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Infomat
A Weekly Review

Friday, November 26, 1999

OVERVIEW

- **Annual inflation rate edges down**

  In October, the annual inflation rate on consumer prices edged down to 2.3%. The Consumer Price Index continued to reflect the climb in energy prices that began in April.

- **Automotive sector drives exports down**

  Exports fell in September by 3.2%, due mainly to a decline in the automotive sector. Imports continued to grow for an eighth straight month, but at a slower pace (+0.4%).

- **Retail sales continue climbing**

  Consumers increased their spending in retail stores for a fifth consecutive month in September (+0.4%). That translated into a third-quarter gain of 3.1%.

- **Wholesale sales decline for first time in 10 months**

  In September, after nine consecutive months of increase, wholesale sales declined 1.0%. This decline was in large part due to a drop in sales among computer wholesalers.

- **Profitability decline for large firms**

  In 1998, large Canadian firms experienced a decline in profitability for the first time since 1991. However, they were still more profitable than medium and smaller enterprises.

- **Longer workweek has health consequences**

  According to data from the National Population Health Survey, the people who are spending longer hours on the job may be increasing their chances of weight gain, smoking or alcohol consumption.

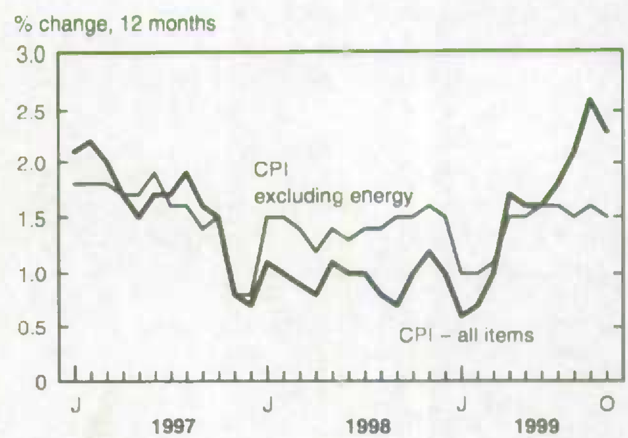
Annual inflation rate edges down

In October, the annual inflation rate on the goods and services contained in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket edged down to 2.3%. That was a slight slowing from September's 2.6% rate, as the CPI in October continued to reflect the climb in energy prices that began in April. Excluding the impact of energy prices, the CPI in October rose 1.5%. The increases in the energy index in September and October were the largest seen since early 1991.

Compared with October 1998, prices were higher this October for gasoline, motor vehicles, natural gas and university tuition. In Ontario, for example, the tuition fees index climbed 10.4%, compared with an average increase for Canada of 6.7%. Prices were lower for computer equipment and telephone services. An average increase of 19.1% in gasoline prices was recorded for Canada. Gasoline prices in Quebec were 23.0% higher, while they were up 18.0% in Ontario.

For the first time since September 1974, the index for property taxes declined (-0.5%). A 2.9% drop in Ontario was almost completely offset by increases in the other provinces. In Quebec, property owners experienced the smallest increases, while proprietors in New Brunswick faced the largest. Property taxes

Consumer Price Index



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... Annual inflation rate edges down

climbed in Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Quebec, mainly due to higher general mill rates. In Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, higher assessment values lifted taxes. Ontario's decline originated from cuts to education tax rates. In Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, taxes rose primarily due to higher education rates, but general mill rates increased as well. In Alberta, a general reassessment boosted both property values and general mill rates.

Consumer Price Index, October 1999
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All-items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	**2.3**	**1.3**	**1.5**	**5.5**	**11.5**
Newfoundland	1.9	0.8	3.5	4.0	10.3
Prince Edward Island	2.2	0.3	3.2	4.7	11.3
Nova Scotia	2.8	0.7	4.1	5.4	11.8
New Brunswick	2.3	1.1	2.1	5.5	8.6
Quebec	2.3	0.8	1.6	6.0	11.7
Ontario	2.3	2.0	1.1	5.2	10.5
Manitoba	2.2	0.8	1.2	5.3	6.5
Saskatchewan	1.9	-0.8	2.6	5.2	9.8
Alberta	3.6	2.3	4.8	6.8	18.6
British Columbia	1.5	0.6	-0.3	4.6	12.1
Whitehorse	1.5	0.3	-0.4	5.0	1.7
Yellowknife	1.3	0.5	1.0	4.2	7.3

From September to October, the CPI edged up 0.1%. The monthly changes in provincial CPIs ranged from -0.4% in British Columbia to +0.3% in Quebec. October's CPI edged higher due to energy prices, which rose from September by 1.2%, since the CPI excluding energy remained unchanged. Reduced supplies drove natural gas prices up 4.6%. Unusually warm weather this summer required greater production of electricity to operate air conditioners, depleting the natural gas supplies normally stored for winter consumption. Fuel oil prices rose 4.8% following a 3.3% increase in September. Gasoline prices nationally rose only 0.6% in October, a sharp slowing from the 2.1% increase in September.

Apart from the price increases for energy, prices also rose for bakery products (after specials ended) and fresh vegetables (due to seasonal factors). Traveller accommodation rates fell on seasonal rate changes, while sales cut prices for women's clothing. The index for owned accommodation fell 0.2%, compared with an increase of 0.7% in September. October's decline was mostly due to a lower price level for homeowners' maintenance and repairs, which resulted from widespread specials on materials that more than offset higher labour costs.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9940-9956.

