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Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, August 11, 2000

OVERVIEW

- **GDP growth resumes**

  After pausing in April, gross domestic product grew 0.6% in May, as manufacturing output surged. Increased auto production led the surge, as did advances in certain high-tech industries.

- **Unemployment rate rises slightly**

  In July, the overall unemployment rate increased 0.2 percentage points to 6.8%, as employment edged down slightly for a second consecutive month. The job losses mostly occurred among adult women and in three industries: health and social assistance, educational services and manufacturing.

- **Fewer manufacturers expect to increase production**

  The proportion of manufacturers who plan to raise production in the current quarter dropped from 32% in April down to 25% in July. Even so, they do not expect this to lead to reduced employment this quarter.

- **Value of building permits rebounds**

  In June, the value of building permits rebounded from two straight months of decline by climbing 7.2%. The value of permits also recorded its best first-half performance for any year since 1990.

- **Adult contemporary music remains the favourite radio format**

  Adult contemporary music remains the favourite radio format in the country. In the fall of 1999, Canadians listened to the radio for an average of 20.5 hours a week, about the same as in the fall of 1998.

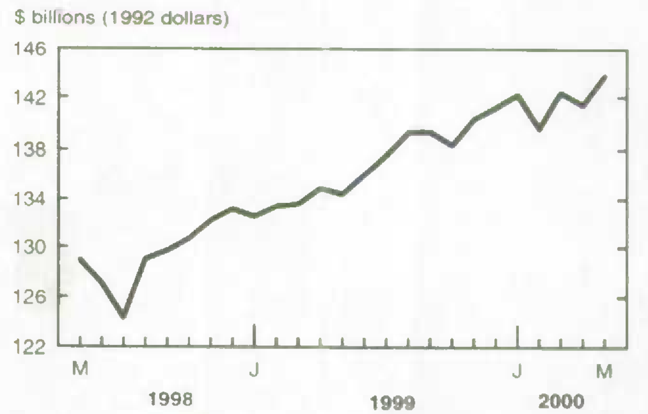
GDP growth resumes

After pausing in April, gross domestic product grew 0.6% in May, as manufacturing output strengthened (+1.7%). Advances in certain high technology industries—electrical and electronic products, telecommunication carriers and computer services—continued to outpace the rest of the economy, collectively rising 2.0% in May. Compared with May 1999, the output of these industries climbed 21.0%, whereas the rest of the economy grew 3.8%.

The strength in May brought manufacturing more in line with the trend observed over the past year and a half. Eighteen of 22 major industry groups, accounting for almost 90% of total manufacturing production, advanced in May. Output declined in the primary metal products and beverage manufacturing industries.

Increased output at auto assembly plants and parts manufacturers led to a 4.1% surge in automotive production. Nevertheless, this industry's output has fallen 5.1% since the previous cyclical peak nine months earlier, amid signs that sales in both Canada and the United States are moderating. Production of electrical and electronic goods advanced 4.2%—the seventh consecutive monthly increase. The industry's recent explosive growth, which has contributed to lifting output almost 35% above May 1999 levels, has been partly fuelled by strong foreign demand.

Manufacturing output



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... GDP growth resumes

Output of machinery advanced 3.3% in May. It was the fifth increase in seven months, building on higher demand. Production in these industries has strengthened after falling off sharply in 1998-99. Furniture producers raised output 4.4%—the fourth increase in five months. Growth during this period has been focussed on business instead of consumer needs. Factories making office desks and chairs registered the fourth increase in six months, a growth spurt that has raised production significantly above May 1999 levels. Makers of household furniture produced less in May than they did in January 2000, the most recent cyclical peak.

Food production rose 1.1% in May, as output of vegetable oils rebounded 11.9% after the resolution of a month-long strike in Manitoba. The output of sawmills was virtually unchanged in May, as exports notched a second decline and Canadian housing starts recorded the largest of three consecutive monthly drops. As well, housing starts in the United States tumbled 12.3% between February and May, indicating a slowdown in a market that bought more than half of Canadian wood product output in 1999.

In other areas of the economy, output also rose significantly for wholesalers (+1.8%), transportation and storage services (+1.4%) and electric utilities (+1.8%). These increases reflected the strength in manufacturing and in exports. However, May was a lacklustre month for retailers, as sales were virtually unchanged.

Note to readers

Monthly gross domestic product (GDP) by industry is valued at 1992 prices. The data are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

Retail sales have not shown any sustained upward momentum so far in 2000. Business services maintained a robust pace (+0.6%), growing for a fourth consecutive month. The latest advance was driven by strong gains at computer consulting, architectural, engineering, scientific, accounting and legal firms.

