless otherwise noted, all data are seasonally adjusted.

Sales of new motor vehicles



of trucks built in North America by automakers other than the Big Three.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 64.

The December 1998 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (63-007-XIB, \$13/\$124) can be downloaded from the Internet at www.statcan.ca. To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549; 1 877 421-3067; retailinfo@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division. For analytical information, contact Greg Peterson (613-951-3592; petegre@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

New Housing Price Index up for 22 months

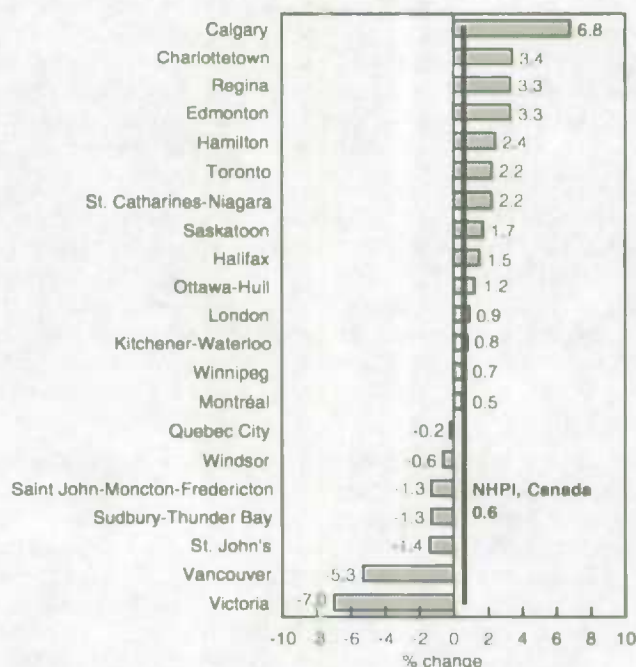
Although, the price changes have varied considerably among the cities surveyed, the New Housing Price Index has now registered an annual increase for 22 consecutive months. In December, it rose 0.6% compared with December 1997. Prior to this climb, it had made annual decreases for the 31 consecutive months from July 1994 to January 1997. From November to December 1998, the index increased 0.1%. This continued the generally hesitant upward movement observed in the index on a month-to-month basis since November 1996.

The modest improvement in the New Housing Price Index in 1998 was attributable to favourable mortgage interest rates, strong activity in the resale market, and higher consumer confidence in Ontario and in the Prairie provinces. Despite the general optimism, however, the competitive nature of housing markets moderated price increases or contributed to price decreases, especially in the surveyed cities on the West Coast.

Although there are areas of activity in British Columbia's housing market, conditions there remain generally depressed. The general economic slowdown and the situation in Asia have together lowered consumer confidence levels in the province. So, despite favourable interest rates and competitive pricing, consumers there are reluctant to make major purchases, such as new houses.

At the end of 1998, the outlook for new housing construction seemed less optimistic than it was at the beginning of the year. Now, it is expected that total housing starts for 1998 will actually be 6.6% less than in 1997, which is lower than May's forecast of a 6.3% increase for 1998. As well, annual housing construction intentions (measured by the value of residential building permits) were down from 1997 to 1998 by 2.2%. And the resale market for homes was down 4.6% in 1998 compared with the record year of 1997. Nevertheless, market performance toward the end of 1998 did rekindle some optimism. In the fourth quarter of 1998, the value of residential building permits was up 5.4% from the third quarter. In December, new housing starts were up from November by 9.6%, while sales of existing homes rose 1.0%.

New Housing Price Indexes,
December 1997 to December 1998



Each month, the New Housing Price Index surveys contractors in 21 metropolitan areas, in order to measure changes in their selling prices of new residential houses with the same specification details.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 9921.

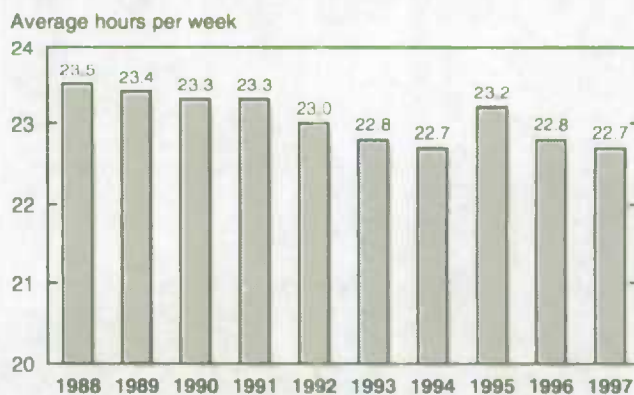
The fourth quarter 1998 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB, \$24/\$79) will be available in March. For further information, contact Louise Chagné (613-951-3350, fax: 613-951-2848, infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division.

