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Catalogue 11-002E (Français 11-002F) ISSN 0380-0547

Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, May 14, 1999

OVERVIEW

◆ **Sharp jump in job seekers**

Despite little change in employment in April, higher labour force participation led to a sharp jump in the number of people looking for work. That pushed the unemployment rate up to 8.3%.

◆ **Large turnaround in building permits**

In March, the value of building permits issued by municipalities jumped 18.7% to $3.1 billion. That was the highest monthly level since March 1990. The residential and non-residential sectors both made strong contributions.

◆ **Manufacturers optimistic about production prospects**

Nearly one out of three manufacturers plans to increase production in the coming three months. Manufacturers in the transportation equipment industries are the most optimistic.

◆ **Department store sales down for second straight month**

In March, department store sales were down for a second consecutive month, falling from February by 0.6%.

◆ **Class of '95 entered labour market at a favourable time**

Graduates with more education in 1995 had lower and less volatile unemployment rates two years later.

◆ **The Year 2000: Municipalities expect to be ready**

In almost all municipalities, police and ambulance services have taken action to be ready. Likewise, steps have been taken to prepare water and sewage services.

Sharp jump in job seekers

Employment has levelled off since January and remained unchanged in April. A sharp jump in the number of people looking for work, most pronounced among youths, pushed the unemployment rate up in April by half a percentage point to 8.3%. This increase in labour market activity caused the participation rate to rise to 66.0%—its highest rate since June 1993.

In April, youth employment was unchanged. However, the youth unemployment rate jumped 1.4 percentage points to 15.7%. An increase of 42,000 in youth unemployment, closely split between teenagers and older youth, occurred because a large number of students began looking for work. The youth participation rate has been on an upward trend since June 1998, rising three percentage points to 64.1%.

For a second month in a row, employment among adults was little changed. In the eight months prior to March, employment among adults had been following a strong upward trend, with all of the increase in full-time work. Unemployment among adults increased due to the higher labour force activity: An estimated 39,000 more adults (almost equally split between men and women) were looking for work in April. As a result, the unemployment rate for adult men increased 0.2 percentage points to 6.9%; for adult women, it rose 0.3 percentage points to 6.8%.

Employment

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... Sharp jump in job seekers

The number of full-time workers continued to grow in April, increasing by 29,000. On a year-over-year basis, full-time employment was up 3.5%, whereas part-time employment declined 1.2%. As a result, the proportion of part-time jobs in the labour market edged down from 18.8% in April 1998 to 18.1%.

The number of people working in the service sector rose in April by 39,000. Most of that job growth was in accommodation and food services and in health and social services. That job growth in the service sector was offset in the goods-producing sector, which employed 24,000 fewer workers. In construction, employment has edged down in recent months after strong growth in 1998. Manufacturing employment was 80,000 higher in April than at the start of this year.

The public sector employed more people in April (+39,000). Employment fell slightly in the private sector (-24,000). In the 12 months to April, the number of public sector jobs increased by 105,000 (+4.1%), while employment in the private sector grew by 267,000 (+2.3%). The public-sector job growth was seen in health and social services and in education.

Among the provinces, increased labour force participation in April pushed unemployment rates up in both Ontario and Quebec. The higher participation drove unemployment in Ontario up by 52,000; youths accounted for half of that rise. In Quebec, the increase in participation pushed unemployment up by 21,000. Ontario's strong job growth in the six months prior to March lifted employment in that province by 172,000 (+3.1%) compared with April 1998. In Quebec, by contrast, employment has risen by 58,000 (+1.8%).

In Alberta, employment grew by 9,000, continuing the upward trend in that province. Despite a loss in the natural resources sector in Alberta, 39,000 jobs were added in the last 12 months (+2.5%). Over this period, gains were made in several service-producing industries as well as in manufacturing and construction. In April, the unemployment rate in Alberta remained at 5.9%.

The number British Columbians with a job or a business fell in April by 12,000. Employment in the province, which grew through most of 1998 and into the beginning of this year, fell in both March and April. Compared with April 1998, a drop in the number of construction and natural resources jobs has been more than offset by a rise in the number of service sector jobs, leaving employment up 58,000 (+3.1%).

