



Infomat

A Weekly Review

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OVERVIEW

◆ Machinery and equipment sector pushes up exports

In June, the merchandise trade balance increased to \$2.8 billion. Exports rose 1.9% on higher exports of machinery, equipment and industrial goods. Imports just inched up for a third month in a row.

◆ Factory shipments continue to climb

After advancing strongly in May, factory shipments rose in June by 0.4%. The climb was led by makers of motor vehicle parts and accessories and by makers of machinery.

◆ Big-ticket items lead retail sales higher

Retail sales edged up in June by 0.3%. Furniture retailers and vehicle dealers drove the increase. The largest declines were in clothing stores and food stores. Overall, retailers ended the second quarter with sales up 0.7%.

◆ Wholesale sales still growing despite pause in June

Held back by lower sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories, wholesale sales remained unchanged in June. Despite this pause, wholesalers were able to finish the second quarter with sales up from the first by 2.1%.

◆ Canadians investing less in foreign securities than last year

In the first half of 1999, Canadians invested almost \$6 billion in foreign securities. However, this investment amounted to a little more than half of what they invested during the same period of 1998.

◆ Higher gasoline and transportation costs lift CPI

In July, higher gasoline prices were the main reason consumer prices rose for a seventh consecutive month (+0.3%). Transportation costs were also behind the increase in the annual inflation rate in July, as it edged up from 1.6% in June to 1.8%.

Machinery and equipment sector pushes up exports

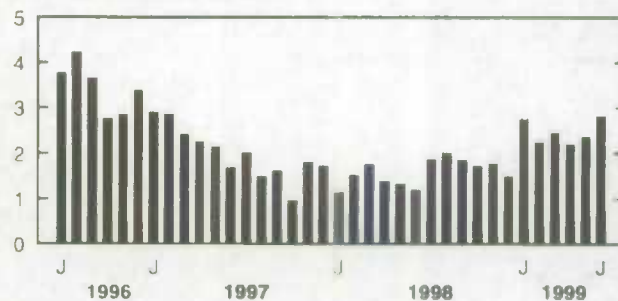
In June, the merchandise trade balance increased to \$2.8 billion. Exports rose 1.9% to \$29.4 billion, mainly due to higher shipments of machinery, equipment and industrial goods. Exports of energy products dropped in June. Imports just inched up (+0.3% to \$26.6 billion) for a third month in a row. So June's trade balance was up \$460 million from a revised \$2.3 billion in May.

Machinery and equipment exports jumped 8.0%. Rebounding from May's weak performance, exports of aircraft, engines and parts soared 46.4%. Hitting a new high in June, exports of televisions and other communications equipment (mainly modems and computer equipment) reached \$1.2 billion. Shipments from the industrial goods sector were also up in June (+2.6%). In particular, exports of chemical products, plastics and fertilisers rose 3.9% and aluminium exports climbed 9.4%. Demand for aluminum, mainly from automakers, remained high in the United States. The auto sector's exports remained stable, as a drop in truck exports (-4.1% from May's high) was completely offset by an increase in car exports (+1.5%).

A decline in forestry product exports in June (-1.0%) was due to a drop in newsprint prices, so that the value of these exports fell for a fifth straight month to their lowest level since November 1994. However, the value of other wood-fabricated material exports

Merchandise trade balance

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



(continued on page 2)

... Machinery and equipment sector pushes up exports

has shown a cumulative increase of 24.1% since September 1998. This upward trend is due chiefly to higher prices for oriented strandboard. Demand for wood-fabricated materials has remained robust because of the strong housing starts in the United States and Canada during the first six months of 1999.

The growth in energy exports that began in January shifted down in June (-3.1%). However, this downturn was due to a drop in exports of coal (-27.0%) and electricity (-15.6%), both of which recorded exceptional increases in May. The value of oil exports continued its upward trend for a sixth straight month, rising 7.9% in June for an increase since January of 62.8%. Most of that increase can be credited to higher prices. The price index for Canadian crude oil exports has risen 44.6% since January, whereas export volumes have risen 12.5%.