*The October 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.*

Automotive sector drives exports down

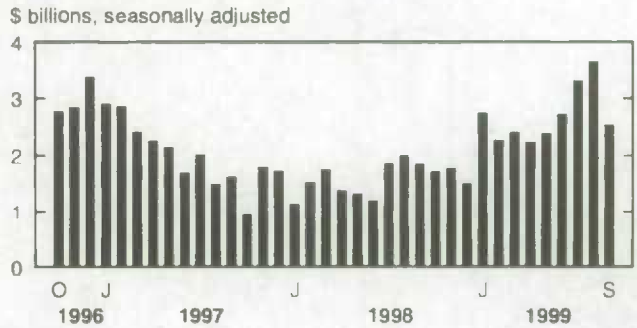
Exports fell 3.2% in September, offsetting most of August's increase. Imports increased for an eighth straight month, but at a slower pace (+0.4%). The merchandise trade surplus fell to $2.5 billion, but the cumulative surplus of $24 billion since January remained almost double that seen in the same period last year.

The main contributor to the drop in total exports was the automotive sector, where exports dropped 10.4% from their record high reached in August. In particular, car and truck exports plummeted by 13.5% and 11.9% respectively. However, the automotive sector's exports for the third quarter stood 4.9% above the second quarter.

Exports of industrial goods were down 4.0% in September, chiefly due to lower exports of gold, uranium and petrochemical products, mainly to the United States. The decrease was somewhat offset by higher exports of metals and minerals, particularly zinc, nickel and copper. Exports of forestry products to the United States also dropped, what with September being the last month in the quarter for quotas. However, measures implemented by the Japanese government to stimulate construction caused a recovery in exports of wood products to Japan.

Counterbalancing these declines, machinery and equipment exports advanced 0.4%, led by strong deliveries of airplanes, helicopters and locomotives. However, these increases were almost completely offset by a sharp drop in exports of navigation equipment and computers. Elsewhere, rising energy prices pushed up exports of crude oil, petroleum and coal products. The increase

Merchandise trade balance



for crude was entirely price-driven, with export volumes for crude falling 11%.

Turning to the growth in imports, it was primarily caused by a strong increase in crude and fuel oil imports. Crude oil import prices vaulted 64% since September 1998, which contributed to the postponement of inventory stockpiling for winter demand until this September.

Imports of fertilisers, medications and gold also surged, but these were almost completely offset by a sharp drop in imports of automotive products, drilling equipment, airplanes and computers. Computer imports were down for a fourth consecutive month. Restructuring in this sector and the Year 2000 transition appear to have affected both importers and wholesalers. There was some offset provided by higher imports of metalworking and assembly

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... Automotive sector drives exports down

line machinery, as the automotive industry increased production capacity and moved from 1999 models to 2000 models. As well, flooding in North Carolina contributed to a slowdown in production at a number of North American auto plants, pushing down imports of parts, cars and trucks.

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

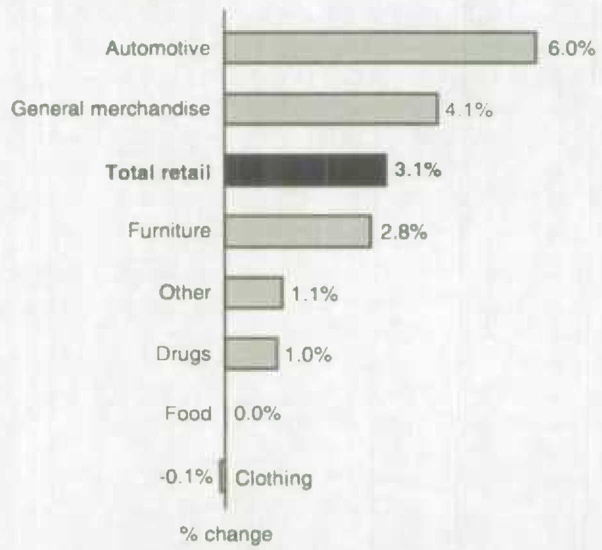
*The September 1999 issue of **Canadian international merchandise trade** (paper: 65-001-XPB, $19/$188; online at www.statcan.ca: 65-001-XIB, $14/$141) includes tables by commodity and country. Current account data are available quarterly in **Canada's balance of international payments** (67-001-XPB, $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.*

Retail sales continue climbing

Consumers increased their spending in retail stores for a fifth consecutive month in September (+0.4% to $22.2 billion). That translated into a third-quarter gain of 3.1%—one of the largest quarterly gains of this decade. Total retail sales have been advancing since the fall of 1998. Holding prices constant, retail sales remained essentially unchanged in September (-0.1%), however.

In the third quarter, the most significant sales increases occurred in the automotive trade group (+6.0%) and at general merchandise stores (+4.1%). The former's impressive quarter was led by strong sales at motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+7.2%), as well as by price-induced sales gains at gasoline service stations (+6.5%). As for general merchandise stores, the quarterly sales advance occurred mostly at department stores (+6.2%).

Retail sales, second quarter to third quarter of 1999



In September, sales rose only at general merchandise stores (+1.6%), stores in the automotive group (+1.1%) and at drugstores (+0.2%). September marked consumers' third straight month of higher spending at general merchandise stores, where sales have risen considerably since last fall. September marked the fourth straight monthly gain for motor and recreational vehicle dealers (+1.5%)—a reflection of consumer confidence. These dealers have enjoyed rising sales since the summer of 1996. Higher gas prices (+2.1%) continued to push up sales at gasoline service stations, where sales advanced 0.6%, much slower than the 4.5% surge in August, however.