Nova Scotia's job growth in April (+8,000) was concentrated in construction, as well as in some service industries. In the other provinces, the employment and unemployment picture was little changed in April.

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

Labour force information, for the week ending April 17, 1999 *(71-001-PPB, $11/$103) is now available. For further information, contact Deborah Sunter (613-951-4740) or Nathalie Caron (613-951-4168), Household Surveys Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Labour Force Survey[1], April 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	**15,973.5**	**0.6**	**14,650.1**	**0.1**	**1,323.4**	**8.3**
Newfoundland	249.2	0.1	203.0	-0.9	46.2	18.5
Prince Edward Island	73.8	1.0	62.9	1.1	10.9	14.8
Nova Scotia	458.9	0.8	416.5	2.0	42.4	9.2
New Brunswick	376.8	0.5	337.1	0.4	39.7	10.5
Quebec	3,761.9	0.9	3,371.6	0.4	390.3	10.4
Ontario	6,206.0	0.7	5,760.1	-0.1	445.9	7.2
Manitoba	587.9	0.6	554.9	0.4	33.0	5.6
Saskatchewan	513.7	0.7	480.7	0.6	33.0	6.4
Alberta	1,655.8	0.6	1,557.6	0.5	98.2	5.9
British Columbia	2,089.5	-0.2	1,905.7	-0.6	183.9	8.8

[1] *Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.*

Large turnaround in building permits

In March, the value of building permits issued by municipalities jumped 18.7% to $3.1 billion. That was the highest monthly level since March 1990. The residential and non-residential sectors both made strong contributions to the increase. (Unless otherwise indicated, all figures are seasonally adjusted.)

Construction intentions in the residential sector rose 11.4% to $1.6 billion. This growth in the housing sector was due to a 58.2% spike in intentions to build multi-family dwellings to $567 million, the highest level since January 1990. This spike more than offset a 3.6% decline in intentions to build single-family dwellings to $1.1 billion, the second monthly decline in three months.

In March, housing starts increased 2.7%, while sales of existing homes posted their second monthly gain (+5.4%) after a record increase in February. All factors affecting the outlook in the

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... Large turnaround in building permits

housing sector remain positive for the near future: Long-term mortgage rates remain at levels comparable to those of the 1960s, the New Housing Price Index was practically unchanged from January to March (+0.2%), and full-time employment among the 25-to-44 age group remains stable.

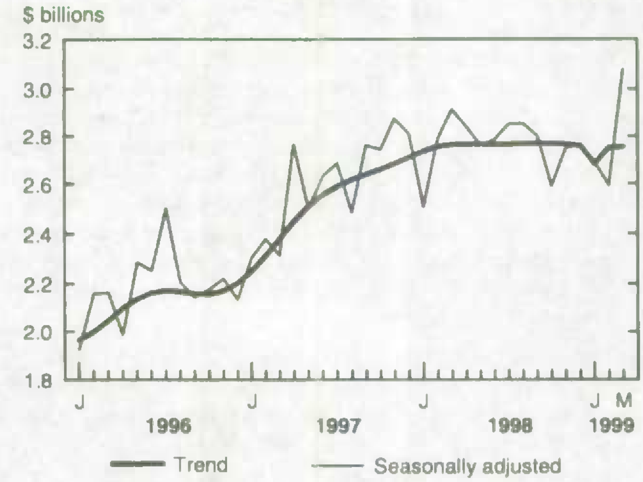
On a provincial basis, the largest gains in March based on change in dollar value occurred in Ontario, British Columbia and Newfoundland. In Ontario and British Columbia, multi-family dwellings led the way, while single-family dwellings were the main factor behind the increase in Newfoundland. The most significant monthly decline occurred in Quebec, mainly due to lower intentions to build single-family dwellings.

In the non-residential sector, the value of permits rebounded 28.1% to $1.4 billion—the highest since June 1990. March's strong advance followed a decline in February. Institutional permits vaulted 50.6% to $347 million, the highest level since September 1997, mostly on intentions in the welfare and medical building groups. Following two consecutive declines, the commercial component grew 16.6% to $706 million. The office, warehouse and recreation building groups accounted for this growth. Industrial intentions jumped 34.5% to $387 million, almost all because of permits for factories and plants.