On the import side, the 0.3% growth in June resulted mainly from a 2.7% increase in the machinery and equipment sector and a 4.8% increase in the energy sector. In the former, imports of aircraft, engines and parts climbed 23.3%, while imports of other transportation equipment such as ships and trains surged 18.7%. Communications equipment imports have risen a cumulative 6.9% since February and have been rising since 1996. This uptrend is

due to the popularity of cell phones. The Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association currently estimates their usage in Canada at 20.0%, a rate lower, by the way, than that of most G7 countries including the United States (25.5%). In the energy sector, the recent rise in prices pushed the value of crude oil imports up 6.4%. Coal imports advanced 12.0%.

Also notable in June, the auto sector's imports remained stable, as they have since the beginning of the year, at \$6.2 billion. And beverage imports, which jumped 5.0% in June, have climbed 21.5% in the four months since March. Mostly, this is due to increased imports of wine from France and the United States and of beer from the United States and Mexico.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3618, 3619, 3651, 3685-3699, 3701-3711, 3713, 3720, 3887-3913, 8430-8435 and 8438-8447.

The June 1999 issue of *Canadian international merchandise trade* (paper: 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188; Internet at www.statcan.ca: 65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141) includes tables by commodity and country. Current account data are available quarterly in *Canada's balance of international payments* (67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). For further information, contact Jocelyne Elibani (613-951-9647 or 1 800 294-5583), International Trade Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

Factory shipments continue to climb

Manufacturers' shipments rose in June by 0.4% to \$40.2 billion. The climb was led by makers of motor vehicle parts and accessories and by makers of machinery. June's rise followed a period of volatility. Although the trend for shipments remains positive—a result of the three increases this year—it is more modest than it was at the end of 1998. Unfilled orders slipped in June, whereas inventories edged upward.

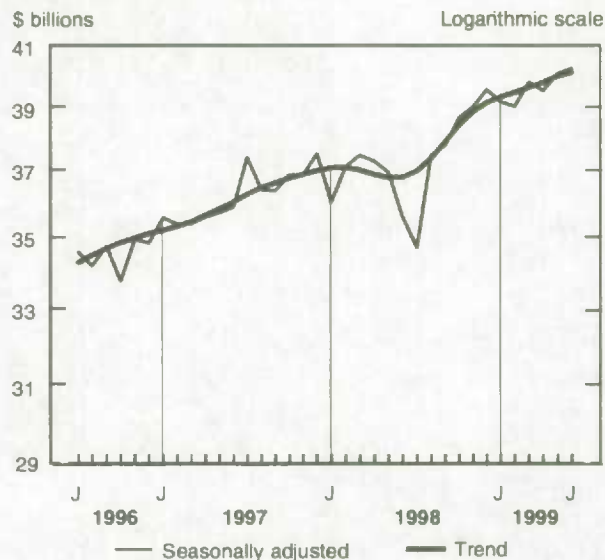
June's significant 4.1% increase in shipments from the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry followed moderate growth early in the quarter (+0.4% per month). The increase in the machinery industry (+6.8), which more than offset the declines in

Manufacturers' shipments, June 1999

Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	40,246	0.4
Newfoundland	176	4.3
Prince Edward Island	79	0.9
Nova Scotia	590	-4.0
New Brunswick	701	-1.8
Quebec	9,195	1.4
Ontario	22,243	0.7
Manitoba	881	-3.0
Saskatchewan	478	-0.7
Alberta	2,870	-1.8
British Columbia	3,029	0.6
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	3	0.9

Manufacturers' shipments



April and May, turned the trend in this industry upward. In the refined petroleum and coal products industry, a 1.1% price decrease tempered a 3.3% gain in the value of shipments. As for railway rolling stock, June was the first full month of production following the recent labour dispute, so shipments spiked 17.6%.

Offsetting decreases in shipments occurred in the food (-2.5%) and paper and allied products (-2.0%) industries. The food industry's decrease followed a strong gain in May, attributable primarily to unusually high demand for seafood. The decline was also marked by a decrease in the quantity of canola crushed in

(continued on page 3)

... Factory shipments continue to climb

June. The decrease in the paper and allied products industry was mainly due to lower shipments of pulp and paper.

