



# Infomat

A Weekly Review

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Friday, January 21, 2000

## OVERVIEW

### ◆ Building permits rise on strength in the non-residential sector

In November, the value of building permits rose 4.0%, an increase that was mostly ascribed to the non-residential sector. On a year-to-date basis, overall construction intentions through November were running well ahead of their pace in 1998.

### ◆ Economic forecasts steady but optimistic

According to the Short-term Expectations Survey, the average of the three-month economic forecasts is steady and on the optimistic side.

### ◆ Health and personal care products propel sales of large retailers

In October, large retailers' sales increased from a year earlier by 4.1%. The increase was propelled by strong sales of health and personal care products (+21.2%). The large retailers grew their market share of these products in the third quarter.

### ◆ Business spending on environmental protection declines

In 1997, business investment in environmental protection totalled \$1.7 billion, a decrease from 1996 of 8.7%. The decrease was due to a 16% drop in investment in end-of-pipe processes.

### ◆ Membership in RPPs slipping

By the end of 1997, 41% of all paid workers were participating in employer-sponsored pension plans (RPPs). That was down from the peak reached in 1991 of just over 45%.

### ◆ Food processors adopting advanced technologies

Food processing companies are adopting a wide range of advanced technologies in order to stay competitive. Most report the biggest impact has been on the quality of their products.

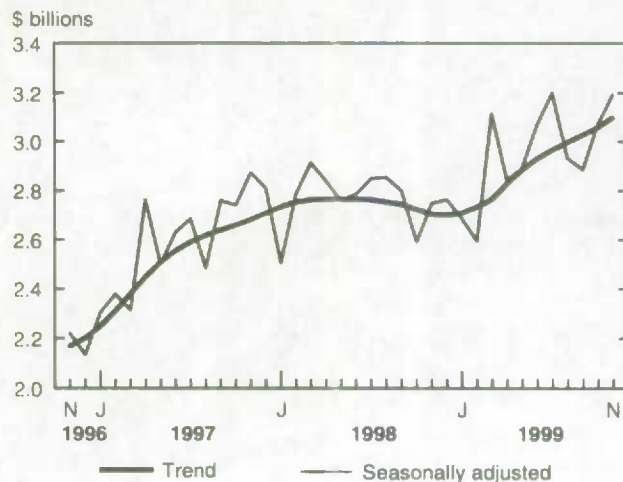
## Building permits rise on strength in the non-residential sector

The value of building permits increased for a second straight month in November. Municipalities issued permits worth \$3.2 billion, a 4.0% monthly increase that was mostly ascribed to the non-residential sector. Non-residential building permits climbed 8.1% in value to \$1.4 billion on the strength of commercial and institutional intentions.

In the non-residential sector, intentions to build commercial structures vaulted 18.9% to \$767 million—the highest monthly value for 1999. The office building category contributed the most to this increase. Institutional intentions, after a sharp decline the previous month, climbed in November by 31.6% to \$335 million. The most significant gain occurred in the education building category. In the industrial component, intentions fell 25.8% to \$283 million, with the factories/plants category showing the most significant decline.

Provincially, the most significant monthly gains (in dollars) in non-residential permits occurred in Ontario and British Columbia. In Ontario, after having declined the month before, the institutional sector contributed the most to the increase. The largest decreases

Value of building permits



(continued on page 2)



Statistics  
Canada

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Canada

### ... Building permits rise on strength in the non-residential sector

occurred in Saskatchewan and Quebec. In Quebec, the institutional component tumbled 42.1% to \$28 million.

The residential sector also helped to push up the overall value, with a slight 1.0% rise to \$1.8 billion—the highest monthly figure since the early 1990s. November's increase in the residential sector was solely due to a rise in intentions to build single-family dwellings (+5.1% to \$1.3 billion). That was the component's best monthly result of 1999. Permits for multi-family dwellings declined in November by 8.1% to \$513 million.