Among the provinces, monthly increases based on change in dollar values were most significant for non-residential building in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. The most significant decline was in Nova Scotia. In British Columbia, all three components had an impact, while the commercial component played the largest role in Ontario. In Quebec, the industrial and the institutional components led the way.

In the first quarter of 1999, municipalities issued building permits worth $8.4 billion, an increase from the fourth quarter of 3.2%. Due to a decrease in the value of permits for single-family dwellings, housing intentions declined 0.6% to $4.6 billion. Despite the decline, that was the highest first-quarter level for residential building permits since 1990. Compared with the first quarter of 1998, residential building permits were up 2.1%. This increase is in line with the expectations of higher investment in housing for this year, as shown by Statistics Canada's most recent survey on private and public investment.

Value of building permits



Following a significant decrease in the fourth quarter of 1998, intentions to build non-residential structures were up 8.1% in the first quarter of 1999, to $3.8 billion. It was the best first-quarter performance for the sector since 1990. Gains in the industrial and institutional components more than offset a slight decline in the commercial component. Compared with the first quarter of 1998, the value of non-residential building permits was 1.7% higher. This is consistent with the 6% increase in non-residential building construction that is anticipated in 1999.

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

*The March 1999 issue of **Building permits** (64-001-XIB, $19/$186) can be downloaded at www.statcan.ca. For further information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; burejoa@statcan.ca) or Ginette Gervais (613-951-2025; gervgin@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

Building permits[1], First quarter 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	$ millions	% change, previous quarter	$ millions	% change, previous quarter	$ millions	% change, previous quarter
Canada	**8,362.0**	**3.2**	**4,556.2**	**-0.6**	**3,805.8**	**8.1**
Newfoundland	108.5	36.3	54.8	83.2	53.8	8.1
Prince Edward Island	22.7	-24.8	15.7	2.7	7.0	-52.9
Nova Scotia	203.9	10.0	125.0	17.1	78.9	0.3
New Brunswick	97.7	-14.9	65.6	12.5	32.1	-43.1
Quebec	1,681.4	15.5	797.3	4.4	884.0	27.7
Ontario	3,786.2	8.5	2,083.9	-3.6	1,702.3	28.3
Manitoba	209.0	0.9	94.0	-1.0	115.0	2.6
Saskatchewan	130.6	-33.8	46.1	-30.1	84.5	-35.7
Alberta	1,189.0	-8.9	705.7	0.4	483.3	-19.7
British Columbia	902.9	-11.1	555.3	-2.5	347.6	-22.1
Yukon	6.9	-35.8	4.8	-19.5	2.1	-56.0
Northwest Territories	23.2	82.0	8.1	12.0	15.1	173.0

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

Manufacturers optimistic about production prospects

> *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 these 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.*

Nearly one out of three manufacturers (32%) are planning to increase production in the coming three months, according to the April Business Conditions Survey. Manufacturers in the transportation equipment industries are the most optimistic about increasing production. The balance of opinion regarding production prospects for the coming three months increased 9 points to +16. (The balance of opinion is the difference between the 32% of manufacturers who said that production will be higher in the coming three months and the 16% who said it will be lower.)

As for employment prospects, about 71% of manufacturers say that the size of their workforce will change little over the course of the next three months. In the April survey, the balance of opinion concerning employment prospects remained virtually unchanged (-1) from the January survey. The share of manufacturers expecting to cut their workforce was 15%, while the proportion expecting to increase employment remained at 14%. In manufacturing, employment increased strongly in the first three months of 1999 (+96,000).

The April survey revealed that the level of manufacturers' finished-product inventory—$16.6 billion in February—is not a major concern. About 78% of manufacturers say that the current level of finished-product inventory is about right, 18% say they are too high, while 4% say inventories are too low. This leaves the current balance of opinion at -14, a decrease of 1 from the January survey.

Manufacturers are more satisfied than they were in January with the current level of new orders. This is especially the case with manufacturers in the transportation equipment, primary metal and wood industries. In April, about 89% of manufacturers said their current level of new orders was about the same or rising compared with the previous three months. The balance of opinion concerning the current level of new orders increased 6 points from January to April, rising to +5.

