



Infommat

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A Weekly Review

Friday, June 11, 1999

OVERVIEW

◆ GDP continues to advance

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◆ Not much change in employment

In May, for a fourth consecutive month, the number of employed Canadians was about the same. The unemployment rate slipped 0.2 percentage points to 8.1%.

◆ Residential and non-residential building permits both lose ground

In April, the value of building permits retreated for both residential and non-residential projects. This followed a strong performance in March, when the total value of permits reached its highest level in nine years.

◆ Department store sales rise

After declining for two consecutive months, department store sales rose 0.6% in April.

◆ Tourism breaking records

Buoyed by strong American tourism, 18.8 million international travellers made overnight trips to Canada in 1998. That was the largest number of visitors in the 26 years that travel data have been collected.

◆ Lowest international travel deficit in over 10 years

In the first quarter, the international travel deficit fell to \$182 million—its lowest level in more than a decade thanks to record spending by American travellers in Canada.

◆ Economists expect a very slight increase in inflation

The Short-term Expectations Survey shows that little change is expected in the performance of the economy going into July, except for a very slight increase in inflation.

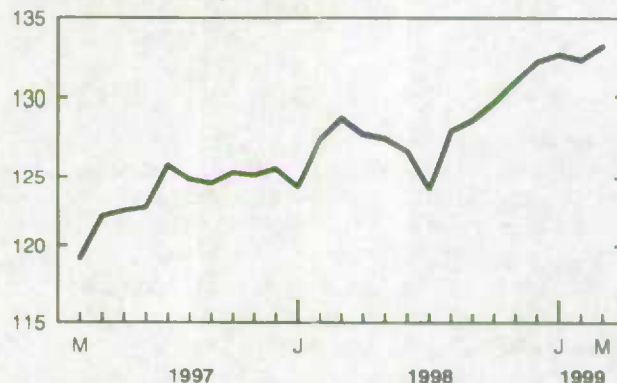
GDP continues to advance

In March, strong showings in most sectors combined to advance gross domestic product by 0.3%. Manufacturers raised output a significant 0.7%, more than offsetting the 0.3% decline in February, which was the first in seven months. Increased computer wholesaling and auto retailing kept the trades sector busy in March (wholesale trade, +1.3%; retail trade, +0.5%). Business service providers again expanded their activities (+1.0%), as the Year 2000 problem continued to spur growth at computer service and consulting firms. There was also healthy growth in demand for temporary help workers, accountants, legal specialists, architects, engineers and scientists.

Among manufacturers, 13 of 22 major industry groups—accounting for more than 80% of total manufacturing production—increased output in March. Makers of electrical and electronic products raised output 2.8%. Production of computers and peripheral equipment rebounded and growth continued to be solid in the telecommunications equipment industry and the communications wire and cable industries. Transportation equipment makers were buoyed by increased production of aircraft and parts, which continued to pick up after temporary layoffs in the fourth quarter. Output of cars and parts edged up 0.5% in March, showing no sign

GDP of the manufacturing sector

\$ billions (1992 dollars)



(continued on page 2)



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... GDP continues to advance

of falling off after the fourth quarter's spectacular rebound from the strike-induced low in the third quarter.

Steel mills boosted production for a third consecutive month in March. Labour strife led to a 2.2% monthly drop in output of the printing and publishing industry. Wood production fell for a second consecutive month in March, as quota restrictions under the Canada-U.S. softwood lumber agreement forced many sawmills to take downtime. Some U.S. importers postponed large purchases in order to try for lower prices when the new quota year began in April. Production of machinery was up slightly in March, but this did little to halt the downward slide the industry has been in since the end of 1997. Producers of all types of machinery face weak domestic and foreign demand.

Total construction activity was little changed in March, as declines in residential and non-residential building were offset by an increase in engineering construction. Non-residential construction continued to trend downward, as activity on commercial and industrial projects decreased. Mining production dropped 1.7%

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.

in March, as drilling and rigging activity plumbed multi-year lows and producers of crude petroleum and natural gas cut output for a sixth straight month. Higher prices for crude petroleum did little to help the oil industry.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 4677-4681.