The most significant sales declines in September were seen at clothing (-2.6%) and furniture (-0.9%) stores. Sales in clothing stores were down for a second consecutive month, as all types of clothing retailers saw sales decline. Nevertheless, sales at clothing stores have been on the rise since early 1996. Although furniture stores have seen sales declines in the last three months, their sales have been strong since the spring of 1996.

Turning to the provinces, lower sales in the automotive group, at furniture stores and at clothing stores led to the only two declines, which occurred in New Brunswick and Ontario (see table on page 4). Overall, however, sales in New Brunswick have been strong since the fall of 1998. In Ontario, September's sales decrease was the first monthly decline of 1999.

In Alberta, sales have been rising considerably in the last four months after showing little progress since the start of 1998. Overall, retail sales in Prince Edward Island have generally been climbing since the summer of 1996. Higher sales in the automotive trade group and in general merchandise stores led sales higher in British Columbia. The sales advances in the province since last fall have now recaptured the losses observed during the rest of 1998. Consumers in Quebec increased spending in retail stores for a third consecutive month in September.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2299 and 2397-2416 and 2418-2420.

*The September 1999 issue of **Retail trade** (paper: 63-005-XPB, $21/$206; online 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 decline for first time in 10 months

After nine consecutive monthly increases, wholesale sales declined in September by 1.0% to $30.2 billion. This decline was in large part due to a 9.8% drop in sales of computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery. If not for that sales drop among computer wholesalers, total sales would have remained unchanged from August. Despite September's decline, total wholesale sales were up from a year earlier by 9.0%.

In the third quarter, sales were up from the second quarter by 1.7%—the fourth consecutive quarterly increase. Except for a levelling off during the first half of 1998, wholesale sales have been carving an upward trend for several years.

Contributing to the lower sales in September among wholesalers within the computer sector was consumer concern related to Y2K. Several of the larger wholesalers within this sector point to what they see as a reluctance on the part of customers to buy new computer equipment as the year 2000 approaches. The earthquake in Taiwan may also have tightened the supply of computer chips during September, thereby hurting wholesale sales and pushing inventory down. Except for a brief lapse in early 1998, sales within the computer sector have been on the rise for several years.

Wholesalers of household goods posted the second largest percentage drop in sales in September (-2.6%). For their part, wholesalers of lumber and building materials also posted slower sales (-2.0%)—their third straight month of decline. A 0.1% decline for them in the third quarter followed four quarters of strong increases. Demand for Canadian building materials is waning in the face of reduced orders for private construction and building materials in the United States. Meanwhile, wholesale sales of motor vehicles, parts and accessories were essentially unchanged from August. A drop in U.S. retail sales of cars and light trucks during September had a dampening effect on Canadian wholesale sales.

Wholesalers of farm machinery, equipment and supplies reported higher sales (+7.3%). This gain coincided with the start of harvesting. Despite the increased activity compared with August, their sales this September were below September 1998 by 6.7%. Elsewhere, wholesalers of beverage, drug and tobacco products posted a sales advance of 2.3%.

In British Columbia, wholesale sales have revived, rising in September (+1.1%), as well as in the second (+3.1%) and third quarters (+3.4%) of 1999. These recent sales advances follow more than a year of generally declining sales. Despite a slowdown in the lumber sector, other wholesaling activity in British Columbia may be benefiting from the ongoing recovery in Asia and from increased activity related to the oil sector in Alberta.

Retail and wholesale trade, September 1999
Seasonally adjusted

	Retail sales		Wholesale sales	
	$ millions	% change, previous month	$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	**22,199**	**0.4**	**30,236**	**-1.0**
Newfoundland	354	2.3	217	-5.5
Prince Edward Island	101	3.0	62	5.0
Nova Scotia	679	0.2	566	-1.7
New Brunswick	547	-1.8	374	-3.2
Quebec	5,105	0.8	6,318	0.2
Ontario	8,495	-1.1	14,838	-2.2
Manitoba	777	1.1	930	-2.2
Saskatchewan	658	0.2	901	3.2
Alberta	2,561	3.1	2,693	0.4
British Columbia	2,846	1.9	3,314	1.1
Yukon	28	3.6	9	0.4
Northwest Territories	33	0.8	12	-8.2
Nunavut	15	2.6	2	-25.3

On the East Coast, Prince Edward Island was the only province where wholesale sales rose in September. The food sector was the major contributor. A common element behind sales declines in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick was weakness within the lumber and building materials sector. As for Nova Scotia, sales have turned downward since the spring of 1999. This may be related to an ebbing of construction associated with the Sable Island project, which is nearing completion.

For a fourth consecutive month, wholesalers' inventories rose (+0.4% to $41.5 billion). However, wholesalers of computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery reduced their inventories by 1.9%. Although the overall level of inventories held by wholesalers dropped slightly during the first quarter of 1999, wholesalers are again building inventories to new highs, as has been the case for the past several years. The inventories-to-sales ratio rose from 1.35 in August to 1.37. For six months, the ratio has fluctuated around 1.35, the same level seen in late 1997.

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

The September 1999 issue of ***Wholesale trade*** *(63-008-XIB, $14/$140) is available online 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.*

Profitability decline for large firms

In 1998, large Canadian firms experienced a decline in profitability for the first time since 1991. However, they were still more profitable than medium and smaller enterprises, continuing a trend that began after the 1991 recession.