Provincially, the largest gains (in dollars) occurred in Ontario, Alberta and Manitoba. In these three provinces, the single-family and the multi-family dwelling components both increased. The largest decline was recorded in British Columbia.

As a result of the latest increases in both sectors, year-to-date construction intentions through November 1999 were running well ahead of their 1998 pace. Between January and November

1999, municipalities issued \$32.5 billion in building permits, up from the same period in 1998 by 6.7% and just short of the 1998 total of \$33.2 billion—which was the highest level for any year in the 1990s. The outstanding performance of the housing resale market, the upward trend in employment levels and sustained economic growth all are supporting the increase in housing activity. These factors, together with the stability of mortgage rates, should mean that the housing market will remain strong in the coming months.

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

The November 1999 issue of **Building permits** (64-001-X1B, \$19/\$186) can be downloaded at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca). For general information, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689; [burejoa@statcan.ca](mailto:burejoa@statcan.ca)). For further analytical information, contact Sébastien LaRochelle-Côté (613-951-2025; [sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.ca](mailto:sebastien.larochelle-cote@statcan.ca)), Investment and Capital Stock Division.

### Building permits, November 1999 Seasonally adjusted<sup>1</sup>

	Total		Residential		Non-residential	
	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter	\$ millions	% change, previous quarter
<b>Canada</b>	<b>3,192.3</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1,806.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>1,385.5</b>	<b>8.1</b>
Newfoundland	20.1	-24.7	10.7	-8.7	9.5	-37.2
Prince Edward Island	19.1	33.4	6.3	3.7	12.8	55.6
Nova Scotia	98.0	3.0	46.5	-3.0	51.5	9.1
New Brunswick	36.6	-20.4	21.1	-16.1	15.5	-25.6
Quebec	519.1	-1.0	280.8	0.8	238.3	-3.0
Ontario	1,517.7	9.1	918.4	4.8	599.3	16.6
Manitoba	88.5	14.5	39.5	30.7	49.0	4.1
Saskatchewan	46.0	-14.9	25.3	0.0	20.7	-28.0
Alberta	441.1	4.4	239.2	8.9	201.9	-0.3
British Columbia	399.8	-1.5	215.3	-18.7	184.5	30.6
Yukon	3.7	-38.2	2.3	37.0	1.4	-67.8
Northwest Territories	0.5	-83.2	0.4	-51.3	0.1	-95.8
Nunavut	2.0	-49.5	1.0	178.2	1.0	-72.3

<sup>1</sup> Data may not add to totals due to rounding. Some percentage changes should be interpreted with caution because of the small numbers involved.

## Economic forecasts steady but optimistic

According to the Short-term Expectations Survey, the average of the three-month economic forecasts is steady and on the optimistic side. Responses from seven economic forecasters were obtained between December 17 to 23. They expect the pending data for the months of November 1999 through February 2000 to show lower inflation, slightly higher economic growth, slightly higher international trade and steady unemployment.

Averaging their forecasts, they expect the Consumer Price Index to show an annual inflation rate of 2.3% for both December and January and 2.2% for February. For November, the analysts' average forecast was an inflation rate of 2.3%. The actual inflation rate for November was 2.2%.

As for gross domestic product, the analysts on average look for a growth rate of 0.3% in each month from October to December.

That is slightly above the actual growth rate seen in October of 0.1%.

Forecasts for international trade show no change in the trade surplus from November to January, with an average forecast of \$2.9 billion for each month. This is slightly higher than the actual trade surplus of \$2.7 billion that occurred in October. As for exports and imports, the average forecasts for both show slight increases over the forecast period.

The surveyed forecasters expect the unemployment rate will stay close to the actual rates recorded in October (7.2%) and November (6.9%). They forecast an unemployment rate of 7.0% in each month from December to February. The actual unemployment rate remained at 6.9% in December. Over the forecast period, the analysts expect little change in the participation rate, which stood at 65.5% in November and at 65.6% in December.

To order a set of tables, or for further information, contact Jamie Brunet (613-951-6684; fax: 613-951-1572; [jamie.brunet@statcan.ca](mailto:jamie.brunet@statcan.ca)), Small Business and Special Surveys Division.