The March 1999 issue of *Gross domestic product by industry* (15-001-XPB, \$15/\$145) presents the full report. To purchase data, contact Kim Lauzon (1 800 877-IMAD; IMAD@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division.

Not much change in employment

In May, for a fourth consecutive month, the number of employed Canadians was about the same (-14,000 or -0.1%). April's strong increase in labour force participation was cut in half in May, when the number of persons in the labour force fell by 49,000. Unemployment, which rose sharply in April, fell in May by 35,000, pushing the unemployment rate down 0.2 percentage points to 8.1%. Neither the number of full-time employees nor the number of part-time workers changed much in May. However, full-time employment has shown a marked upward trend for a year now, growing since May 1998 by 3.1%.

Youth employment showed no change in May for a second consecutive month. Compared with May 1998, the number of young people with a job has risen by 99,000 (+4.7%). After climbing in April, the number of unemployed youths was unchanged in May, leaving their unemployment rate at 15.6% (-0.1 percentage points). The percentage of older students (aged 20 to 24) who had jobs this May was 56.1%, up from a year earlier by 0.7 percentage points. However, a slightly higher percentage of those jobs were part time. The unemployment rate among older students was 17.2%—unchanged from a year earlier.

Adult employment remained virtually the same for a third consecutive month. During the 12 months to May, adult employment grew by 263,000 (+2.2%)—all in full-time jobs. The number of unemployed adults declined in May by 35,000. The drop in the number of people looking for work was almost entirely among men, causing their unemployment rate to drop 0.4 percentage points to 6.5%. For adult women, the unemployment rate remained unchanged from April at 6.8%.

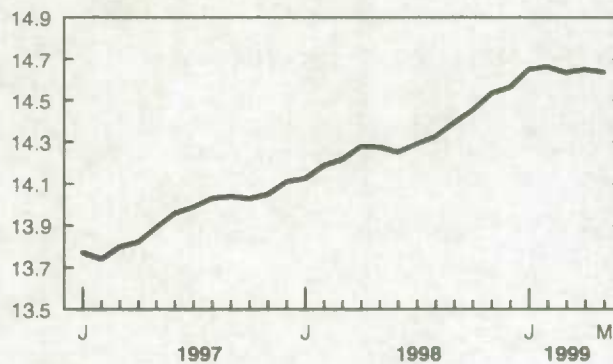
Private-sector employment fell slightly in May. This sector, which showed strong employment growth during the second half of 1998, has added 254,000 new employees (+2.2%) since May 1998. The public sector, meanwhile, showed little employment change in May.

Note to readers

From May to August, the Labour Force Survey identifies young people aged 15 to 24 who both attended school full time in March and intend to return to school in the fall. Survey results for May give an early indication of the summer job market for older students (aged 20 to 24). Many younger students (aged 15 to 19) are not yet out of school for the summer. Survey results for June, July and August will provide further insights into the summer job market facing students of all ages.

Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



In the service sector, employment was practically unchanged overall in May. The number of employees in health care and social assistance grew by 21,000. Meanwhile, the number employed in business management, administrative and other support services grew by 11,000, which continued an upward trend evident since the beginning of the year. Conversely, the professional, scientific and technical services industry cut 19,000

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... Not much change in employment

employees in May. And employment in public administration fell by 15,000, bringing the job losses since May 1998 to 45,000 (-5.5%).

The goods sector also showed little change in total employment in May. In particular, manufacturing employment has changed only slightly since March. It has increased since May 1998 by 71,000 (+3.3%), however, mainly in motor vehicle and parts manufacturing, food processing, furniture manufacturing, and in computer and electronic products manufacturing.

Among the provinces in May, employment in Ontario rose by 23,000. This followed two months of little change. Ontario's unemployment rate fell 0.2 percentage points. In Newfoundland, employment grew by 12,000, more than offsetting the losses in March and April. The province's unemployment rate fell 1.5 percentage points.