Most manufacturers are also satisfied with their current level of unfilled orders. About 79% say that their level of unfilled orders is about normal, down slightly from January. About 14% of manufacturers stated in April that unfilled orders will be lower than normal in the three months ahead, while 7% stated that they would be higher. Overall, manufacturers' satisfaction with the current level of unfilled orders remains negative at -7.

Concern about skilled labour shortages has increased. A shortage of skilled labour continued to be a concern for 7% of manufacturers, an increase from the January survey, when 5% shared that concern. However, the proportion of manufacturers reporting an absence of production impediments was unchanged from January at 86%.

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

	April 1998	July 1998	October 1998	January 1998	April 1999
	% of manufacturers who said				
Volume of production in next three months will be:					
About the same as in previous three month	60	45	44	73	52
Higher	22	22	41	17	32
Lower	18	33	15	10	16
Employment in next three months will:					
Change little from previous three months	70	70	73	73	71
Increase	19	17	14	14	14
Decrease	11	13	13	13	15
Finished-product inventory is:					
About right	80	84	80	79	78
Too low	3	2	2	4	4
Too high	17	14	18	17	18
Orders received are:					
About the same	59	72	69	75	73
Rising	18	14	18	12	16
Declining	23	14	13	13	11
Backlog of unfilled orders is:					
About normal	77	80	74	81	79
Higher than normal	10	7	10	7	7
Lower than normal	13	13	16	12	14

Department store sales down for second straight month

Department store sales declined for a second consecutive month in March, falling 0.6% to $1,449.7 million. The diminishing sales in February and March came on the heels of two strong monthly increases in December 1998 and January 1999. Before December, sales in department stores had remained essentially flat since the spring of 1998. (Unless stated otherwise, all figures are seasonally adjusted.)

Compared with March 1998, sales were higher this March by 0.7%. This was the lowest year-over-year percentage increase since March 1995. In comparison, the year-over-year sales increases were higher than 9.0% during the period of strong growth from March 1997 to April 1998.

Unadjusted for seasonal factors, department store sales increased in almost all provinces compared with March 1998. The only exception was British Columbia, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, where sales fell 4.9%. Department stores posted double-digit year-over-year sales growth in March in Nova Scotia (+12.2%) and in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island (+10.4%).

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 Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; gratpau@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Department store sales including concessions
Not seasonally adjusted

	March 1999	March 1998 to March 1999	January-March 1999	January-March 1998 to January-March 1999
	$ millions	% change	$ millions	% change
Canada	**1,215.0**	**3.3**	**3,192.7**	**4.9**
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island1	22.6	10.4	58.5	9.3
Nova Scotia	39.1	12.2	95.0	7.7
New Brunswick	26.4	2.5	66.8	2.8
Quebec	222.2	4.9	584.2	5.1
Ontario	515.4	3.4	1,361.5	6.0
Manitoba	51.9	5.3	133.8	5.3
Saskatchewan	40.0	3.7	107.1	7.1
Alberta	145.0	6.1	380.2	5.9
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories	152.4	-4.9	405.6	-1.5

[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.*

Class of '95 entered labour market at a favourable time

Graduates with high levels of educational attainment in 1995 had lower unemployment rates two years later in June 1997. Compared with the last three National Graduates Surveys (of 1992, 1988, and 1984), unemployment rates among college and university graduates have remained stable. Moreover, their unemployment rates have been less volatile than those for trade or vocational graduates, whose rates fluctuate more as labour market conditions change. Unemployment rates in 1997 were lowest among graduates of college and trade/vocational programs in health, social sciences and engineering. Among university graduates, unemployment rates were lowest among graduates from education, commerce, engineering and health programs.

The 300,000 students who graduated from the country's trade and vocational schools, colleges and universities in 1995 entered the labour market at a favourable time: the economy was generally expanding. In June 1997, two years after they graduated, 79% of the trade and vocational graduates, 85% of the college graduates and 83% of the university graduates were employed either full time or part time. These percentages were similar to previous graduating classes of 1990, 1986, and 1982.