## Health and personal care products propel sales of large retailers

In October, large retailers' sales reached \$6.2 billion, up from a year earlier by 4.1%. However, the changed composition of the group of large retailers surveyed affected the year-over-year comparison. Accordingly, with food retailers excluded, the year-over-year sales growth in October was 8.4%. All of the major product lines showed sales growth compared with October 1998 except food and beverages (-3.6%). Strong sales increases occurred in health and personal care products, home furnishings and electronics, and in housewares.

Sales of health and personal care products climbed from October to October by 21.2%. In keeping with the pattern established in the summer of 1998, October 1999 marked this category's 16th consecutive month of double-digit sales growth. October's growth

**Large retailers' sales**  
Not seasonally adjusted

	October 1998	October 1999	October 1998 to October 1999
	\$ millions		% change
<b>All commodities</b>	<b>5,997</b>	<b>6,241</b>	<b>4.1</b>
Food and beverages	2,176	2,097	-3.6
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,259	1,317	4.6
Home furnishings and electronics	806	903	12.0
Health and personal care products	414	502	21.2
Housewares	277	301	8.4
Sporting and leisure goods	273	282	3.5
Hardware, lawn and garden products	182	190	4.4
All other goods and services	608	647	6.4

### Note to readers

A significant number of food stores that were included in the October 1998 survey are no longer a part of the survey. Sales in October include those made by Eaton's merchandise liquidator. All data are unadjusted for seasonal factors.

was boosted by rising consumer spending on cosmetics and fragrances, prescription drugs and over-the-counter drugs.

In October, the large retailers' sales of home furnishings and electronics increased from a year earlier by 12.0%. The largest sales increases within this category were for computers and related equipment, artwork and other home decorating products, household furniture, and cameras and photographic equipment.

Houseware sales at the large retailers rose from October to October by 8.4%. Non-electric household supplies (e.g., brooms, mops and laundry baskets) recorded the largest percentage increase in this category. The large retailers' sales of clothing, footwear and accessories advanced only 4.6% on a yearly basis in October. This followed a 9.8% yearly increase in September.

Benefiting from sustained sales growth of health and personal care products, the large retailers increased their market share of these products to 29.5% in the third quarter, up from 27.8% in the third quarter of 1998. As for home furnishings and electronics, stores belonging to the large retailers accounted for 49.6% of all such purchases in the third quarter, a relatively stable share compared with the third quarter of 1998. As a result of sales increases in all three months of the third quarter of 1999, the large retailers' market share for clothing, footwear and accessories rose 2.1 percentage points from 56.4% in the third quarter of 1998 to 58.5% in the third quarter of 1999.

To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067; [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)). For further analytical information, contact Janet Sear (613-951-5580; [searj@statcan.ca](mailto:searj@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division.

## Business spending on environmental protection declines

In 1997, business investment in environmental protection totalled \$1.7 billion, a decrease from 1996 of 8.7%. The decrease was due to a 16% drop in investment in end-of-pipe processes—those designed to lessen undesirable substances resulting from normal production.

By comparison, investment in integrated-process changes, which prevent generation of pollutants resulting from production, grew by just over 5%. Since 1994, the first year of the survey, businesses have been steadily reducing their investment in end-of-pipe technologies and increasing their investment in cleaner, integrated-process changes.

For a fourth consecutive year, the pulp and paper industry showed the largest capital investment in environmental protection (\$331.5 million in 1997). This industry allocated significant amounts to end-of-pipe processes (54% of the \$331.5 million) and to integrated-process changes (41%). However, compared with 1996, total environmental protection investment spending in

pulp and paper dropped almost 50%. The focus among pulp and paper companies has shifted away from large investment expenditures on environmental protection during the late 1980s and early 1990s and toward improved production processes and quality of product.