Large firms in non-financial industries earned an average return on assets in 1998 of 6.6%, down from 7.2% in 1997. This coincided with slower economic growth in Canada during the second half of last year and lower commodity prices, particularly for oil. Meanwhile, non-financial medium-sized firms recorded an average return on assets of 4.0%, a small decline from 4.3% in 1997. For small firms, the return was 5.6%, a healthy increase from 4.2% in 1997 and the first time it exceeded 5% since 1990. Small firms tend to focus on domestic markets. The large firms' higher rates of return reflect the many economic advantages that these firms may enjoy. They may also benefit from lower financing costs and be better at tapping foreign markets.

Among medium and large firms, manufacturing continued to outperform the other major sectors of the economy last year, recording a return on capital employed of 9.3%. That was in line with the 1996-to-1998 annual average return of 9.2%. Manufacturing was the only sector to record returns of 9% or better in each of the three years from 1996 to 1998. These results reflect the restructuring of that sector.

The transportation, storage, communications and utilities sector also turned in a solid performance, with an 8.8% return on capital employed in 1998 and an annual average of 9.0% over the past three years. Mining trailed all major sectors with returns of just 3.1% last year and an average of 5.1% over the three-year period.

Looking at goods-producers among the medium and large firms, the logging industry proved the most profitable from 1996 to 1998 (+14.3%), followed closely by printing and publishing excluding books and newspapers (+13.4%) and rubber products manufacturing (+13.3%)—mainly because of a 21.0% return in 1998. Reflecting the weak commodity prices, the least profitable goods producers were pulp and paper makers (+1.2%), followed by firms engaged in mining, smelting and refining metals.

For larger firms engaged in non-financial services, the computer and peripheral equipment sales/service industry performed the best (+14.3%), propelled by a strong return in 1998 of 20.5%. Firms providing services incidental to water transport reported a three-year average annual return of 13.6%—near the top of the rankings for a second consecutive year. The worst performer was the book, magazine and periodical wholesaling industry with a three-year average return on capital employed of 0.1% (-2.9% in 1998).

Among small non-financial firms, the most profitable sector in 1998 was services, with a return on assets of 8.8%. Mining followed closely with a return of 8.7%. For the three-year period, these two sectors switched positions: mining 7.1%, services 6.9%. Retail trade lagged behind the group with returns of 3.5% last year and 2.7% over the three-year period.

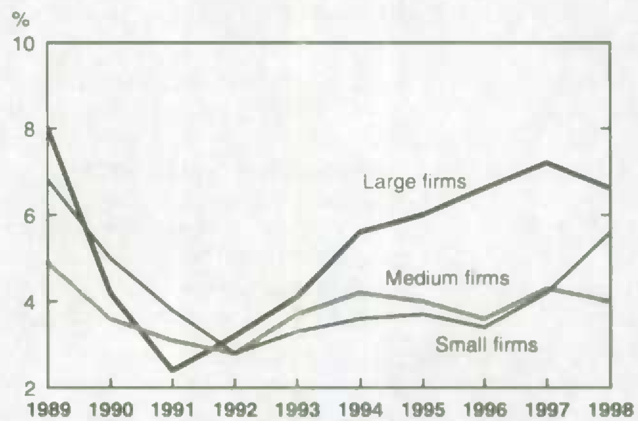
For small goods-producers, makers of non-current carrying wiring devices were ranked as the most profitable from 1996 to 1998 (+15.7%). Second place went to makers of paperboard (+13.5%)—largely due to a 19.7% return in 1998.

Note to readers

These indicators were developed using the income tax returns of about 1 million corporations, along with data from Statistics Canada's quarterly and annual programs of financial statistics for enterprises.

Return on assets was the ratio used to compare the performance of firms classified as large (annual revenues of $75 million), medium (revenues between $5 and $75 million) and small (revenues between $50,000 and $5 million), since this was the best measure of profitability available for all three size groups. This same ratio was used to rank the most and least profitable industries for small firms. To rank the industries for large and medium firms, the ratio used was return on capital employed.

Return on assets of non-financial industries



The health care field again dominated the list of the most profitable service industries. These businesses typically report low assets, since the key asset, human capital, does not appear on the balance sheet. Many of the worst performers from 1996 to 1998 were in the amusement and recreation services industries, where negative returns were seen.

As for the financial services industries, most experienced lower profitability in 1998. The Schedule A chartered banks recorded the best overall profitability with a 10.8% return on capital employed, down from 11.5% in 1997. However, from 1996 to 1998, independent investment dealers topped the list (+13.7%)—largely on the strength of a 26.5% return in 1996. Their return in 1998 was 4.1%. Over the three-year period, the next most profitable were investment dealers who are subsidiaries of banks (+13.2%). The worst performers were consumer and business finance companies (+5.5%) and Schedule B banks (+5.9%).

Financial performance indicators for Canadian business *(61F0058XCB, vol. 1, $170; 61F0059XCB, vol. 2, $190; 61F0060XCB, vol. 3, $210; 10-3010XKB, vols. 1-3 and selected provinces/regions, $695) is now available on CD-ROM. For further analytical information, contact Ed Hamilton (613-951-4310), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.*

Longer workweek has health consequences

Switching from a standard workweek (35 to 40 hours) to a longer workweek (41 hours or more) increases the risk of certain negative impacts on health. For some individuals, a longer workweek may increase the chances of weight gain, smoking or alcohol consumption.