Television viewing continues to decline

In the fall of 1997, Canadians watched an average of 22.7 hours of television per week. This included 1.3 hours spent viewing videotapes on their VCRs. Except for when new specialty cable channels were introduced in 1995, television viewing has undergone a small but steady decline since 1988.

Since 15 new Canadian specialty stations were introduced in 1997, the audience for pay-TV and for Canadian-source specialty cable programming has grown remarkably. In the fall of 1997, these services accounted for 14% of Canadians' total viewing—double the viewing time in the fall of 1993. This sizeable audience share may be a result of the free trial period that these new specialty stations were offering. Data obtained in fall of 1998 will show whether the audience rating for Canadian specialty services has remained high even though these new stations are no longer free.

Television viewing in Canada



(continued on page 6)

... Television viewing continues to decline

Despite the growing popularity of the specialty channels, Canada's conventional stations continue to hold the highest viewership among both anglophones and francophones. However, their audience share has steadily declined from 66% in 1993 to 60% in 1997. These stations still account for more than half of anglophones' viewing time and for more than three-quarters of francophones'. In addition, anglophone viewers spend more than 18% of their viewing time watching foreign-source conventional stations.

As the table shows, average weekly viewing times are highest among residents of Quebec, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. By contrast, average weekly viewing times in Ontario, Prince Edward Island and the Western provinces are below the national average. Compared with English-speaking Quebecers or with other Canadians, French-speaking Quebecers watch more television—their viewing time exceeds the national average by nearly four hours.

For all age groups and all provinces, women watch more television than men do, averaging almost five hours more per week. Older persons also spend much more time in front of the television, especially men and women over 50. This trend is even more pronounced among men and women over 60, who spend nearly 10 more hours per week watching television than the average for men or women as a whole. Men aged 18 to 24, followed by teenagers and children, spend the least amount of time watching television.

The programs coming from Canadian sources attract different viewers than do programs from foreign sources. In general, francophone viewers spend more than 66% of their viewing time

watching programs from a Canadian source. By contrast, anglophone viewers spend 70% of their viewing time watching programs from a foreign source. This difference may be due in part to the fact that francophones do not have access in French to the range of foreign programs that is available to anglophones in English on the American channels.

Within Canadian-source programming, news and public affairs shows attract the largest audience among both anglophones and francophones. However, francophone viewers devote nearly 12% more of their viewing time to them. Francophone viewers also show much more interest in variety shows, game shows and dramas than do anglophone viewers, who are more interested in sports programs. As for foreign-source programming, dramas and comedies are the most popular with anglophone viewers. Francophones also enjoy foreign-source dramas, but in a much lower proportion than anglophones, who spend nearly 10% more of their viewing time watching them.

From 7 to 11 p.m., francophones spend almost the same proportion of time watching Canadian programs as foreign programs. However, they prefer Canadian dramas (27%), followed by foreign dramas (18%) and Canadian news and public affairs programs (14%). During the same time slot, anglophones increase their viewing of foreign programs to nearly 80% of their total viewing time. This high proportion is largely due to their attraction to foreign dramas and foreign comedies, which account for 87% and almost 99%, respectively, of their total viewing time for these types of programs.

For further information, contact Lotfi Chahdi (613-951-3136; fax: 613-951-9040; chahlot@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Average hours per week spent watching television, Fall 1997

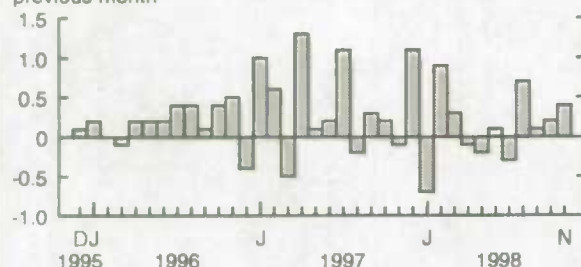
	Total population	Children 2 to 11	Teens, 12 to 17	Men, 18 to 24	Women, 18 to 24	Men, 35 to 49	Women, 35 to 49	Men, 60 and over	Women, 60 and over
Canada	22.7	17.9	16.9	14.3	18.0	19.8	23.5	32.2	36.1
Newfoundland	24.3	22.7	16.2	14.1	21.0	22.4	25.4	30.3	33.6
Prince Edward Island	21.8	18.0	16.9	15.2	11.8	19.9	21.2	30.9	31.7
Nova Scotia	24.1	18.3	16.1	16.0	19.9	20.5	25.0	32.5	35.0
New Brunswick	24.5	19.2	18.3	15.6	19.7	21.7	25.8	29.5	35.2
Quebec - English	22.3	16.9	15.7	15.2	15.1	22.1	22.8	30.1	34.1
Quebec - French	26.5	18.9	18.1	16.0	19.5	23.1	28.7	39.2	43.7
Quebec - Total	25.8	19.0	18.0	15.9	19.2	22.7	27.4	36.6	41.5
Ontario	22.2	18.6	17.9	13.7	18.9	18.9	22.5	31.7	35.3
Manitoba	21.0	15.9	14.2	12.9	16.5	17.7	22.5	28.8	32.8
Saskatchewan	21.7	17.2	15.9	14.7	19.1	17.8	22.1	29.8	35.4
Alberta	19.8	16.3	15.1	13.0	15.0	17.1	20.9	28.5	32.8
British Columbia	20.4	15.3	14.3	13.5	14.4	18.8	20.5	30.4	32.7