The primary metals industry reported the second largest amount invested in environmental protection in 1997 (\$290.4 million), climbing from 1996 by 16%. Investment in integrated-process changes decreased by almost \$19 million, but this was more than offset by the \$46 million increase in end-of-pipe investment spending.

Business operating expenditures on environmental protection stayed virtually the same from 1996 to 1997 at \$3.0 billion.

*Preliminary results of the 1997 Survey of Environmental Protection Expenditures are now available. Revised 1996 estimates and preliminary 1997 estimates of environmental protection expenditures by industry and type of activity are available upon request. An analytical report of the 1996-97 estimates will be released shortly on Statistics Canada's Web site ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)). For further information, contact Alice Born (613-951-3728; fax: 613-951-0634), Environment Accounts and Statistics Division.*

## Membership in RPPs slipping

**M**embership in employer-sponsored registered pension plans (RPPs) has been declining, albeit slowly, since it peaked at 5.3 million in 1991. By the end of 1997, about 5.1 million paid workers participated in just over 15,200 RPPs. These plans covered about 41% of all paid workers in Canada in 1997, down from the peak reached in 1991 of just over 45%.

About 2.2 million women or 40% of all paid working women belonged to an RPP in 1997. That proportion has remained relatively constant throughout the 1990s. The growth in total RPP membership until 1991 was entirely due to the increase in women's participation, as growing numbers of women entered the paid workforce and as new legislation extended coverage to part-time workers.

Since 1991, however, the growth in the number of women participating in RPPs has tailed off and has not been strong enough to offset a slow decline in the membership among working men. Women comprised 44% of all plan members in 1997, up substantially from 36% a decade earlier.

In 1991, 3.1 million men or almost half (49%) of all paid working men belonged to an RPP. By 1997, after steady declines, 2.8 million men or 42% of all paid working men were covered by an RPP. Between 1991 and 1993, the decline in male RPP membership occurred mostly in industries such as manufacturing and construction. Since 1993, most of their drop in membership has been observed in the public sector.

Although public-sector plans represented a small fraction (8%) of all plans in 1997, they covered close to half (47%) of total membership. Given changing demographics and federal and provincial downsizing over the latter part of the 1990s, public-sector plan membership dropped 3% between 1995 and 1997. Private-sector membership rose slightly over the same period.

Turning to contributions, employer-sponsored RPPs remained an essential part of the retirement savings system for Canadians in 1997. That year, Canadians contributed \$63 billion to the three main retirement income programs: RPPs, registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) and the Canada/Quebec Pension Plans (C/QPP). However, the proportions contributed to each program have changed substantially. In 1993, RPP contributions represented

### Note to readers

*Employer-sponsored pension plans, or registered pension plans (RPPs), are established for employees and can be sponsored by an employer or a union. This article is derived from a report entitled Pension plans in Canada, which is based on a census of all registered pension plans in the country. It provides information on the terms and conditions of these plans, membership and contributions made by and on behalf of members.*

Number of RPP members, at January 1



about 40% of total contributions, slightly more than the proportion directed towards RRSPs (37%). By 1997, RRSP contributions represented 44% of the total, whereas RPP contributions were down to 31%.

A table showing the labour force and paid workers covered by an RPP can be viewed under the "Canadian statistics" module on Statistics Canada's Web site ([www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca)). The report, **Pension plans in Canada, January 1, 1998** (74-401-XIB, \$31), is now available. To order tables of key information, custom tabulations, or for further information, contact Client Services (613-951-7355 or 1 888 297-7355; fax: 613-951-3012; [income@statcan.ca](mailto:income@statcan.ca)), Income Statistics Division.

## Food processors adopting advanced technologies

**T**he vast majority (90%) of companies in the food processing industry—the nation's third largest manufacturing industry—used at least 1 of 61 advanced technologies in 1998. About 30% used more than 10, and most reported the biggest impact has been on the quality of their products.

Six in 10 of these companies reported they use these technologies to improve product texture or appearance, prolong shelf life or enhance convenience for consumers. In addition, 70% of companies reported that the new technologies improved food safety, while 45% said they had also improved nutritional levels in their products.