By contrast, employment fell in four provinces in May. In British Columbia, employment dropped by 17,000, adding to the

job losses of the prior two months. A drop in the number of persons looking for work pushed the unemployment rate down 0.4 percentage points. In Alberta, employment fell by 10,000, offsetting April's increase. Employment in Saskatchewan dipped by 4,000. This dip was accompanied by an increase in the number of persons looking for work, pushing the unemployment rate up 0.8 percentage points. In Prince Edward Island, employment dropped by 2,000 and the province's unemployment rate was little changed (-0.1 percentage points).

The employment picture was little changed in the other provinces in May. In Quebec, however, a drop in the number of people looking for work pushed the unemployment rate down 0.5 percentage points.

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

The full report, *Labour force information, for the week ending May 15, 1999* (71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103), is now available. For further information, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325), Labour Statistics Division. See also "Current trends" on page 9.

Labour Force Survey¹, May 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	15,924.6	-0.3	14,636.6	-0.1	1,288.0	8.1
Newfoundland	258.8	3.9	214.7	5.8	44.1	17.0
Prince Edward Island	71.4	-3.3	60.9	-3.2	10.5	14.7
Nova Scotia	459.1	0.0	414.6	-0.5	44.5	9.7
New Brunswick	372.8	-1.1	334.7	-0.7	38.2	10.2
Quebec	3,727.9	-0.9	3,359.1	-0.4	368.8	9.9
Ontario	6,218.1	0.2	5,782.8	0.4	435.3	7.0
Manitoba	588.7	0.1	557.2	0.4	31.5	5.4
Saskatchewan	513.4	-0.1	476.3	-0.9	37.0	7.2
Alberta	1,651.9	-0.2	1,547.7	-0.6	104.3	6.3
British Columbia	2,062.4	-1.3	1,888.6	-0.9	173.7	8.4

¹ Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.

Residential and non-residential building permits both lose ground

In April, the value of building permits retreated for both residential and non-residential projects following a strong performance in both sectors the month before. Municipalities in April issued building permits worth \$2.9 billion, down 8.0% from March's value of \$3.1 billion, the highest in nine years. From January to April, municipalities issued building permits valued at \$11.3 billion, a 1.9% increase over the same period last year and the best performance for the first four months of any year since 1990.

In the residential sector, construction intentions fell by 8.7% in April to \$1.5 billion. This followed March's 12.5% gain. The drop was due to a decline in intentions to build multi-family dwellings, which were down 29.7% to \$398 million following a 57.8% increase in March. However, the value of permits to build

Note to readers

The monthly Building and Demolitions Permits Survey covers 2,600 municipalities and represents 94% of the population. It is an early indicator of building activity. The value of planned construction activities shown in this article excludes engineering projects (waterworks, sewers, culverts etc.) and land.

Starting with the April data, the new territory of Nunavut has been introduced. This affects the geographical coverage and data of the Northwest Territories. Unless otherwise stated, all the data are seasonally adjusted.

single-family homes largely offset that decline by rising 2.2% to \$1.1 billion, the second monthly gain in three months.

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... Residential and non-residential building permits both lose ground

Overall, residential building permits in the first four months of 1999 were up 0.5% over the same period in 1998 to \$6.1 billion. Single-family dwellings led the way with a 0.9% increase, whereas multi-family housing edged down 0.6%.

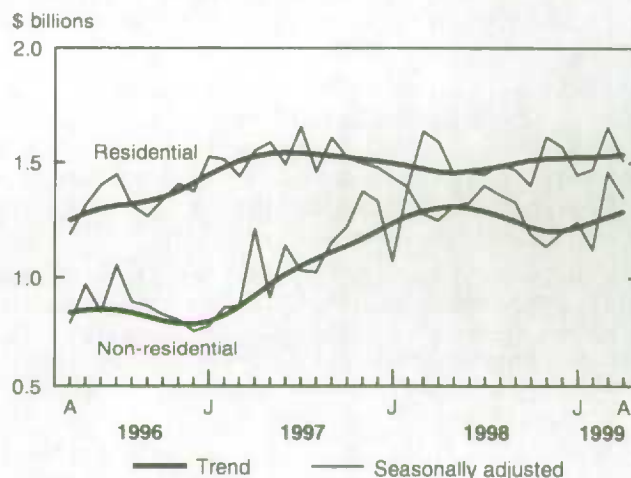
Among the provinces in April, the largest decreases in residential permits (in terms of dollar amount) occurred in Ontario, Alberta, Quebec and British Columbia. In Ontario and British Columbia, only multi-family dwellings contributed to the decrease, whereas both single- and multi-family dwellings were responsible for the decline in Alberta and Quebec. Despite the general decline in permits in Ontario in April, the province showed the most significant increase in intentions to build single-family dwellings.