The value of manufacturers' unfilled orders dropped in June by 0.2% to \$49.1 billion. The decline was mainly attributable to the machinery industry (-4.1%). An increase was observed in the aircraft and parts industry (+1.0%).

Inventories edged up 0.2% to \$50.6 billion. This fifth consecutive increase continued the upward trend that began at the start of 1999. In order of magnitude, the major contributors to June's inventory increase were the food (+1.5%), chemical (+1.3%) and railway rolling stock (+3.7%) industries. The offsets occurred in the refined petroleum and coal products industry (-4.0%)—owing

partly to the already noted drop in prices—and in the primary metals industry (-1.3%), which experienced a concomitant increase in shipments. Both shipments and inventories increased, so the inventories-to-shipments ratio remained unchanged in June at 1.26.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9550-9555, 9558, 9559, 9562-9565, 9568-9579 and 9581-9595.

The June 1999 issue of *Monthly Survey of Manufacturing* (31-001-XPB, \$20/\$196) presents the full report. Detailed data on shipments by province are available on request. For further information, contact Craig Kuntz (613-951-7092; kuncrai@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

Big-ticket items lead retail sales higher

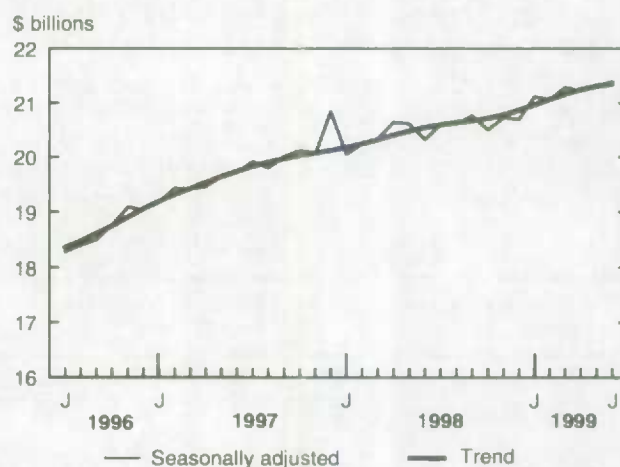
Retail sales edged up in June by 0.3% to \$21.4 billion. Big-ticket furniture retailers and vehicle dealers drove the increase. The largest declines were in clothing stores and food stores. June's retail sales growth followed a similar increase in May (+0.4%). Overall, retailers ended the second quarter with sales up 0.7%. (In the first quarter, sales rose 2.5%.) The second quarter's only decline was posted by drugstores (-0.2%). The quarter's sales advance was led by furniture stores (+1.7%). The other trade groups' quarterly sales growth ranged from 0.6% to 0.8%.

In June, consumers spent considerably more in furniture stores for a second consecutive month (+5.0% in May and +2.7% in June). June's strong sales came entirely from household furniture and appliance stores. Partly stimulated by a strong housing market, sales in furniture stores have been on the rise since spring 1996. Automotive, another big-ticket trade group, bounced back in June (+2.3%) from two months of declining sales. The bounce came almost entirely from motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+3.4%). These dealers reported lower sales in both April and May after five consecutive monthly gains. Also within automotive, gasoline service stations reported a sales decline in June of 0.6%, ending a three-month string of increases. The recent fluctuations in gas prices have played a key role. After rising for three months, gas prices declined in June by 1.5%.

Clothing stores showed the largest sales decline in June (-2.8%), followed by food stores (-1.6%). All types of clothing stores shared in the decline. In May, clothing sales were up 1.0%. Family and children's clothing stores continued to be the trade group's source of strength. As for food stores, June's sales decline offset May's 1.5% gain. Sales in food and clothing stores have been on the rise since spring 1996, but with periods of weaker sales. Also in June, after increasing 1.8% in May, sales declined in general merchandise stores (-0.5%), which include department stores (-0.7%) and "other" general merchandise stores (-0.2%).