> ***Note to readers***
>
> *A new publication,* The Class of '95: Report of the 1997 National Survey of 1995 Graduates, *takes a comprehensive look at how the 1995 graduates of trade and vocational schools, colleges and universities were faring in the labour market two years after graduation. The 1997 National Survey of 1995 Graduates, conducted in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada, interviewed 43,000 graduates about their education, training and labour market experiences two years after graduation.*

The most successful at finding full-time work were the university graduates of commerce and engineering programs. Two years after graduation, 85% of the commerce graduates and 81% of the engineering graduates were working full time. Only

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... Class of '95 entered labour market at a favourable time

5% of commerce graduates and 3% of engineering graduates were working part time, the lowest rate among all 1995 university graduates.

About 14% of the college and university graduates had part-time jobs two years after graduating. That was a higher proportion than for previous graduating classes in 1990, 1986 and 1982. However, only one-quarter of the 1995 university graduates and only one-third of the 1995 college graduates who were working part time two years later did so because they could not find a full-time job.

Among college and university graduates, men had higher rates of full-time employment than did women. However, about 12% of female university graduates were not working full time because of family responsibilities or because of a personal preference to work fewer hours.

Slightly over 50% of all 1995 graduates who were working full time two years after graduation were working in jobs closely related to their degree. About 22% reported working in jobs somewhat related to their degree.

University graduates continue to earn more than post-secondary graduates at the college and trade/vocational level do. University graduates working full time had median earnings of $33,800 in current 1997 dollars. This compares with median earnings of $25,700 for college graduates working full time and $23,400 for those from trade or vocational schools.

*The publication titled **The Class of '95: Report of the 1997 National Survey of 1995 Graduates** is now available. To order, send a fax to Public Enquiries Centre, Human Resources Development Canada (fax: 819-953-7260), or visit their web site at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/arb. For further analytical information, contact Shelley Harris (613-951-1532) at Statistics Canada or Jean-Pierre Voyer (819-994-1620) at Human Resources Development Canada. For more general information, contact Sharon-Anne Gibbs (613-951-1503), Centre for Education Statistics.*

The Year 2000: Municipalities expect to be ready

In large municipalities (more than 25,000 people), all of the surveyed police departments, fire departments and ambulance service providers have taken steps to prepare their critical systems to be ready to handle the date change to 2000. The preparedness of service providers in large municipalities is especially important, given that these municipalities are home to 62% of the population. As for police services, critical systems are expected to be ready no later than October in 92% of the large municipalities. This compares with 94% for systems critical to both ambulance and fire services.

Meanwhile, systems critical to providing water will be ready by the end of October in about 95% of the large municipalities surveyed. Similarly, sewage services with critical systems are expected to be ready in all large municipalities, with 98% finishing by the end of October. For a substantial proportion of municipalities, especially the small ones, computer systems are not considered critical for the delivery of water and sewage services.

In small and medium-sized municipalities, systems critical to police, ambulance and fire services are also expected to be ready before the end of 1999. In the smallest municipalities (1,000 to 5,000 people), an estimated 21% of fire departments with critical systems had not taken steps to ensure these systems will function. Two-thirds of these are not addressing the Y2K problem because they feel it is not an issue or because they assume their systems will not be affected.

As for businesses, virtually all (99.5%) with more than 250 employees say their computerized systems will be ready. A substantial proportion will continue preparations for the millennium bug throughout the summer. By the end of April, about 18% of all large firms are expected to have all systems critical to operations ready to handle the date change to the Year 2000. This is expected to climb to about one-half (52%) before July, to two-thirds (67%) before September, and to 92% by the end of October.

Note to readers

This article looks at the preliminary results from the March 1999 version of the ongoing National Survey on Preparedness for the Year 2000. As with the two previous versions of the survey, conducted in October 1997 and May 1998, this new survey included a sample of all businesses with more than five employees. It also included a wide range of public sector organizations that were not covered in the two earlier surveys. The sample included health care providers, police forces, fire departments, ambulance services and public utilities. The latest survey was conducted by telephone in February and March 1999.

With 10,100 organizations responding, including 1,600 large firms (more than 250 employees), the survey is a rich source of information on wide-ranging aspects of Year 2000 planning. The results are still being analyzed and a final report will be available later this spring.