Historically low long-term mortgage rates, stable employment, stable selling prices for new housing, strong sales of existing homes and uninterrupted economic growth all point to an active housing market for the future.

On the non-residential side, the almost 30% jump in March was followed by a decline in April of 7.3%, down to \$1.4 billion. Declines in all industrial building groups pushed the industrial component down 36.2% to \$255 million—the lowest value since September 1997. The value of permits to build institutional projects fell for the first time this year, dropping 6.1% to \$332 million. Lower intentions to build welfare and medical buildings more than offset moderate gains in school building projects. The value of commercial permits rose 8.4% to \$766 million, mostly on the strength of intentions to build trade, services and hotel projects.

After slowing in the fourth quarter of 1998, the non-residential sector was vigorous in the first four months of 1999. Intentions to build non-residential structures have picked up so far this year, totalling \$5.2 billion for a 3.7% increase compared with January-to-April 1998—the best showing for the first four months of any year since 1990. Gains in the commercial and industrial

Value of building permits



components this year have more than offset a decline in the institutional sector.

At the provincial level, the most significant monthly decreases (in terms of dollar amount) were in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Except for Ontario, where commercial projects showed the largest drop, declines in industrial intentions were the main contributors. The most significant increases (in terms of dollar amount) were in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Nova Scotia.

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

The April 1999 issue of **Building permits** (64-001-XIB, \$19/\$186) can be downloaded at www.statcan.ca. For general information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; bureaujoa@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Pierre Després (613-951-9691; desppie@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

Building permits, April 1999 Seasonally adjusted

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	2,864.2	-8.0	1,511.4	-8.7	1,352.8	-7.3
Newfoundland	25.9	-7.2	15.3	-40.4	10.6	382.5
Prince Edward Island	12.9	70.7	6.5	18.1	6.4	214.7
Nova Scotia	67.6	21.3	45.9	-0.6	21.7	127.5
New Brunswick	48.1	27.5	24.3	9.6	23.7	53.7
Quebec	481.4	-20.3	230.6	-6.2	250.8	-30.0
Ontario	1,360.8	-7.5	749.4	-9.0	611.4	-5.7
Manitoba	88.3	26.7	33.0	12.3	55.3	37.3
Saskatchewan	79.3	35.1	23.2	20.3	56.1	42.3
Alberta	318.8	-19.2	187.1	-19.1	131.7	-19.3
British Columbia	368.9	-1.9	190.5	-6.6	178.4	3.6
Yukon	6.9	126.1	1.2	2.9	5.7	199.5
Northwest Territories	0.7	-91.0	0.2	-73.1	0.5	-92.6
Nunavut	4.7	...	4.2	...	0.5	...

Note: Data may not add to totals due to rounding. Some percentage changes should be interpreted with caution because of the small numbers involved.
... Figures not appropriate or not applicable.

Department store sales rise

In April, department store sales rose 0.6% to \$1,455.5 million (seasonally adjusted). This increase followed consecutive declines in February (-2.9%) and March (-0.6%). April sales were 1.2% higher than in April 1998. Monthly department store sales, which were fairly flat throughout the spring and summer of 1998, have rebounded since the fall of 1998.

At the national level, department store sales grew 0.5% in April compared with April 1998 (unadjusted for seasonal factors). However, the year-over-year change in sales varied widely from one province to another. Sales declined 6.1% in the Atlantic

provinces and were down 1.6% in the region that includes British Columbia, the Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Stores in Manitoba registered the largest year-over-year sales growth in April, followed by those in Quebec, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Alberta.