Most trade groups contributed to the sales advances on the Prairies in June (+1.3%), which came after declines in May (-0.5%) and April (-0.7%). Overall, retail sales in the Prairie provinces have remained flat since the beginning of 1998. In

Retail sales



Ontario, higher automotive and furniture sales pushed retailing up in June (see the table on page 4). It was the sixth consecutive monthly increase. This six-month spending spree has lifted retail sales in Ontario by 5.7%. But then, sales in the province have generally been increasing since mid-1996. Most trade groups also contributed to the higher June sales in British Columbia, where retailers have generally been reporting modest sales advances since the end of 1998.

Lower sales in all trade groups except automotive and furniture pushed down total retail sales in Quebec in June. Retail sales in the province have been weakening since April. In Atlantic Canada, where retailers have generally been reporting sales increases since the fall of 1998, sales edged down in June by 0.2%. That followed a 4.6% gain in May. Except for automotive and furniture, all trade groups in the region posted weaker sales in June.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299 and 2397-2420.

The June 1999 issue of *Retail trade* (paper: 63-005-XPB, \$21/\$206; Internet at www.statcan.ca: 63-005-XIB, \$16/\$155) presents the full report. To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067 or 613-951-3549, retailinfo@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541, gratpau@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Wholesale sales still growing despite pause in June

Held back by lower sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories, wholesale sales remained unchanged in June at \$29.8 billion. Excluding that trade group, sales would have risen a modest 0.4%. Despite June's pause, wholesalers finished the second quarter with sales up from the first quarter by 2.1%.

Wholesalers of motor vehicles, parts and accessories recorded the most notable sales drop in June (-1.8%). Declines were also reported by wholesalers of apparel and dry goods (-3.0%), household goods (-0.8%), and goods in the general category of "other" products (-0.5%), which includes newsprint, stationery and office supplies, jewellery and books.

Notable sales increases were made by wholesalers of metals, hardware, plumbing and heating equipment and supplies (+1.2%)—their fifth consecutive monthly increase—and by wholesalers of lumber and building materials (+1.2%), sustaining the general rise in their sales that began in spring 1998.

The healthy U.S. economy and its associated increase in consumer confidence, along with its housing boom and the subsequent spillover into Canada, are boosting the sales of wholesalers linked to the construction industry. As well, construction intentions in Canada were up in both May and June.

Retail and wholesale trade, June 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Retail sales		Wholesale sales	
	\$ millions	% change, previous month	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	21,398	0.3	29,816	0.0
Newfoundland	348	0.2	218	-2.3
Prince Edward Island	98	4.9	48	-1.4
Nova Scotia	677	1.3	592	-3.9
New Brunswick	525	-3.3	370	-1.4
Quebec	4,939	-0.9	6,124	-0.9
Ontario	8,221	0.7	14,828	0.5
Manitoba	736	0.9	920	0.3
Saskatchewan	632	-0.2	884	0.5
Alberta	2,379	1.9	2,590	-0.7
British Columbia	2,769	0.5	3,219	0.9
Yukon	28	0.2	9	-2.3
Northwest Territories	30	-0.1	13	6.6
Nunavut	15	4.5	1	..

.. Figure not available.

There was also a noteworthy price gain in softwood lumber during June. The increase in planned business and government investment in plant and equipment, up 8.1% over 1998, could also be assisting the wholesale industry.

Sales of industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies rose in June by 0.8%. These wholesalers pointed to continuing sales to governments and the forestry industry as the main reason for this increase. In Manitoba, they also noted that sales were stronger in June leading up to the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg.

Wholesalers of farm machinery, equipment and supplies saw sales increase 1.0%. (This follows downward-revised decreases over the last few months due to revised data.) Despite June's increase, the news on farms is still not good. This trade group has been coping with generally declining sales levels since the fall of 1997. Along with low commodity prices and the global economic situation, weather was a major factor affecting wholesale sales in June. In Western Canada, wet and cold weather contributed to lower sales of farm machinery, equipment and supplies. In Eastern Canada, hot dry weather strengthened sales, with some sales growth due to higher sales of irrigation systems to combat the arid conditions.