A growing number of workers are spending longer hours on the job. Between 1994/95 and 1996/97, 21% of men and 8% of women who had worked standard hours changed to long hours. Among full-time workers, half of men and 28% of women aged 25 to 54 who were employed 35 or more hours a week in 1994/95 worked at least 41 hours a week. The average workweek for the men was 55 hours on the job, while for women it was 51 hours.

Long hours are relatively common among shift workers, and predictably, among the self-employed and multiple jobholders. Long hours also tended to be more prevalent among individuals with higher formal education and among those in white-collar occupations.

Men working long hours in 1994/95 were more likely than those who worked a standard schedule to have excess weight—even when the effects of such factors as age, education, occupation, and work stress were taken into account. Moreover, 16% of men whose hours of work had changed from standard to long by 1996/97 had an unhealthy weight gain during that two-year period, compared with 8% of men who continued to work standard hours. In contrast, among women there was no association between long hours and having excess weight or an unhealthy weight gain.

For both sexes, changing from standard to long hours between 1994/95 and 1996/97 was significantly associated with an increase in daily smoking during the period. Among men, 14% who moved from standard to long hours increased their daily smoking, compared with 8% who continued with standard hours. Among women, 16% who switched from standard to long hours increased their daily smoking, compared with 6% who maintained standard hours. Men who increased their cigarette consumption smoked on average 10 more cigarettes a day. Women on average smoked eight more cigarettes a day.

As for weekly alcohol consumption, it increased among 36% of women who changed from standard to long working hours. Among women who continued with standard hours, 23% increased their drinking. The women who increased their drinking consumed an average of three more drinks a week in 1996/97 than they did in 1994/95. Among men, a change in working hours was not significantly related to increased drinking.

Spending more time on the job should, it would seem, cut into the time available for exercise. Surprisingly, however, an increase in working hours between 1994/95 and 1996/97 was not significantly related to a decrease in physical activity for either men or women. However, a relatively high proportion of respondents who increased their working hours were interviewed in the summer, the season when physical activity tends to peak.

The Autumn 1999 edition of ***Health reports*** *(paper: 82-003-XPB, $35/$116; online at www.statcan.ca: 82-003-XIE, $26/$87) is now available. For further information, contact Margot Shields (613-951-4177; shiemar@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.*

Note to readers

This article is based on the report "Long working hours and health", which appears in the Autumn 1999 edition of Health reports. *The report examines associations between changing from standard to long working hours and several lifestyle behaviours that may have health consequences (such as weight gain, smoking, alcohol consumption and less time spent on physical activity).*

The analysis uses data from the 1994/95 and 1996/97 cycles of the National Population Health Survey (NPHS). The survey looked at a sample of 3,830 people aged 25 to 54 (2,181 men and 1,649 women) who worked 35 hours or more per week throughout the year before their 1994/95 NPHS interview.

New from Statistics Canada

Canadian economic observer
November 1999

The November 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 October and presents a feature article on the importance of exports to GDP and jobs.

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 November 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.*

Canadian travel survey: domestic travel
1997

The *Canadian travel survey* provides a yardstick for identifying who is travelling, the types of trips they are taking and how much they are spending. Throughout 1997, Statistics Canada interviewed 300,000 Canadians about their trips and their demographic and household characteristics. The findings help decision-makers in the tourism industry and in government market Canada to Canadians by indicating which tourism products to develop.

In addition to reviewing the 1997 results, this publication includes two in-depth articles showing the analytical potential of the data. The first describes characteristics of retired travellers and the types of trips they take. The second presents the 10 most visited tourism regions in Canada in 1997.

The 1997 edition of ***Canadian travel survey: domestic travel*** *(paper: 87-212-XPB, $47; online at www.statcan.ca: 87-212-XIE, $20) is now available. For further information, contact Lizette Gervais-Simard (613-951-1672; gervliz@statcan.ca), Tourism Statistics Program.*

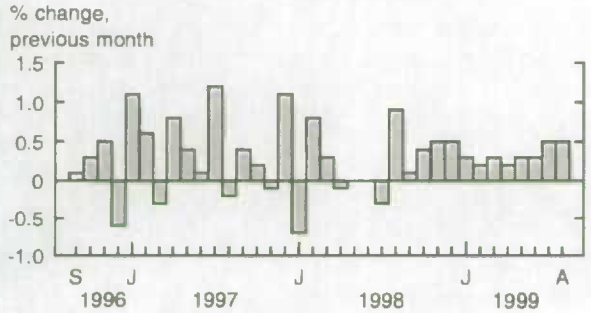
Release dates
2000

Statistics Canada has announced the release dates for selected economic indicators for the year 2000. The release dates are presented chronologically and by subject matter. Subscribers to the print and electronic versions of *Infomat* will find these schedules attached at the back of this week's issue. Anyone can access the release date calendars at anytime for free at www.statcan.ca. Look under "Latest news from Statistics Canada", and then click on "Release dates 2000".