Food processing companies are adopting a wide range of advanced technologies in order to stay competitive. These include

### Note to readers

*The 1998 Survey of Advanced Technology in the Canadian Food Processing Industry had an 84% response rate. It surveyed the use of 61 advanced technologies in nine functional areas: processing, process control, quality control, inventory and distribution, network communications, materials preparation and handling, pre-processing, packaging, and design and engineering.*

deep chilling and advanced filtering technologies for processing; rapid testing techniques and automated laboratory testing for quality control; local and wide area networks for communicating; and advanced materials for packaging.

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### ... Food processors adopting advanced technologies

The food processing industry employs 200,000 persons, or around 1 out of every 10 employees in the entire manufacturing sector. In 1998, the gross domestic product of the food processing industry totalled \$14.5 billion, or 11% of the manufacturing sector's gross domestic product. The industry produces food products ranging from meat and milk to frozen pizzas and highly processed meat products.

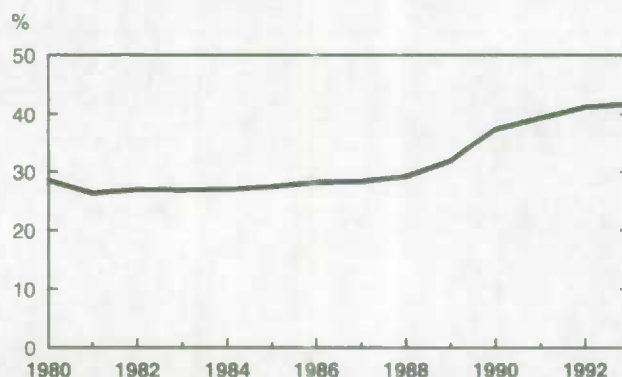
Food processing companies that value quality the highest tend to adopt more advanced technologies. But the search for quality extends beyond the use of new technologies. Often, companies also adopt new specific business practices, primarily those related to food quality and safety in areas from processing to packaging. Four out of 10 companies reported in 1998 that they had solid plans to upgrade their technologies with new, more advanced technologies within three years.

In 1998, foreign-controlled plants led Canadian-owned plants in the use of advanced technologies. The gap was particularly large in network communications and in process-control technologies. About 90% of foreign-owned plants had adopted at least one advanced network communications technology by 1998, compared with 60% of Canadian-owned plants. Similarly, about 85% of foreign-owned companies had adopted process control technologies, compared with about 50% of Canadian-owned firms.

Multi-national companies have been increasing their presence in food processing. In 1995, foreign-controlled plants accounted for only 11% of the total number of companies in this industry, but they accounted for 40% of the total shipments. This has increased from less than 30% in the early 1980s.

Large enterprises (250 or more employees) had much higher adoption rates of new technologies in 1998 than did small ones (10 to 19 employees). This was particularly evident in network communications such as local area networks (90% versus 45%) and in process-control technologies such as programmable logic controllers (85% versus 35%). This is partly because large plants are more likely to do continuous processing operations of higher value-added products.

### Foreign share of shipments in the food processing industry



Technology use differs greatly across the seven industries investigated. Advanced technology use is highest in dairy, fruit and vegetable and in specialised food products (such as frozen pizzas and snack foods). The higher use in these three industries is generally associated with competition levels. The fruit and vegetable industry and the specialised products industries both experience high competition from imported products, while the dairy industry is faced with a competitive environment that has rapidly changed production technology.

Despite its lead in adopting new technology, managers in the dairy industry in 1998 considered it to be lagging behind its American competitors. In fish products, adoption rates were well below those of the dairy industry, yet managers considered the industry to be ahead of its American counterparts. Managers in the meat industry, which was about average in terms of technology use, considered the industry to be behind its U.S. competitors.