Wholesale sales rose in June in only British Columbia, Ontario, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Despite lower sales in June, wholesalers in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia continued to perform well, posting yearly sales growth of 18.9% and 14.3% respectively. In both provinces, sales have been rising since mid-1998. The industrial activity related to the Hibernia and Terra Nova oil field developments off Newfoundland and to the Sable Island natural gas fields off Nova Scotia have contributed to this performance. In Ontario, wholesale sales also performed well in June, posting yearly growth of 11.7%. Ontario's strength can be attributed to the continuing boom in the U.S. economy and its associated Canadian spillover.

After two months of decline, wholesale inventories rose in June by 1.5% to \$40.8 billion. The only wholesalers reporting inventory declines were those selling food products (-1.1%) and apparel and dry goods (-0.2%). Inventories have been on the decline since the start of the year. Since spring, however, this decline appears to be abating. The inventories-to-sales ratio, after four consecutive monthly drops, rose from 1.35 in May to 1.37. Generally, this ratio has been falling since mid-1998.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 59, 61 and 648-649.

The June 1999 issue of *Wholesale trade* (63-008-XIB, \$14/\$140) can be downloaded from the Internet at www.statcan.ca. For general enquiries, or to order data, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067 or 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Greg Parsons (613-951-0062; parsons@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Canadians investing less in foreign securities than last year

In June, Canadian investors added a further \$1.7 billion to their holdings of foreign securities, bringing their investment in the first half of 1999 to almost \$6 billion. However, this six-month investment was just over half what they invested during the same period of 1998.

Canadian investors bought a further \$2.0 billion of foreign stocks in June. Two-thirds of that was directed to overseas stocks. The total of \$7.4 billion invested in foreign equities in the first half of 1999 was roughly split between U.S. and overseas markets, and it was largely driven by investment from Canadian mutual funds.

At the same time, Canadians reduced their holdings of foreign bonds by a small amount. In the first half of 1999, their sales of foreign bonds amounted to \$1.5 billion, mostly U.S. treasuries. That contrasts with the first half of 1998, when they purchased a similar amount of foreign bonds.

Foreign investors, meanwhile, reduced their holdings of Canadian securities in June. Their selling was exclusively limited to short-term paper. This followed two months of major investments totalling \$9 billion. In particular, foreign investors reduced their holdings of Canadian money market paper in June by \$3.0 billion. This brought their year-to-date divestment to

Note to readers

In June, the interest-rate differential on short-term government instruments marginally favoured investment in the United States for a second consecutive month. During the month, the difference declined to zero before rising back to 25 basis points in favour of investing in the United States. On long-term government instruments, the differential continued to favour investment in the United States. It rose marginally to the 30-35 basis points range.

Canadian stock prices (TSE 300 composite index) regained in June the 2.5% they lost in May. After losing a similar amount in May, U.S. stock prices (Standard and Poor's 500 index) shot back with a much stronger 5.4% gain in June. Up to June of this year, Canadian stock prices (+8.1%) trailed U.S. stock prices (+11.7%).

The Canadian dollar resumed its upward trend in June, which has seen it climb five cents against the U.S. dollar since August 1998. June's half-cent gain recouped most of the loss in May. The dollar closed June at 68.35 U.S. cents.

nearly \$8 billion. June's selling was concentrated in corporate and other government paper, as it has been for most of the year.

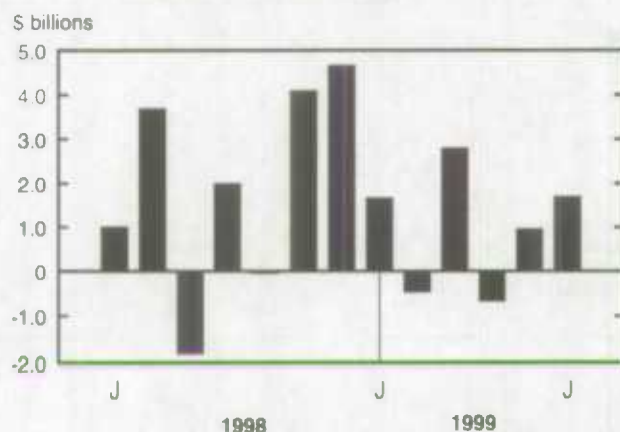
Foreigners continued to show interest in Canadian stocks in June, buying some \$2 billion worth. This brought their total investment in April, May and June to \$6.8 billion—a record quarterly investment. American investors accounted for all the foreign buying of Canadian stocks in that three-month shopping spree. Resource industry shares led the way with those investors. The strong foreign demand for Canadian corporate shares coincided with generally rising Canadian stock prices.