For further information on ***Release dates 2000****, contact Chantal Prévost (613-951-1088; prevcha@statcan.ca), Communications Division.*

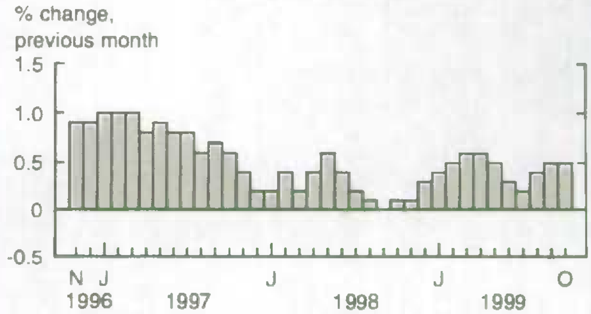
Current trends

Gross domestic product



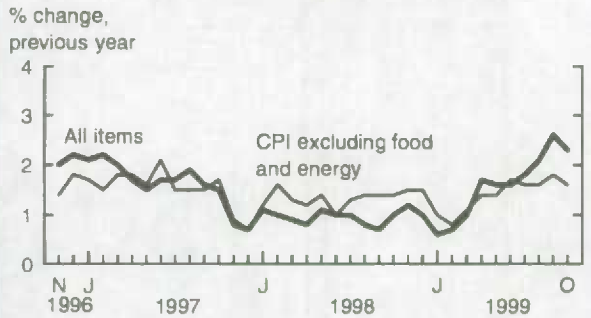
Economic activity continued to advance briskly in August (+0.5%). This extended the expansion to 13 months – the longest uninterrupted string of advances in more than a decade.

Composite Index



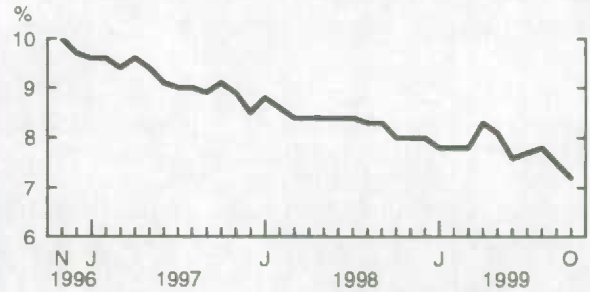
In October, the leading indicator continued to show growth of 0.5%, the same as in September.

Consumer Price Index



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.3% higher in October 1999 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.6%.

Unemployment rate

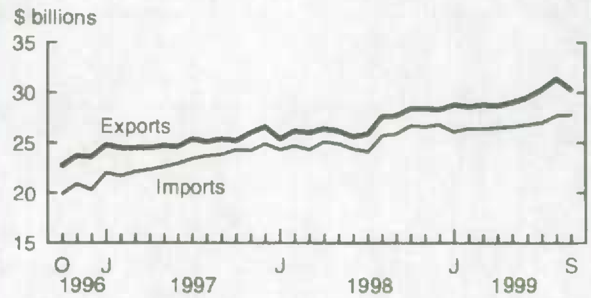


In October, the unemployment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 7.2%, its lowest level since March 1990.

Manufacturing

Manufacturers' shipments increased 0.8% in September to $42.4 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders grew for a fifth consecutive month, rising 1.9% to $53.7 billion.

Merchandise trade



In September, the value of merchandise exports dropped 3.2% from August to $30.4 billion. Imports increased 0.4% to $27.8 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)	August	752.6	0.5%	4.1%
Composite Index (1981=100)	October*	218.3	0.5%	5.1%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q2 1999	37.2	1.6%	..
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 1999	83.8	0.5†	1.0†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	September*	22.2	0.4%	6.9%
Department store sales ($ billions)	September	1.59	0.9%	12.0%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	September	134.8	2.0%	5.4%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	September*	30.2	-1.0%	9.0%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	October	14.82	0.5%	2.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	October	7.2	-0.3†	-0.8†
Participation rate (%)	October	65.5	0.1†	0.2†
Average weekly earnings ($)	August	610.42	-0.1%	0.8%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	October	162	1.3%	11.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	September*	30.3	-3.2%	9.5%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	September*	27.8	0.4%	7.5%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	September*	2.5	-1.1	0.7
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	September	42.4	0.8%	12.1%
New orders ($ billion)	September	43.4	1.0%	12.5%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	September	53.7	1.9%	7.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	September	1.27	0.00	-0.09
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	October*	111.5	0.1%	2.3%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	September	123.1	0.5%	3.1%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	September	125.5	3.5%	16.1%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	September	101.3	0.2%	1.2%

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*

Infomat
A weekly review

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Publications released from November 18 to 24, 1999

Division/Title of publication	Period	Catalogue number	Price: Issue/Subscription Canada (C$)	Outside Canada (US$)
AGRICULTURE				
Production and value of honey and maple	1999	23-221-XIB	no charge	
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS				
Canadian travel survey: domestic travel	1997			
Internet		87-212-XIE	20	
Paper		87-212-XPB	47	47
Tourism statistical digest	1999 edition			
Internet		87-403-XIE	36	
Paper		87-403-XPE	45	45
CURRENT ECONOMIC ANALYSIS				
Canadian economic observer	November 1999	11-010-XPB	23/227	23/227
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES				
New motor vehicle sales	September 1999	63-007-XIB	13/124	
INCOME STATISTICS				
Pension plans in Canada	January 1, 1998	74-401-XIB	31	
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS				
Gross domestic product by industry	August 1999	15-001-XPB	15/145	15/145
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Imports by commodity	September 1999			
Microfiche		65-007-XMB	37/361	37/361
Paper		65-007-XPB	78/773	78/773
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY				
Construction-type plywood	September 1999	35-001-XIB	5/47	
Mineral wool including fibrous glass insulation	October 1999	44-004-XIB	5/47	
Monthly survey of manufacturing	September 1999	31-001-XPB	20/196	20/196
Pipeline transportation of crude oil and refined petroleum products	August 1999	55-001-XIB	9/86	
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	September 1999	25-001-XIB	6/55	
PRICES				
The consumer price index	October 1999	62-001-XPB	11/103	11/103
SCIENCE, INNOVATION AND ELECTRONIC INFORMATION				
Science statistics service bulletin, vol. 23, no. 7: Estimation of research and development expenditures in the higher education sector	1997-98	88-001-XIB	6/59	