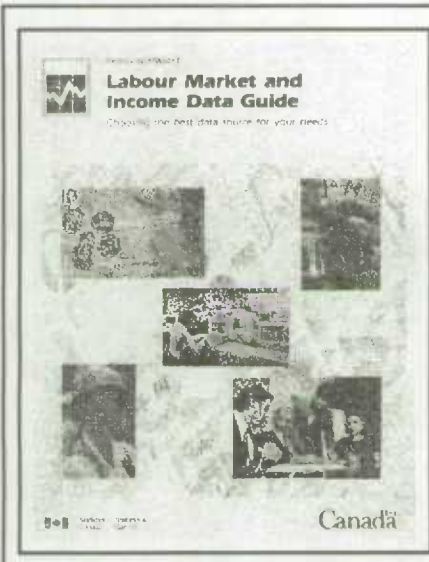
**Advanced technology in the Canadian food processing industry** (paper: 88-518-XPE, \$45; online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 88-518-XIE, \$33) is now available. For further information, contact John Baldwin (613-915-8588) or David Sabourin (613-951-3735), Micro-economics Analysis Division.

## New from Statistics Canada

### Labour market and income data guide December 1999

A new version of this guide is now available in electronic (PDF) format. This reference tool describes all the major Statistics Canada surveys related to labour and income. It includes information on survey coverage, typical uses of the data, related publications and it offers case studies. The guide also provides lists of relevant contact persons, Statistics Canada Regional Reference Centres and depository libraries.

*The Labour market and income data guide (75F0010X1E, free) is now available in PDF format. For more information, contact Henry Pold (613-951-4608; [henry.pold@statcan.ca](mailto:henry.pold@statcan.ca)), Labour and Household Surveys Analysis Division.*



### Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics: The wage gap between men and women 1997

Although this study analyzes a number of factors underlying the male-female wage gap, it focuses on two that previous studies have not explored: work experience and job responsibilities. It finds that about 18% of this wage gap reflects the fact that women generally have less work experience than their male counterparts, supervise other employees less often and are involved in administrative decisions less frequently. Several other factors are also considered, including differences in job tenure and the fact that men are more likely to graduate from programs leading to high-paying jobs such as engineering. However, according to this report, all these other factors combined account for, at most, 30% of the wage gap. Consequently, much of the wage gap still remains a puzzle, leaving at least half of the discrepancy unaccounted for.

*The persistent gap: New evidence on the Canadian gender wage gap (75F0002M1E) is available free at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca). The menu path is "Products and services", "Downloadable research papers", "Income, expenditures, pensions, assets and debts" and then "Income". For further information, contact Client Services (1 888 297-7355 or 613-951-7355; [income@statcan.ca](mailto:income@statcan.ca)), Income Statistics Division.*

### Pension coverage among young and prime-aged workers 1984 to 1994

Previous Canadian studies have shown that real earnings of young men dropped substantially between the beginning of the 1980s and the mid-1990s. Now this study shows that pension coverage of young men has also fallen, suggesting that the drop in their earnings has been accompanied by a decrease in their fringe benefits, as well. It also suggests that, as long as the movement of women toward better jobs is permanent, women who are now aged 35 to 54 should have a greater pension income than those who were the same age 15 years ago.

Moreover, the findings in this study suggest that, unless the growth in group RRSPs completely offsets the decrease in RPP coverage, new groups of young men may have to accept jobs providing lower fringe benefits than those received by previous groups.

*The report titled The evolution of pension coverage of young and prime-aged workers in Canada is now available at no charge at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca). The menu path is "Products and services", "Downloadable research papers", and then "Analytical studies". For further information, contact René Morissette (613-951-3608) or Marie Drolet (613-951-5691), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division.*



## New from Statistics Canada

### Telecommunications statistics Second quarter 1999

The second quarter of 1999 report from the new Quarterly Survey on the Telecommunications Industry in Canada (NAICS 5133) is now available. For the first time, this survey includes the major alternative wireline carriers and the wireless industry. As well, estimated data are now provided for those units not covered in the survey (reseller, satellite and small wireline and wireless service providers).

The publication includes data on operating revenues and expenses, capital expenditures, employment, network infrastructure (access lines and wireless subscribers) and telecommunications traffic.