Construction activity dropped sharply in May, partly owing to a strike by cement truck drivers in the Toronto area. In addition, housing starts have fallen since March, amid reports of skilled labour shortages.

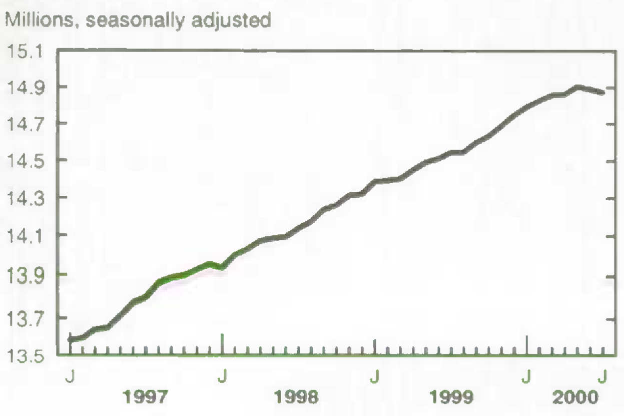
The May 2000 issue of ***Gross domestic product by industry*** *(online at www.statcan.ca: 15-001-XIE, $11/$110) presents the full report. A print-on-demand version is also available at a different price. To order, or to purchase data, contact Yolande Chantigny (1 800 877-4623; imad@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. See also "Current trends" on page 7.*

Unemployment rate rises slightly

Employment edged down slightly (-17,000) in July for a second consecutive month. Since March, employment growth has averaged 4,000 jobs per month, much slower than the prior six months' average growth of 44,000 jobs per month. Full-time employment was little changed in July, whereas part-time employment declined by 23,000 jobs. The unemployment rate increased 0.2 percentage points to 6.8%.

Among adult women, employment declined in July for the first time in more than four years. The number of adult women employed dropped by 29,000, pushing their unemployment rate up 0.3 percentage points to 5.7%. This loss was equally split between full-time and part-time jobs. Among adult men,

Employment



Related information on employment insurance

In May (the latest data available), the estimated number of Canadians (unadjusted for seasonal trends) who received the regular type of employment insurance (EI) benefit dropped 23.3% from April. Regular benefit payments (adjusted for seasonal trends) increased 1.8% between April and May to $594.2 million, while the number of EI claims filed by the jobless increased 5.9% to 215,380 claims.

Statistics Canada and Human Resources Development Canada have discovered that the number of EI beneficiaries for the months from January 1997 to April 2000 has been underestimated. So those data series will be revised. Until then, data on the number of beneficiaries will be aggregated only at the provincial level, be unadjusted for seasonal trends, and will not be available on CANSIM. Readers are cautioned against making any analytical comparisons between these data and any monthly or historical data previously released. For more information, contact Gilles Groleau (613-951-4090; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

employment remained unchanged in July, but still their unemployment rate slipped 0.3 percentage points to 5.5%. Since March, employment among adult men has fallen by 15,000.

As for youths, employment edged up by 12,000 in July following a decline of 22,000 in June. The July increase was all in full-time work. Despite the job gains, a strong rebound in labour force participation pushed the youth unemployment rate up to 12.6% (+0.8 percentage points). The summer job market in July for students aged 15 to 24 was improved compared with a year earlier. The proportion of students with a job this July was 57.0%, up slightly from 55.2% in July 1999.

(continued on page 3)

... Unemployment rate rises slightly

Turning to industries, the major ones affected by job losses in July were health and social assistance (-25,000), educational services (-20,000) and manufacturing (-22,000). In health and social assistance, employment is up by 47,000 since the start of the year despite the weakness in July. In education, employment has declined by 41,000 since the start of the year, following strong growth last year. As for manufacturing, July marked the second consecutive month of job losses following strong growth over the last three years.

The construction industry added 17,000 jobs in July, offsetting the losses of the previous four months. Employment also increased in professional, scientific and technical services (+15,000), continuing a long-term upward trend. Finance, insurance, real estate and leasing saw similar job growth (+14,000).

In Ontario, employment climbed by 29,000 in July. That followed three months of slow growth. Since the start of the year, employment in Ontario has increased 1.8% (+102,000). More people in the labour force in July meant that the province's unemployment rate fell only 0.1 percentage points, however, down to 5.3%.