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 Clérance Kimanyi (613-951-3592; kimacle@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Department store sales including concessions
Not seasonally adjusted

	April 1999	April 1998 to April 1999	January-April 1999	January-April 1998 to January-April 1999
	\$ millions	% change	\$ millions	% change
Canada	1,339.9	0.5	4,533.2	3.5
Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island ¹	22.6	-4.9	81.1	5.0
Nova Scotia	39.4	-6.1	134.4	3.3
New Brunswick	29.2	-7.3	96.0	-0.5
Quebec	256.2	2.0	840.5	4.1
Ontario	569.5	1.3	1,931.1	4.6
Manitoba	57.6	2.4	191.5	4.4
Saskatchewan	44.8	1.5	151.9	5.4
Alberta	155.0	0.5	535.4	4.3
British Columbia, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut ¹	165.6	-1.6	571.3	-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, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

Tourism breaking records

Tourism businesses enjoyed a record year in 1998. Buoyed by strong American tourism, 18.8 million international travellers made overnight trips to Canada. That was up 6.8% from 1997 and it was the largest number of visitors in the 26 years that the travel data have been collected. Most, about 14.9 million, came from the United States, up from 1997 by 11.1%. This strong increase in American overnight travel offset a 7.1% decline in travellers from overseas, which fell to 3.9 million.

The Americans' overnight travel to Canada broke the previous 13-year record set in 1986, the year that Expo was held in Vancouver. Moreover, the number of Americans visiting Canada surpassed the number of Canadians travelling to the United States by 1.5 million travellers—the first time this occurred since 1988. Three key factors are behind the growth in American tourism to Canada: the booming U.S. economy, the strength of consumer confidence in the United States, and the cheaper Canadian dollar.

Tourism from the United States grew in almost all regions of Canada last summer. Ontario saw the largest increase in American tourists staying overnight (+12.4%), followed closely by British Columbia (+11.9%). Americans made fewer overnight visits last year to the Yukon and to the Northwest Territories (-5.4%). American overnight visitors injected \$6.7 billion into the Canadian economy in 1998—a surge over the previous year of 25.2%—and they spent about \$450 per trip (+12.5%). Of all the spending

categories, the highest increase in American spending was in "other expenses" (for example, shopping and souvenirs), which climbed 38.7% to \$925 million. The low Canadian dollar no doubt encouraged many visitors to shop while in Canada. The majority of their tourism spending (\$2.7 billion) went to accommodation—up from 1997 by 29.8%.

American travellers continued to take more flights into Canada (+12.4%), maintaining the trend that began with the Open Skies Agreement. Air travel has climbed steadily from 2.4 million trips in 1994 to about 3.6 million in 1998. However, the vast majority of Americans still drove to their Canadian destinations (9.4 million), an 11.9% increase over 1997.

The 3.9 million travellers who visited Canada from overseas countries in 1998 spent \$4.5 billion, down from 1997 by 1.2%. The cut in the number of Asians travelling to Canada in 1997 (-8.9%) deepened in 1998 (-19.0%). Meanwhile, the number of overnight visitors from Europe slipped 2.2% despite the appreciation of many European currencies. The number of Mexicans travelling to Canada in 1998 grew 16.7%. Much of the decline in travellers from overseas was due to a 14.1% drop in the number of overseas visitors travelling to Canada via the United States. In comparison, direct overseas arrivals, which now represent 63% of all overseas traffic, decreased just 2.4%. Direct arrivals are a significant market for Canada: they tend to stay longer and to spend more.

(continued on page 6)

... Tourism breaking records

The provinces that showed the strongest growth in overnight visits from travellers arriving from overseas were Alberta (+19.1%) and British Columbia (+16.2%); however, the 1998 levels remained well below those recorded in 1996. Large inflows of travellers from the United Kingdom, Germany and France were mainly responsible for the growth.

Canadians, meanwhile, made fewer overnight trips to the United States in 1998, down 11.2% to 13.4 million—the lowest annual level since 1987. Still, Canadians made a record 4.2 million

overseas trips (+5.9%), preferring traditional European destinations such as the United Kingdom, France and Germany.