*The second quarter 1999 issue of Telephone statistics (online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 56-002-XIB, \$21/\$40) is now available. For further information, contact Haig McCarrell (613-951-5948) or Joanne Lambert (613-951-6673), Science, Innovation and Electronic Information Division.*

### Financial and taxation statistics for enterprises 1997

This report provides a comprehensive statistical portrait of the financial performance of business enterprises in Canada between 1993 and 1997. It analyzes 62 industrial groupings on the basis of factors such as total operating revenues, operating profits and return on capital employed. In addition, there are data on corporate income taxes paid to federal, provincial and territorial governments.

For the first time, this publication contains a 10-year time series of the key performance indicators (such as operating revenue, operating profits and return on capital employed) for 63 industrial groupings.

*Financial and taxation statistics for enterprises (61-219-XPB, \$57) will be available shortly. For further information, contact Wai-yong Yong (613-951-0861; fax: 613-951-0318; [yongwai@statcan.ca](mailto:yongwai@statcan.ca)) or Paula Helmer (613-951-9852; fax: 613-951-0318; [helmpau@statcan.ca](mailto:helmpau@statcan.ca)), Industrial Organization and Finance Division.*

### Products shipped by Canadian manufacturers—CD-ROM 1988-1997

The CD-ROM version of *Products shipped by Canadian manufacturers, 1988-1997* is a database and analytical tool that can help you research the value and quantity of goods manufactured in Canada and in each province/territory. It also provides the origins of manufactured goods by SIC (Standard Industrial Classification).

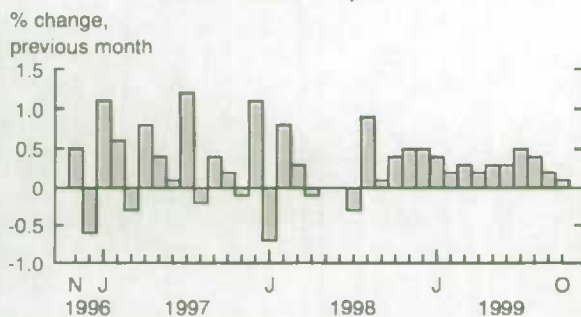
The CD-ROM is user-friendly in that it allows commodity code or word searches, so that you can obtain in seconds the value and quantity of a product shipped. You can also follow the trend of manufactured goods or simply calculate the market share in Canada or a province/territory. In addition, this product permits tracing of any historical changes to commodity codes, and it includes the Standard Classification of Goods and the Standard Industrial Classification.

*The CD-ROM on Products shipped by Canadian manufacturers, 1988-1997 (31-211-XCB, \$430) is now available. For more information, contact Jean-Marie Houle (613-951-9497; fax: 613-951-3522; [manufact@statcan.ca](mailto:manufact@statcan.ca)), Manufacturing, Construction, and Energy Division.*



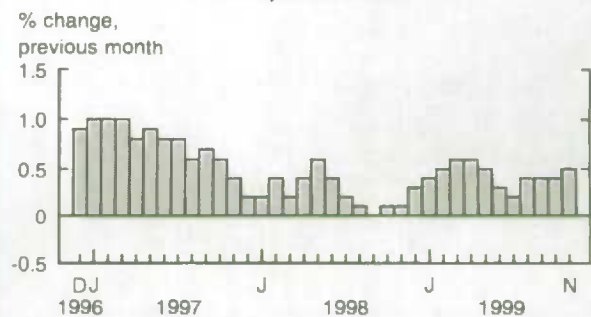
## Current trends

### Gross domestic product



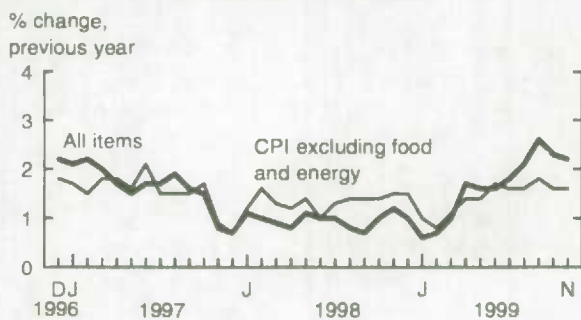
Economic activity continued to advance in October (+0.1%). This was in line with the slower pace set in September, and it extended the expansion to 15 months.