The preparation of large companies is particularly important, since they account for about 85% of the gross revenues of all businesses and organizations included in the survey. Larger firms are also more likely to have elaborate computer systems and computer-controlled equipment.

The timelines by which large organizations expect to complete preparations of their critical systems vary somewhat across industrial sectors. Of the large hospitals, more than one-half (57%) do not expect all critical systems to be ready until some time after August, with a substantial number expecting to finish preparations in September and October. In the air transportation sector, by contrast, only about 3% of large companies will be completing preparations during the last four months of 1999, while the percentage for large electrical utilities is 9%.

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... The Year 2000: Municipalities expect to be ready

System testing, a time-consuming process, seems to be well under way in large organizations: 14% had completed all testing of critical systems at the time of the survey; for 53%, testing was more than half done. Some 85% of large firms that had started testing said the process had not revealed more problems than expected.

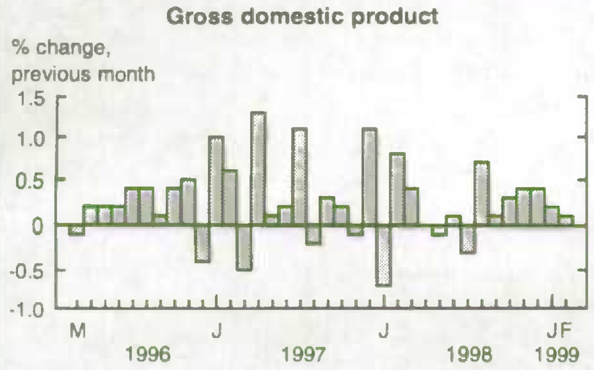
Large businesses are taking other steps to minimize the impact of Year 2000 disruptions. About 87% have asked their suppliers and service providers about how well they are prepared to cope. An estimated 85% have implemented contingency measures designed to sustain operations in the event of system failures or disruptions. This includes 57% that are developing alternative processes in case computer systems shut down, as well as 48% that are identifying alternative suppliers that have achieved Year 2000 compliance. About 97% of large firms expect to have contingency planning in place before the end of the year.

Most small and medium-sized firms have acted. Some 87% of small businesses (6 to 50 employees), and virtually all (98%) of the medium-sized firms have taken steps to ensure their critical systems will work correctly. (These proportions exclude those that said they had no critical systems.) About half of the small firms that have not taken steps to prepare critical systems indicated the Year 2000 problem is not an issue for them. Many of the rest are planning to address the problem later, or expect the problem to be solved by their information technology suppliers.

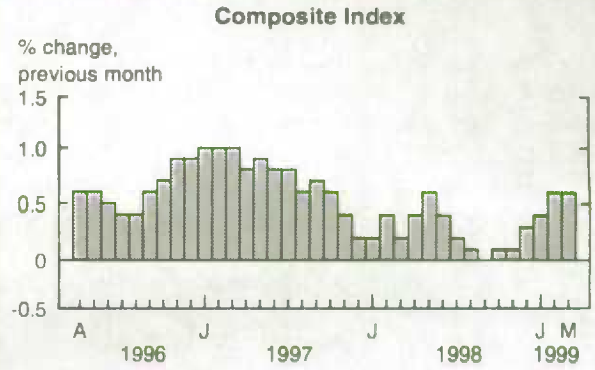
The preliminary analysis of the latest survey has not revealed major regional variations in preparedness for the Year 2000. By October, 95% of the large organizations in the Atlantic Provinces and Ontario expect their critical systems to be ready. The proportions are slightly lower in Quebec (88%), the Prairies, Northwest Territories and Nunavut (90%) and British Columbia and the Yukon (92%).

For further information, contact Christian Wolfe (613-951-0708; wolfchr@statcan.ca), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.