This article presented only a brief overview of the data now available from the International Travel Survey. Data tables are now available on request, as are various statistical profiles and microdata files of the characteristics of international travellers for the fourth quarter of 1998 and the year 1998. To order, contact Carol Moskaluk (613-951-9169; fax: 613-951-2909; moskcar@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Laurie McDougall (613-951-6766; fax: 613-951-2909; mcdolau@statcan.ca), Tourism Statistics Program.

Lowest international travel deficit in over 10 years

The international travel deficit fell to \$182 million during the first quarter of 1999, its lowest level in more than a decade, thanks to record spending by American travellers in Canada. The first-quarter deficit was the lowest since early 1988, when it reached \$364 million.

In the first quarter, Canadians spent nearly \$4.1 billion outside the country, while foreigners spent \$3.9 billion inside Canada. In other words, between January and March, Canadians spent \$182 million more outside the country than foreigners spent here. That is better than the \$411 million travel deficit recorded in the fourth quarter of 1998.

The main contributor to Canada's lower travel deficit with the other countries of the world was the record \$2.4 billion spent by U.S. residents travelling in Canada (+4.6% from the fourth quarter of 1998). At the same time, Canadians travelling in the United States spent just under \$2.5 billion (-2.3%). The result was a first-quarter travel deficit with the United States of only about \$11 million—down from \$177 million in the previous quarter and the lowest level in 10 years.

The booming U.S. economy, strong consumer confidence in the United States, and the cheaper Canadian dollar were likely major factors in the record American spending on this side of the border. During March alone, Americans made a record 1.4 million overnight trips to Canada, exceeding the number of Canadians travelling to the United States.

Meanwhile, spending in Canada by residents of overseas countries rose to a record \$1.5 billion (+6.0%). For their part, Canadians spent a record \$1.6 billion travelling in overseas countries in the first quarter, up 1.2% from the previous record set in the fourth quarter of 1998. This record spending occurred despite a 2.3% decrease in the number of overnight trips by Canadians to overseas countries.

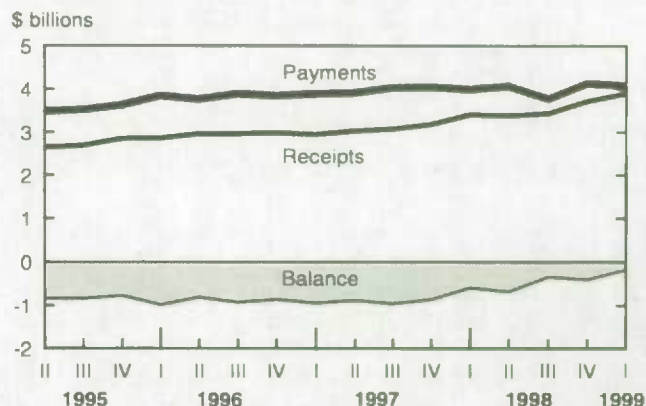
Consequently, Canadians spent \$171 million more in overseas countries during the first quarter of 1999 than overseas residents spent here—the ninth consecutive quarterly travel deficit with

Note to readers

Receipts represent spending by foreigners travelling in Canada, including education-related spending and medical-related spending. Payments represent spending by Canadians travelling abroad, including education-related spending and medical-related spending.

Unless otherwise stated, the quarterly data are seasonally adjusted. Amounts are in Canadian dollars and are not adjusted for inflation.

Canada's international travel account



overseas countries. However, this quarter's travel deficit with overseas countries was a sharp decline from the previous quarter's \$234 million.

To order data, contact Carol Moskaluk (613-951-9169; fax: 613-951-2909; moskcar@statcan.ca). For further information, contact Johanne Plante (613-951-1910; fax: 613-951-2909; planjoh@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Economists expect a very slight increase in inflation

The Short-term Expectations Survey shows that little change is expected in the performance of the economy going into July, except for a very slight increase in inflation. The economic analysts surveyed are expecting the Consumer Price Index to show an increase in inflation over the May to July period. So far, the actual inflation rate for April came in higher than the analysts expected. The average of their forecasts for April's annual rate was 1.1%, compared with the actual rate of 1.7%.