Catalogue numbers with an -XPB or an -XIE extension are Internet versions (B signifies bilingual, E signifies English); those with -XMB or -XME are microfiche; and -XPB or -XPE denote the paper version. XDB means the electronic version on diskette or compact disc.
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Calendar of key releases: December 1999

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6 **Financial statistics for enlerprises,** Q3 1999 **Building permits,** October 1999	7 **Industrial capacity utilization rates,** Q3 1999	8	9 **New housing price index,** October 1999	10
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Note: *Except for the releases marked with an asterisk, all the release dates in this calendar are fixed. A more detailed calendar of fixed release dates for the entire year is available from Statistics Canada's web site at www.statcan.ca.*

Statistics Canada

RELEASE DATES 2000

Selected economic indicators

At the time of release, data are available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca) in *The Daily* in summary form and on the *CANSIM* database in greater detail. It is also possible to consult data tables in *Canadian Statistics* on the Web site. In exceptional circumstances, some release dates may be modified during the year. For more information, contact your nearest regional reference centre.

Balance of international payments

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	February 28, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	May 31, 2000
April-June 2000	August 31, 2000
July-Sept. 2000	November 30, 2000
Oct.-Dec. 2000	February 28, 2001

Building permits

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 12, 2000
December 1999	February 4, 2000
January 2000	March 9, 2000
February 2000	April 4, 2000
March 2000	May 5, 2000
April 2000	June 7, 2000
May 2000	July 5, 2000
June 2000	August 4, 2000
July 2000	September 5, 2000
August 2000	October 5, 2000
September 2000	November 7, 2000
October 2000	December 6, 2000
November 2000	January 11, 2001
December 2000	February 7, 2001

Business conditions survey, Canadian manufacturing industries

Data for:	Release date:
January 2000	February 1, 2000
April 2000	May 2, 2000
July 2000	August 1, 2000
October 2000	November 2, 2000

Canada's international transactions in securities

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 24, 2000
December 1999	February 23, 2000
January 2000	March 23, 2000
February 2000	April 26, 2000
March 2000	May 25, 2000
April 2000	June 22, 2000
May 2000	July 24, 2000
June 2000	August 24, 2000
July 2000	September 25, 2000
August 2000	October 24, 2000
September 2000	November 23, 2000
October 2000	December 21, 2000
November 2000	January 24, 2001
December 2000	February 22, 2001

Canadian international merchandise trade

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 20, 2000
December 1999	February 18, 2000
January 2000	March 21, 2000
February 2000	April 19, 2000
March 2000	May 19, 2000
April 2000	June 20, 2000
May 2000	July 19, 2000
June 2000	August 18, 2000
July 2000	September 20, 2000
August 2000	October 19, 2000
September 2000	November 21, 2000
October 2000	December 19, 2000
November 2000	January 19, 2001
December 2000	February 21, 2001

Characteristics of international travellers

Data for:	Release date:
July-Sept. 1999	February 25, 2000
Oct.-Dec. 1999	May 30, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	August 28, 2000
April-June 2000	November 28, 2000

Composite index

Data for:	Release date:
December 1999	January 26, 2000
January 2000	February 22, 2000
February 2000	March 22, 2000
March 2000	April 17, 2000
April 2000	May 24, 2000
May 2000	June 21, 2000
June 2000	July 25, 2000
July 2000	August 16, 2000
August 2000	September 18, 2000
September 2000	October 25, 2000
October 2000	November 16, 2000
November 2000	December 15, 2000

Consumer price index

Data for:	Release date:
December 1999	January 21, 2000
January 2000	February 24, 2000
February 2000	March 15, 2000
March 2000	April 11, 2000
April 2000	May 18, 2000
May 2000	June 16, 2000
June 2000	July 13, 2000
July 2000	August 17, 2000
August 2000	September 14, 2000
September 2000	October 20, 2000
October 2000	November 21, 2000
November 2000	December 14, 2000
December 2000	January 18, 2001

Employment, earnings and hours

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 27, 2000
December 1999	February 25, 2000
January 2000	March 29, 2000
February 2000	April 27, 2000
March 2000	May 29, 2000
April 2000	June 28, 2000
May 2000	July 27, 2000
June 2000	August 24, 2000
July 2000	September 27, 2000
August 2000	October 26, 2000
September 2000	November 29, 2000
October 2000	December 21, 2000
November 2000	January 30, 2001
December 2000	February 27, 2001

Employment insurance

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 26, 2000
December 1999	February 23, 2000
January 2000	March 29, 2000
February 2000	April 28, 2000
March 2000	May 24, 2000
April 2000	June 21, 2000
May 2000	July 20, 2000
June 2000	August 23, 2000
July 2000	September 20, 2000
August 2000	October 25, 2000
September 2000	November 22, 2000
October 2000	December 20, 2000
November 2000	January 24, 2001
December 2000	February 21, 2001

Farm cash receipts

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	February 24, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	May 25, 2000
April-June 2000	August 30, 2000
July-Sept. 2000	November 23, 2000
Oct.-Dec. 2000	February 22, 2001