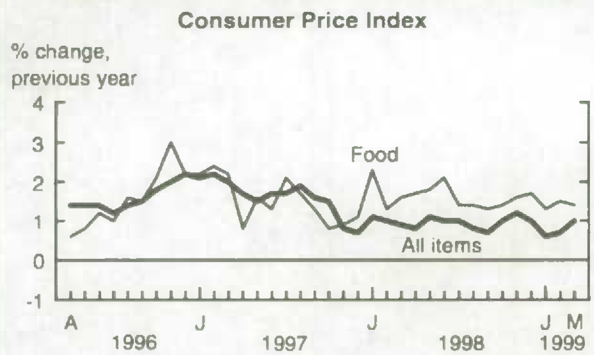
Current trends



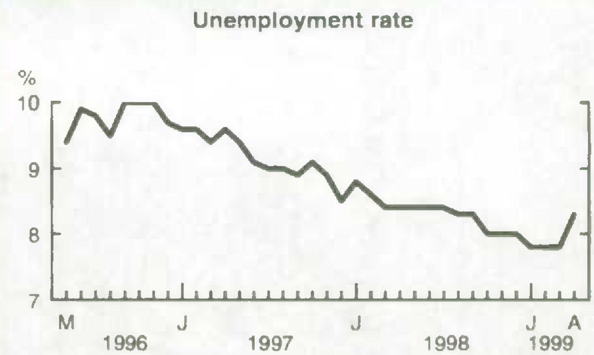
Economic activity advanced a marginal 0.1% in February, the seventh consecutive month of growth.



The leading indicator continued its steady advance in March, rising 0.6%, the same as its upward-revised gain in February.



Consumers paid 1.0% more for goods and services in March 1999 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.4%.



In April, a sharp jump in the number of people looking for work pushed the unemployment rate to 8.3%.

Manufacturers' shipments slipped 0.4% in February to $39.1 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders climbed 3.2% to $49.8 billion.

In February, the value of merchandise exports fell 0.9% from January to $28.7 billion. Imports declined a slight 0.5% to $26.1 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)	February	730.6	0.1%	2.4%
Composite Index (1981=100)	March	212.1	0.6%	4.1%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q4 1998	28.7	15.1%	– 1.0%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q4 1998	82.5	0.7†	– 0.9†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	February	21.0	– 0.4%	3.8%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	February	117.1	– 4.1%	6.4%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	February	28.7	0.0%	3.3%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	April*	14.65	0.1%	2.6%
Unemployment rate (%)	April*	8.3	0.5†	– 0.1†
Participation rate (%)	April*	66.0	0.4†	0.9†
Labour income ($ billion)	January	39.3	– 0.2%	2.6%
Average weekly earnings ($)	February	607.97	0.2%	0.1%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	April	150	5.6%	1.4%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	February	28.7	– 0.9%	8.4%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	February	26.1	– 0.5%	6.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	February	2.6	– 0.1	0.8
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	February	39.1	– 0.4%	5.3%
New orders ($ billion)	February	40.6	5.0%	9.0%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	February	49.8	3.2%	14.5%
Inventory/shipments ratio	February	1.27	0.01	– 0.03
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	March	110.7	0.4%	1.0%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	March	119.7	0.8%	1.4%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	March	107.0	5.5%	–2.9%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	March*	100.5	0.2%	0.6%

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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Publications released from May 6 to 12, 1999

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription Canada (C$)	Outside Canada (US$)
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Field crop reporting series, vol. 78, no. 3:				
Stocks of Canadian grain	At March 31, 1999	22-002-XPB	15/88	15/88
Livestock statistics updates	May 1999	23-603-UPE	45/149	45/149
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES				
New motor vehicle sales	February 1999	63-007-XIB	13/124	
Retail trade	February 1999			
Internet		63-005-XIB	16/155	
Paper		63-005-XPB	21/206	21/206
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS				
Labour force information, week ending April 17, 1999	April 1999	71-001-PPB	11/103	11/103
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Exports by commodity	February 1999			
Microfiche		65-004-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper		65-004-XPB	78/773	78/773
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK				
Building permits	March 1999	64-001-XIB	19/106	
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Asphalt roofing	March 1999	45-001-XIB	5/47	
Cement	March 1999	44-001-XIB	5/47	
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	March 1999	46-002-XIB	5/47	
Oil pipeline transport	February 1999	55-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
Oils and fats	March 1999	32-006-XIB	5/47	
Production and disposition of tobacco products	March 1999	32-022-XIB	5/47	
Production and shipments of steel pipe and tubing	March 1999	41-011-XIB	5/47	
Refined petroleum products	January 1999	45-004-XPB	21/206	21/206
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