In British Columbia, by contrast, employment fell by 23,000, wiping out the gains made earlier this year. The unemployment rate rose to 7.1%, an increase of 0.4 percentage points. In Alberta, job losses totalling 14,000 brought employment in the province back to where it began the year. The unemployment rate there rose 0.2 percentage points to 5.2%. In Quebec, employment declined slightly for a second consecutive month (-6,000). Quebec's unemployment rate increased 0.4 percentage points to 8.8%. In Newfoundland, employment fell by 4,000, pushing the unemployment rate up 0.7 percentage points to 16.1%.

Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) has begun using new regions for the Employment Insurance program. The unemployment rates in the newly defined regions are outlined in Table 18 of ***Labour force information, for the week ending July 15, 2000*** *(print: 71-001-PPB, $11/$103; online at www.statcan.ca: 71-001-PIB, $8/$78), which is now available. For more information these changes, consult the HRDC Web site at www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/common/news/insur/00-46.shtml. For further analytical information from the Labour Force Survey, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325) or Martin Tabi (613-951-5269), Labour Statistics Division. See also "Current trends" on page 7.*

Labour Force Survey, July 2000
Seasonally adjusted[1]

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	**15,950.6**	**0.1**	**14,873.5**	**-0.1**	**1,077.1**	**6.8**
Newfoundland	240.2	-1.2	201.5	-2.0	38.7	16.1
Prince Edward Island	72.9	1.0	63.9	0.2	9.0	12.3
Nova Scotia	462.2	0.8	419.7	0.0	42.5	9.2
New Brunswick	371.5	0.7	333.4	0.7	38.2	10.3
Quebec	3,771.8	0.2	3,440.4	-0.2	331.4	8.8
Ontario	6,203.5	0.4	5,876.1	0.5	327.4	5.3
Manitoba	583.9	0.5	554.3	-0.2	29.6	5.1
Saskatchewan	510.9	-0.6	483.8	-0.4	27.1	5.3
Alberta	1,657.1	-0.7	1,571.4	-0.9	85.7	5.2
British Columbia	2,076.5	-0.8	1,929.0	-1.2	147.5	7.1

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

Fewer manufacturers expect to increase production

According to July's Business Conditions Survey, manufacturers are somewhat less optimistic about production prospects than they were in April and January. Even so, they do not expect to reduce employment levels. However, they are concerned about the current levels of orders.

The proportion of manufacturers who expect to lower production in the current quarter is 14%, unchanged from the April survey. However, the proportion who plan to raise production dropped from 32% in April down to 25%. Manufacturers in the transportation equipment industry were the major contributors to the decreased optimism. Meanwhile, the portion expecting to maintain production levels rose from 54% in April to 61% in July. Notably, in the first quarter, the industrial capacity use rate of manufacturers reached 87.9%, a peak not seen in more than 20 years.

Fully 74% of manufacturers expect that their employment levels will be little changed this quarter. In fact, 16% plan to increase the size of their workforce; 10% say they will cut jobs. That is a slightly more optimistic outlook than in April. The July Labour Force Survey indicated employment in manufacturing was 23,500 higher than in July 1999, an increase of 1.1%.

Manufacturers show heightened concern about their current level of orders received. In July, 18% stated orders were rising, compared with 30% in April. Moreover, 11% said orders were declining, compared with 8% in April. Manufacturers in the transportation equipment industry were the major contributors to this level of concern.

(continued on page 4)

... Fewer manufacturers expect to increase production

There is also less satisfaction with the current level of unfilled orders compared with April. The proportion of manufacturers whose backlog of unfilled orders is higher than normal is now 10%, down from 12% in April. Meanwhile, more manufacturers reported that their unfilled orders are declining, 12% compared with 9% in April. The level of unfilled orders did in fact fall during the first five months of this year, from $54.9 billion in December to $52.9 billion in May.

Few manufacturers are reporting production impediments. Notably, 85% report an absence of production impediments, compared with 86% in April's survey. A shortage of skilled labour continued to be a concern for 8% of manufacturers, unchanged from the last survey. As well, most do not believe that the current level of finished-product inventory is a source of concern.

Note to readers

Most responses to the Business Conditions Survey, which is conducted in January, April, July and October, are recorded in the first two weeks of these months. The survey's results are based on replies from about 4,000 manufacturers and are weighted by a manufacturer's shipments or employment. Consequently, larger manufacturers have a larger impact on the results. Except for the data on production difficulties, the data are seasonally adjusted.

For further information, contact Claude Robillard (613-951-3507; robilcg@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.

Value of building permits rebounds

The value of building permits rebounded in June by 7.2%, climbing to $3.1 billion. This rebound, after two straight months of decline, was the result of advances in both the residential and the non-residential sectors.