Field crop reporting series

Data for:	Release date:
December 31 grain stocks for 1999	February 2, 2000
March seeding intentions for 2000	April 20, 2000
March 31 grain stocks for 2000	May 8, 2000
Seeded area, principal field crops for 2000	June 29, 2000
July 31 crop production estimates for 2000	August 25, 2000
July 31 grain stocks for 2000	September 12, 2000
September crop production estimates for 2000	October 6, 2000
November crop production estimates for 2000	December 5, 2000
December 31 grain stocks for 2000	January 31, 2001

Industrial capacity utilization rates

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	March 7, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	June 7, 2000
April-June 2000	September 8, 2000
July-Sept. 2000	December 7, 2000
Oct.-Dec. 2000	March 7, 2001

Industrial product price index and Raw materials price index

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 5, 2000
December 1999	January 28, 2000
January 2000	February 25, 2000
February 2000	March 30, 2000
March 2000	May 3, 2000
April 2000	May 26, 2000
May 2000	June 28, 2000
June 2000	July 27, 2000
July 2000	August 29, 2000
August 2000	September 28, 2000
September 2000	October 26, 2000
October 2000	November 29, 2000
November 2000	January 4, 2001
December 2000	January 30, 2001

International travel account

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	February 25, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	May 30, 2000
April-June 2000	August 28, 2000
July-Sept. 2000	November 28, 2000

Labour force survey

Data for:	Release date:
December 1999	January 7, 2000
January 2000	February 4, 2000
February 2000	March 10, 2000
March 2000	April 7, 2000
April 2000	May 5, 2000
May 2000	June 9, 2000
June 2000	July 7, 2000
July 2000	August 4, 2000
August 2000	September 8, 2000
September 2000	October 8, 2000
October 2000	November 3, 2000
November 2000	December 1, 2000
December 2000	January 5, 2001
January 2001	February 9, 2001

Monthly survey of manufacturing

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 19, 2000
December 1999	February 15, 2000
January 2000	March 16, 2000
February 2000	April 18, 2000
March 2000	May 16, 2000
April 2000	June 15, 2000
May 2000	July 20, 2000
June 2000	August 16, 2000
July 2000	September 19, 2000
August 2000	October 18, 2000
September 2000	November 17, 2000

Monthly survey of manufacturing - continued

October 2000	December 18, 2000
November 2000	January 22, 2001
December 2000	February 16, 2001

National economic and financial accounts

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	February 28, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	May 31, 2000
April-June 2000	August 31, 2000
July-Sept. 2000	November 30, 2000
Oct.-Dec. 2000	February 28, 2001

Net farm income

Data for:	Release date:
1999 preliminary	May 25, 2000
1999 revised	November 23, 2000

New motor vehicle sales

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 18, 2000
December 1999	February 16, 2000
January 2000	March 17, 2000
February 2000	April 13, 2000
March 2000	May 15, 2000
April 2000	June 14, 2000
May 2000	July 14, 2000
June 2000	August 14, 2000
July 2000	September 14, 2000
August 2000	October 13, 2000
September 2000	November 15, 2000
October 2000	December 14, 2000
November 2000	January 15, 2001
December 2000	February 14, 2001

Private and public investment in Canada

Data for:	Release date:
2000 intentions	February 23, 2000
2000 revised intentions	July 19, 2000

Quarterly financial statistics for enterprises

Data for:	Release date:
Oct.-Dec. 1999	February 25, 2000
Jan.-March 2000	June 9, 2000
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Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry

Data for:	Release date:
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December 1999	February 28, 2000
January 2000	March 31, 2000
February 2000	April 28, 2000
March 2000	May 31, 2000
April 2000	June 30, 2000
May 2000	July 31, 2000
June 2000	August 31, 2000
July 2000	September 29, 2000
August 2000	October 31, 2000
September 2000	November 30, 2000
October 2000	December 22, 2000
November 2000	January 31, 2001
December 2000	February 28, 2001

Retail trade

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 26, 2000
December 1999	February 23, 2000
January 2000	March 23, 2000
February 2000	April 26, 2000
March 2000	May 18, 2000
April 2000	June 21, 2000
May 2000	July 21, 2000
June 2000	August 21, 2000
July 2000	September 21, 2000
August 2000	October 23, 2000
September 2000	November 22, 2000
October 2000	December 20, 2000
November 2000	January 22, 2001
December 2000	February 21, 2001

Travel between Canada and other countries

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 19, 2000
December 1999	February 17, 2000
January 2000	March 17, 2000
February 2000	April 17, 2000
March 2000	May 17, 2000
April 2000	June 16, 2000
May 2000	July 17, 2000
June 2000	August 17, 2000
July 2000	September 15, 2000
August 2000	October 17, 2000
September 2000	November 17, 2000
October 2000	December 15, 2000

Wholesale trade

Data for:	Release date:
November 1999	January 24, 2000
December 1999	February 22, 2000
January 2000	March 21, 2000
February 2000	April 19, 2000
March 2000	May 17, 2000
April 2000	June 20, 2000
May 2000	July 20, 2000
June 2000	August 18, 2000
July 2000	September 20, 2000
August 2000	October 19, 2000
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21	Employment, earnings and hours	October 2000
21	Help-wanted index	December 2000
22	Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry	October 2000

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31	Real gross domestic product at factor cost by industry	November 2000
31	Field crop reporting series: December 31 grain stocks	2000

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7	Building permits	December 2000
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16	Monthly survey of manufacturing	December 2000
20	Wholesale trade	December 2000
21	Canadian international merchandise trade	December 2000
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