As for Canadian bonds, foreign investment in them was flat in June. That followed a \$4.1 billion investment in May. Contributing significantly to the reduced investment was a sharply lower level of new offerings (largely corporate bonds) in foreign markets.

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

The June 1999 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (paper: 67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176; Internet at www.statcan.ca: 67-002-XIB, 14/132) presents the full report. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments and Financial Flows Division.

Canadian investment in foreign bonds and stocks



Higher gasoline and transportation costs lift CPI

In July, higher gasoline prices were the main reason consumer prices rose for a seventh consecutive month (+0.3). So far this year, the monthly advances in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) have ranged between 0.1% and 0.5%. Transportation costs were also behind the increase in the annual inflation rate in July, as it edged up from 1.6% in June to 1.8%.

From June to July, the price of gasoline climbed 4.1%. It had dropped 1.5% between May and June. Gasoline prices are significantly affected by fluctuating prices for crude oil. The crude oil component of the Raw Materials Price Index was up 0.9% between May and June and between April and May. Arrival of the peak tourist season lifted traveller accommodation rates from June to July by 7.4%. This came on the heels of monthly increases in May (+11.3%) and June (+10.6%). Meanwhile, air transportation prices climbed 4.3% in July, after falling 0.7% in June. Partly, July's increase resulted from seasonal increases in demand for travel to transatlantic, Caribbean and domestic destinations.

As for the offsetting declines, automobile prices fell in July by 0.6%, mainly due to discounts being offered prior to the fall arrival of next year's models. Food prices dropped overall in July by 0.2%. This occurred after four consecutive monthly increases, and was mainly due to price declines for fresh fruit and vegetables—following good weather and the arrival of local crops on the market—and for confectionery products. A 3.4% decrease in shoe prices in July reflected promotional sales on all types of shoes.

From June to July, the CPI for British Columbia rose 0.4%, the largest increase among the provinces. In Saskatchewan, the consumer price level did not change from June to July.

Turning to annual inflation, the rates seen in April, May, June and July approached the average annual rates for 1996 and 1997. Just over one-third of July's annual increase in the CPI was due to higher transportation costs, particularly for private transportation. As noted, higher gasoline prices exerted the strongest upward pressure (+9.6 compared with July 1998). That was followed by price increases for new vehicles (+2.1%), as slight increases in

manufacturers' suggested prices were a factor. Public transportation costs also rose, mostly influenced by higher airfares. Once again, however, consumers continued to see lower prices for computer equipment and supplies and for telephone services.

The smallest annual CPI increase in July was in Saskatchewan (+1.2%). Consumers in New Brunswick, Manitoba and Alberta saw the highest annual increases in the CPI at 2.1% each. Inter-city transportation costs in Alberta rose 11.9%. Albertans did see, however, a much lower annual increase in the price of food purchased from stores (+0.1%) than did the nation as a whole (+1.1%). In Prince Edward Island, consumer prices rose on an annual basis by 1.4%. Prince Edward Islanders faced the lowest increase in gasoline prices among all the provinces (+1.0% compared with July 1998). They also benefited from a lower rise in food prices (+0.3%) than did Canadian consumers overall (+1.3%).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9934, 9935 and 9940-9956.