As for gross domestic product (GDP), the average of their forecasts for March's month-to-month growth was 0.2%. However, actual GDP growth for March was better than they expected at 0.3% (see page one of this issue). The analysts are expecting GDP growth to show a slight decrease in the April and May figures. The average forecast is growth of 0.2% for both months.

Turning to international trade, the group's average forecast is for the April trade surplus to show a small decrease from March's figure of \$2.6 billion. The average of their forecasts for exports is a slight increase from April to June, with imports remaining unchanged.

Note to readers

The Short-term Expectations Survey is faxed each month to a group of economic analysts from Canadian businesses across the country to obtain a representative view of the performance of the economy for the upcoming three months.

The unemployment rate increased in April to 8.3% (seasonally adjusted), while the participation rate of 66.0% was higher than the analysts expected. When surveyed, they were expecting the unemployment rate to fall to 8.1% in May and to 8.0% in both June and July. As well, they were expecting a slight decrease in the participation rate for the May-to-July period, with rates of 65.9% forecast for each month. As this issue of *Infomat* shows, their average forecast for May's unemployment rate was right, but their forecast of the participation rate was too high, since the actual rate for May was 65.7%.

For further information about the results of the Short-term Expectations Survey, or for a set of tables, contact Jenny Grenier (613-951-1020; fax: 613-951-1572; grenjen@statcan.ca), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Canadian social trends Summer 1999

The Summer 1999 issue of *Canadian social trends* features the following articles "Widows living alone", "Three generations living together", "Finding work after graduation", "Youth and crime", "A third baby" and "Melanoma".

Each quarter, *Canadian social trends* integrates data from many sources to examine emerging social trends and issues. It also features the latest social indicators, as well as information about Statistics Canada's products and services.

The Summer 1999 issue of *Canadian social trends* (paper: 11-008-XPE, \$11/\$36; Internet at www.statcan.ca: 11-008-XIE, \$8/\$27). For further information, contact Susan Crompton (613-951-2556; cstsc@statcan.ca), Housing, Family and Social Statistics Division.

Grain trade of Canada 1997/98 crop year

The publication *Grain Trade of Canada* for the 1997/98 crop year presents an overview of the crop year. It also contains data tables on Canadian and world grain supply and demand, prices, trade, domestic processing and storage, and information on grain movements.

The 1997/98 issue of *Grain Trade of Canada* (22-201-XPB, \$44) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Karen Gray (204-983-2856; graykar@statcan.ca) or Susan Anderson (613-951-3859; andesue@statcan.ca), Agriculture Division.

Science and technology workers 1996

A paper titled "An analysis of science and technology workers: Deployment in the Canadian economy" provides information on the economic activity of these knowledge workers. The report is the first of four papers that will look at how people educated in subjects related to science and technology contribute to technological change in society. The data behind the analysis come from the 1996 Census.

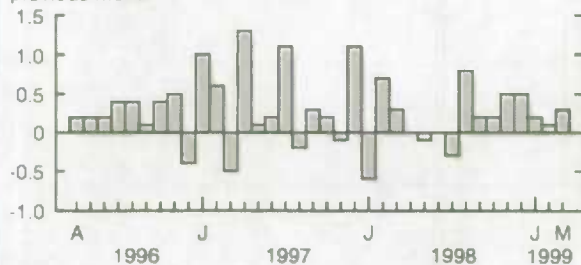
The first paper in the series examines the industrial distribution and levels of unemployment of people who were educated in science and technology subjects (at college, bachelor, master and doctorate levels). That covers a wide range of science and technology expertise, including social sciences, agriculture and biological sciences, engineering and applied sciences and technologies.

The working paper *An analysis of science and technology workers: Deployment in the Canadian economy* (88F0006XIB, No. 03, no charge) is now available for download on the Internet at www.statcan.ca. Look under "Products and services". For further information, contact Claire Simard (613-951-1916; fax 613-951-9920; simard.claire@statcan.ca), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

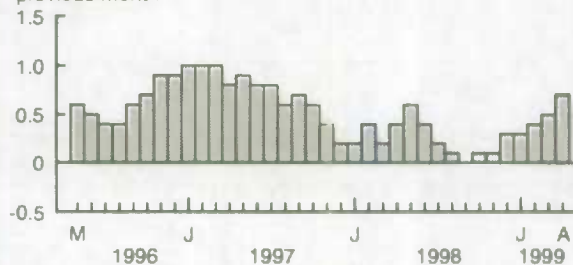
% change,
previous month



Economic activity continued to advance in March (+0.3%), extending the steady expansion that began in mid-1998.