Note: For Quebec, the language classification is based on the language spoken at home. The total column also includes those respondents who did not reply to this question or who indicated a language other than English or French.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

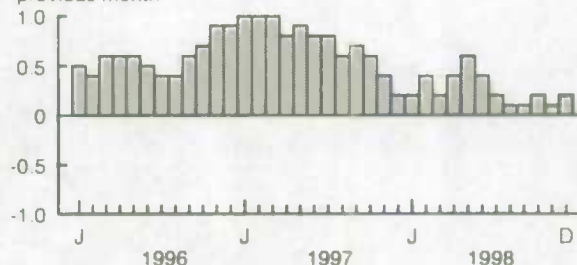
% change,
previous month



Economic activity advanced 0.4% in November. It was the fourth consecutive month of growth.

Composite Index

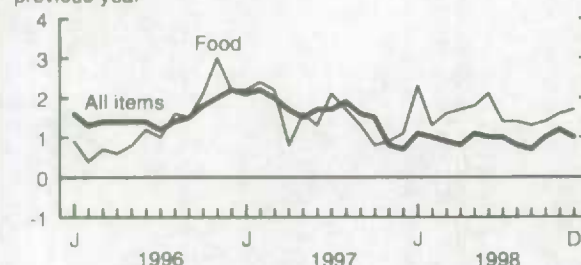
% change,
previous month



In December, the leading indicator grew 0.2%, maintaining the modest growth it has shown since June.

Consumer Price Index

% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 1.0% more for goods and services in December 1998 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.7%.

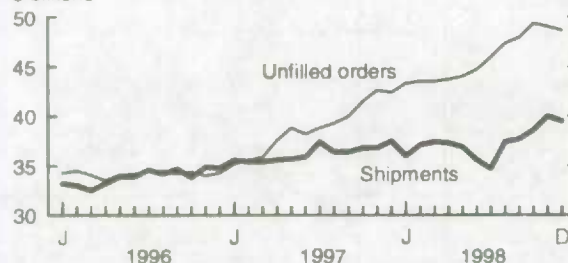
Unemployment rate



In January, the unemployment rate fell to 7.8% – its lowest point since June 1990.

Manufacturing

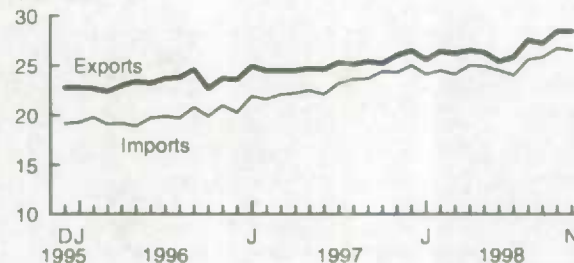
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments climbed 1.4% in December to \$39.5 billion. The level of unfilled orders declined 0.8% to \$48.6 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In November, the value of merchandise exports slipped 0.1% from October to \$28.4 billion. Imports fell 0.8% to \$26.5 billion.

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

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	November	724.2	0.4%	2.7%
Composite Index (1981=100)	December	208.7	0.2%	3.3%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1998	25.6	3.7%	- 9.1%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1998	83.5	- 0.6†	- 1.2†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	November	20.8	1.1%	4.1%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	December*	117.7	- 1.3%	- 18.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	January	14.65	0.6%	3.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	January	7.8	- 0.2†	- 1.0†
Participation rate (%)	January	65.8	0.2†	0.9†
Labour income (\$ billion)	November	39.2	0.1%	3.7%
Average weekly earnings (\$)	November	607.58	0.0%	1.2%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	January	147	0.7%	10.5%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	November	28.4	- 0.1%	9.4%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	November	26.5	- 0.8%	8.8%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	November	1.9	0.2	0.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	December*	39.5	1.4%	5.3%
New orders (\$ billion)	December*	39.1	1.1%	4.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	December*	48.6	- 0.8%	14.7%
Inventory/shipments ratio	December*	1.26	- 0.03	- 0.02
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	December	108.7	- 0.3%	1.0%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	December	119.4	- 0.3%	- 0.7%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	December	111.9	- 9.1%	- 1.7%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	December	100.3	0.1%	0.6%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

Infomat

A weekly review

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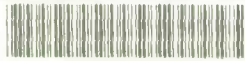
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