The July 1999 issue of *The Consumer Price Index* (62-001-XPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

Consumer Price Index, July 1999

% change from previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	1.8	1.3	1.2	3.7	5.5
Newfoundland	1.4	1.1	1.6	1.6	1.7
Prince Edward Island	1.4	0.3	0.8	1.9	0.2
Nova Scotia	1.5	2.0	0.8	2.4	0.9
New Brunswick	2.1	2.2	0.8	4.2	4.5
Quebec	1.7	1.3	1.0	3.9	5.0
Ontario	2.0	1.9	1.4	3.6	5.0
Manitoba	2.1	1.1	2.1	3.3	4.8
Saskatchewan	1.2	-1.7	2.2	3.1	4.8
Alberta	2.1	0.7	2.0	3.6	5.2
British Columbia	1.4	0.9	0.1	4.6	12.0
Whitehorse	1.2	0.1	-1.2	3.9	-3.7
Yellowknife	1.1	-1.0	-0.3	4.3	0.9

New from Statistics Canada

Defining e-commerce

A new report titled *A reality check to defining e-commerce* provides background information with an aim toward developing working definitions of electronic commerce. In addition, using selected case studies, it examines whether survey respondents could provide information for such measurements. This report distinguishes between e-commerce and e-business (with e-commerce being a component of e-business), and emphasizes computer mediation as an important feature of this process.

A reality check to defining e-commerce (88F0006X1B, no charge) is now available online at Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under "Products and services" followed by "Research papers". For further information, contact George Sciadas (613-951-6389, fax: 613-951-9920, george.sciadas@statcan.ca), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.

New from Statistics Canada



Canadian economic observer August 1999

The August issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarises the major economic events that occurred in July and presents a feature article on saving for retirement.

A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and charts on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

The August 1999 issue of *Canadian economic observer* (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For further information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634, ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.

National Atlas of Canada—hyperlink Sixth edition

Statistics Canada, in cooperation with Natural Resources Canada, has created a direct Internet link from its "Statistical profile of Canadian communities" to the new sixth edition of the *National Atlas of Canada*, which is now available on the Internet.

This atlas on the Internet is based on an interactive mapping technology that lets users visualise national scale data directly and quickly. The data, which is portrayed on maps, enables users to view patterns and trends as they relate to regional differences in Canada. Users also have the capability to create their own maps using atlas data from various government sources. For example, users can access a wide variety of socio-economic information derived from the 1996 Census. The atlas contains data on Canada's age structure and links to resource-dependent communities. It also provides a view of Canada's newest territory, Nunavut. Information on the Canadian family and official languages are planned for release in the fall.

The new link to the *National Atlas of Canada* is now available at Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). Look under "Census" followed by "Statistical profile of Canadian communities". For further information, contact Anna Jasiak (613-996-2817) or Jacques Ouellet (613-951-8198), Statistics Canada, or Jim Levesque (613-992-4342), Natural Resources Canada.

Health reports Summer 1999

The Summer 1999 issue of *Health reports* features the following five articles: "Mortality in metropolitan areas," "Health effects of physical activity," "Body mass index and health," "Medications and fall-related fractures in the elderly," and "Dental insurance and the use of dental services."

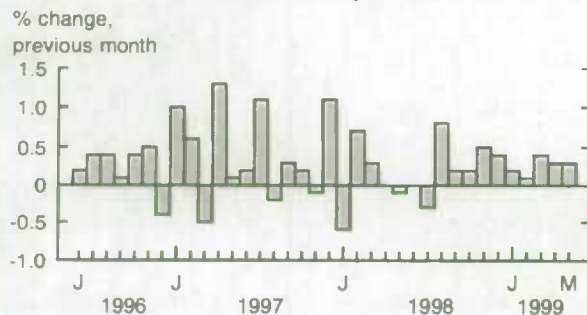
Each quarter, *Health reports* provides comprehensive and timely analysis of national and provincial health information, as well as the vital statistics derived from surveys and administrative data. It is designed to reach a broad audience that includes health professionals, researchers, policy makers, educators and students.

The Summer 1999 issue of *Health reports* (paper: 82-003-XPB, \$35/\$116; Internet at www.statcan.ca: 82-003-X1E, \$26/\$87) is now available. For further information, contact Marie P. Beaudet (613-951-7025, beaumar@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.