Composite Index

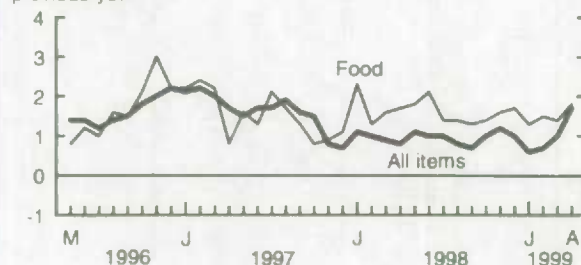
% change,
previous month



The growth of the leading indicator continued to improve, with a gain of 0.7% in April.

Consumer Price Index

% change,
previous year



Consumers paid 1.7% more for goods and services in April 1999 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.8%.

Unemployment rate

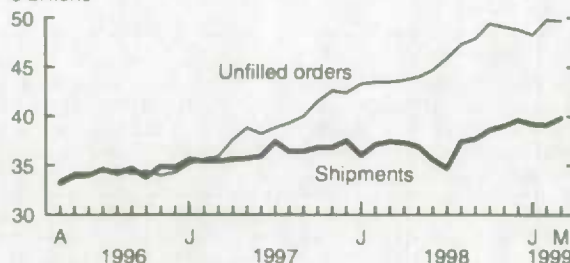
%



In May, the number of people looking for work fell, pushing the unemployment rate down 0.2 percentage points to 8.1%

Manufacturing

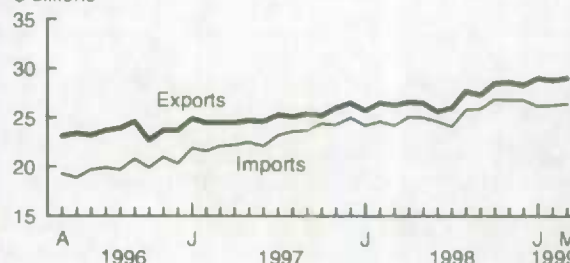
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments increased 2.0% in March to \$39.8 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders slipped 0.3% to \$49.7 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In March, the value of merchandise exports edged up 0.6% from February to just under \$29.0 billion. Imports were almost unchanged (+0.2%) at \$26.4 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)	March	733.1	0.3%	2.4%
Composite Index (1981=100)	April	212.9	0.7%	4.1%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q4 1998	28.7	15.1%	-1.0%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 1999*	83.1	0.5†	-0.3†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	March	21.3	1.1%	4.9%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	March	125.2	6.3%	5.3%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	March	29.3	0.8%	5.2%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	May*	14.64	-0.1%	2.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	May*	8.1	-0.2†	-0.3†
Participation rate (%)	May*	65.7	-0.3†	0.6†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	March	605.47	0.0%	-0.3%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	May	157	0.9%	10.0%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	March	29.0	0.6%	10.3%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	March	26.4	0.2%	8.9%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	March	2.6	0.1	0.6
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	March	39.8	2.0%	6.4%
New orders (\$ billion)	March	39.7	-2.3%	5.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	March	49.7	-0.3%	14.2%
Inventory/shipments ratio	March	1.25	-0.02	-0.04
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	April	110.1	0.5%	1.7%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	April	119.9	0.0%	0.8%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	April	112.1	4.9%	0.4%
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

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LABOUR STATISTICS				
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Electric power statistics	March 1999	57-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
Energy statistics handbook	May 1999			
Paper		57-601-UPB	387	387
Diskette		57-601-XDE	284	284
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Oil pipeline transport	March 1999	55-001-XPB	12/114	12/114
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The sugar situation	First quarter 1999	32-013QXIB	6/19	
TRANSPORTATION				
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