### Composite Index



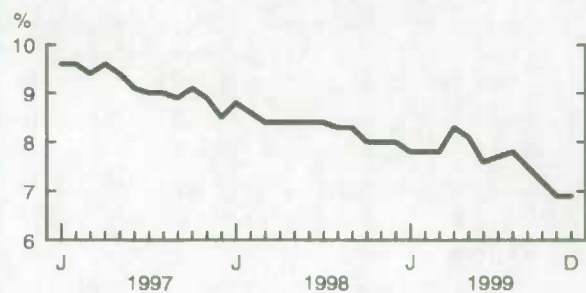
In November, the leading indicator grew by 0.5%, led by financial markets.

### Consumer Price Index



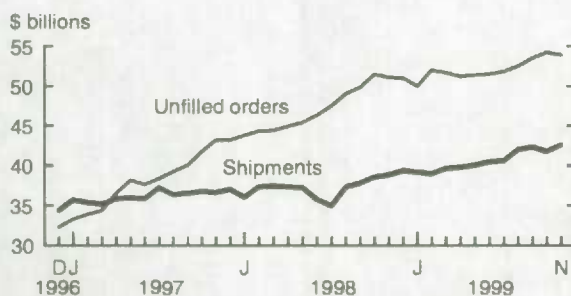
Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.2% higher in November 1999 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.6%.

### Unemployment rate



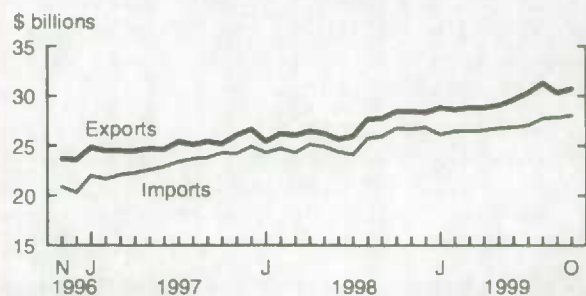
In December, the unemployment rate remained unchanged at 6.9%.

### Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments climbed 1.8% in November to \$42.6 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders slipped 0.4% to \$53.9 billion, the first decline since April 1999.

### Merchandise trade



In October, the value of merchandise exports rose 1.2% from September to \$30.7 billion. Imports increased 0.7% to \$28.0 billion.

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



## Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
<b>GENERAL</b>				
Gross domestic product (\$ billion, 1992)	October	756.2	0.1%	4.2%
Composite Index (1981=100)	November	219.0	0.5%	5.3%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q3 1999	39.8	7.6%	30.5%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 1999	86.0	1.8†	3.6†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	October	21.9	-1.4%	6.5%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	November	1.44	-7.2%	2.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	November*	132.7	3.1%	11.7%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	October	30.9	1.8%	8.8%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	December	14.92	0.3%	2.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	December	6.9	0.0†	-1.1†
Participation rate (%)	December	65.6	0.1†	0.0†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	October	613.00	0.0%	0.9%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	December	164	1.2%	11.6%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	October	30.7	1.2%	7.9%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	October	28.0	0.7%	4.8%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	October	2.7	0.2	1.0
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	November*	42.6	1.8%	9.3%
New orders (\$ billion)	November*	42.3	-0.4%	9.8%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	November*	53.9	-0.4%	5.5%
Inventory/shipments ratio	November*	1.30	-0.01	-0.03
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	November	109.0	-0.1%	2.2%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	November	123.2	0.0%	2.4%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	November	129.1	3.4%	23.2%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	November	101.8	0.3%	1.6%

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

\* new this week

† percentage point

## Infomat

### A weekly review

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