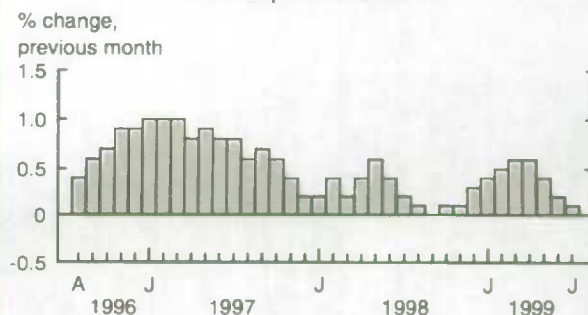
Current trends

Gross domestic product



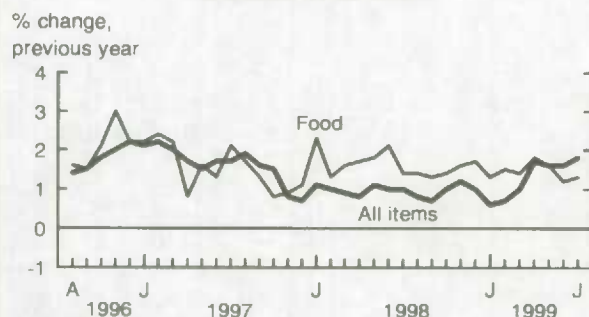
Economic activity continued to advance in May (+0.3%). This extended the expansion to 10 months – the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade.

Composite Index



The growth of the leading indicator slowed to 0.1% in July, marking its smallest gain since last November.

Consumer Price Index



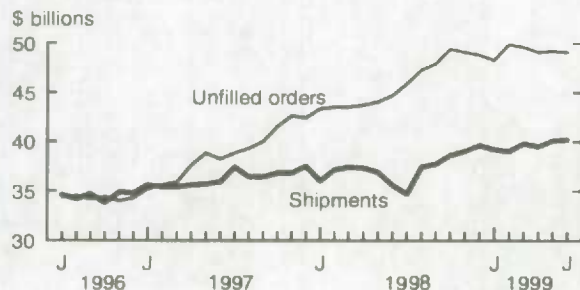
Consumers paid 1.8% more for goods and services in July 1999 than they did a year earlier. Food prices rose 1.3%.

Unemployment rate



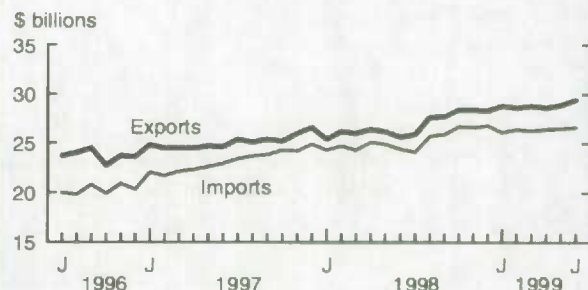
In July, an increase in the number of people looking for work, mostly among youths, pushed the unemployment rate up 0.1 percentage points to 7.7%.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments grew 0.4% in June to \$40.2 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders dropped 0.2% to \$49.1 billion.

Merchandise trade



In June, the value of merchandise exports rose 1.9% from May to \$29.4 billion. Imports edged up only 0.3% to 26.6 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)	May	737.6	0.3%	3.1%
Composite Index (1981=100)	July	215.0	0.1%	3.8%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q1 1999	36.3	4.7%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 1999	83.1	0.5†	- 0.3†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	June*	21.4	0.3%	5.2%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	June	125.0	0.6%	1.8%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	June*	29.8	0.0%	7.7%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	July	14.68	0.3%	2.7%
Unemployment rate (%)	July	7.7	0.1†	- 0.7†
Participation rate (%)	July	65.4	0.1†	0.4†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	May	607.39	0.0%	0.5%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	July	160	0.6%	11.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	June*	29.4	1.9%	14.9%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	June*	26.6	0.3%	9.0%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	June*	2.8	0.4	1.6
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billion)	June	40.3	0.4%	13.1%
New orders (\$ billion)	June	40.1	- 0.1%	10.4%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	June	49.1	- 0.2%	9.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	June	1.26	0.00	- 0.12
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	July	110.8	0.3%	1.8%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	June	120.2	0.1%	0.8%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	June	112.9	- 0.5%	5.4%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	June	100.6	0.0%	0.5%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

.. figures not available yet due to a survey redesign

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Paper		65-001-XPB	19/188	19/188
Imports by commodity	June 1999			
Microfiche		65-007-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper		65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
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