Housing intentions rose 4.8% to $1.7 billion on the strength of robust gains for multi-family dwellings. Intentions for multi-family dwellings recorded their best monthly performance this year by reaching $541 million, a 21.6% jump from May. As for single-family dwellings, the value of building permits fell 1.4% to $1.2 billion.

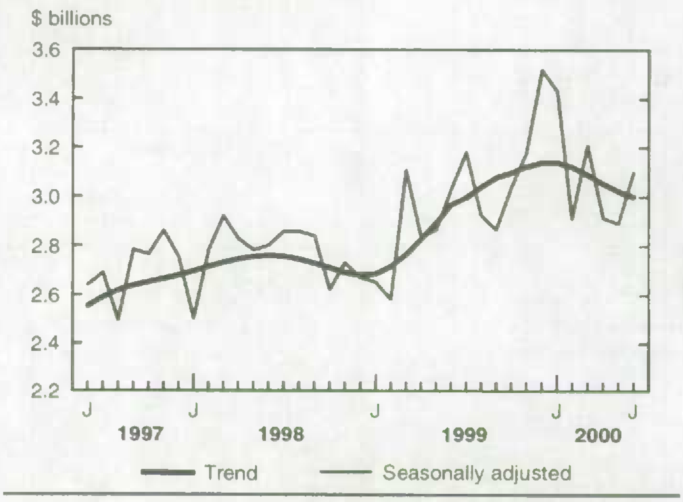
Quebec largely powered the growth (in dollar terms) in residential intentions (+25.5% to $290 million). This was the first monthly increase recorded in Quebec since the beginning of 2000. Notable gains were also seen in Ontario and Alberta. In all three provinces, the gains were fuelled by growing intentions to build multi-family dwellings. By contrast, the largest declines were seen in Nova Scotia and Manitoba, owing to fewer intentions to build single- and multi-family dwellings.

In the non-residential sector, the value of permits in June climbed 10.2% to $1.4 billion. This rebound came on the heels of two straight monthly declines. June's rebound occurred in all three components. Commercial building permits surged 10.9%, following a marked decline in May. June's performance was chiefly the result of a large advance in permits for office buildings. The value of industrial permits increased 13.2%, principally due to permits to build factories and plants. Institutional intentions rose 6.1%, largely because of increased permits in the education and welfare categories.

On a provincial basis, the most significant increases in June (in dollars) were in Ontario, British Columbia and Alberta. Only British Columbia showed advances in all three components. Quebec recorded the largest decline.

Between January and June 2000, municipalities issued $18.5 billion in building permits, up 8.1% compared with the first half of 1999. The residential and the non-residential sectors both contributed to this performance—the best first-half performance of any year since 1990.

Value of building permits



The residential sector's permits totalled $10.2 billion in the first half of 2000, up 7.7% compared with the same period of 1999. Single-family permits led the way with an advance of 10.6%. The multi-family component was virtually unchanged.

Non-residential intentions made a strong showing in first half of this year. The value reached $8.2 billion, an increase of 8.6% over the same period in 1999. The strength was in line with the latest investment intentions for 2000 from the Survey on Public and Private Investment. According to that survey, spending on non-residential construction (including engineering as well as buildings) is expected to surge 9.5% compared with 1999. The first-half increase cut across all components, but was especially notable in commercial permits.

*The June 2000 issue of **Building permits** (online at www.statcan.ca: 64-001-XIB, $19/$186) presents the full report. For general information, contact Vere Clark (613-951-6556; clarver@statcan.ca). For further analytical information, contact Étienne Saint-Pierre (613-951-2025; saineti@statcan.ca), Investment and Capital Stock Division.*

Adult contemporary music remains the favourite radio format

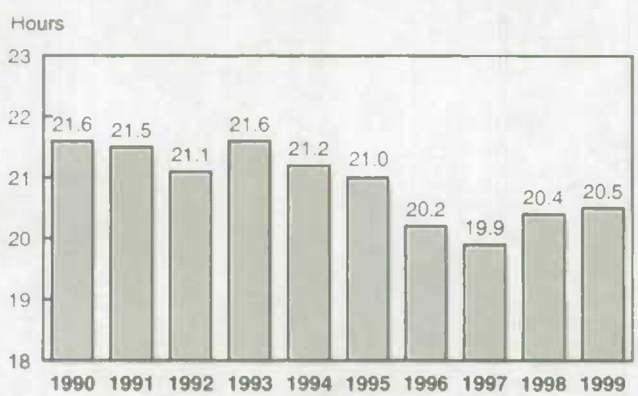
In the fall of 1999, Canadians listened to the radio for an average of 20.5 hours a week, about the same as in the fall of 1998. The adult contemporary music format continues to dominate radio, preferred by 23% of all listeners. Far behind in second position are the country music and gold/oldies/rock formats, each with 12% of the total listening audience. These are followed closely by contemporary music (11%), talk (11%) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation or CBC (10%).

In Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick and British Columbia, adult contemporary music is the first choice of listeners. In all other provinces, country music is the preferred format, especially in Newfoundland, where it is the preference of 55% of the listening audience. Adult contemporary music is especially popular in the 25-to-54 age group.

Teens aged 12 to 17 and adults aged 18 to 24 prefer the contemporary music format. The talk format and the CBC draw very few younger listeners. However, as the age of listeners increases, these formats become popular; they represent the first and second choice, respectively, of seniors 65 and older.

The CBC has a sparse audience (less than 5%) among those who have not completed secondary education, but it attracts 26% of total listeners among those with a university degree. For the country music format, the trend is in the opposite direction.

Average radio listening time



> *Note to readers*
>
> *These data are based on a survey of 83,268 Canadians aged 12 and over. They were asked to fill out a diary-type questionnaire for seven consecutive days within an eight-week period from September 6 to September 26, from October 4 to October 24, and from November 1 to November 14, 1999. Despite a return rate of 44%, modest by Statistics Canada standards, it is in line with broadcasting industry practices for audience measurement. Still, appropriate care in interpretation is recommended.*

In Prince Edward Island, the average weekly radio listening time increased by almost one hour compared with the fall of 1998, to reach the highest listening time in the country (22.1 hours). The lowest listening time was in British Columbia (18.4 hours per week). In 1998, the longest listening times were recorded in Prince Edward Island and Quebec. Previously, Quebec had always recorded the longest listening time.

According to language, however, anglophone Quebecers' listening was the highest in the country at 23.3 hours a week. Their listening exceeded the listening time of francophone Quebecers by two hours and exceeded the average for all Canadians by almost three hours.

Adult men listen to the radio almost as much as adult women (21.3 hours per week vs. 21.6 hours per week). Teenagers' listening time is a little more than half that of adults (11.3 hours per week). This difference is not surprising. Adults have easier access to radio during weekdays (at the office, for example). During the week, one-third of the adults' listening occurs between 10:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., whereas only 9% of teenagers' listening takes place during these hours. On weekends, teenagers substantially increase their listening time during the day (37%) to reach almost the same proportion as that of adults (40%).

Adult radio listening varies significantly according to employment status. The largest proportion of adult listening time is attributed to full-time employees. After 3:00 p.m., adult full-time employees' listening decreases gradually, so that from 7:00 p.m. to midnight adult listening levels are at their lowest level.

For further information, contact Lotfi Chahdi (613-951-3136; fax: 613-951-9040; chahlot@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

New from Statistics Canada

Canada–Mexico–United States merchandise trade reconciliation
1996 to 1997

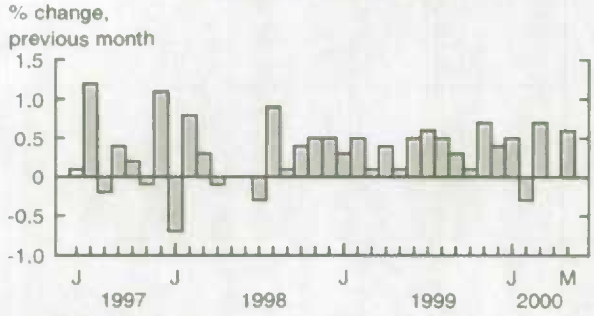
The statistics produced by countries on their merchandise trade with the rest of the world frequently differ from the statistics published by their trading partners. These differences reflect both legitimate conceptual differences between import and export statistics, as well as possible errors. The governments of Canada, Mexico and the United States undertook a reconciliation study to identify and quantify the causes of the differences in trade between the three countries. The results of this study do not constitute revisions to any country's official statistics; however, they do help to understand the trade statistics of the three countries.

Canada and the United States participate in a data exchange, in which the export statistics of each country are derived from the counterpart import data; therefore, there are no unexplained differences in their trade statistics. However, differences in the official trade statistics of Canada and Mexico and of the United States and Mexico are sizeable. The reconciliation study identified indirect trade as the main source of discrepancy between Canada and Mexico in both directions of trade.

The Mexican release, which is now in Spanish only, can be viewed at http://www.inegi.gob.mx/difusion/ingles/portadai.html. The United States release, which is in English only, is located at http://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/www. For more information, or to obtain a detailed Canadian report, contact Marlene Sterparn (613-951-0867; fax 613-951-0117; trade@statcan.ca), International Trade Division.

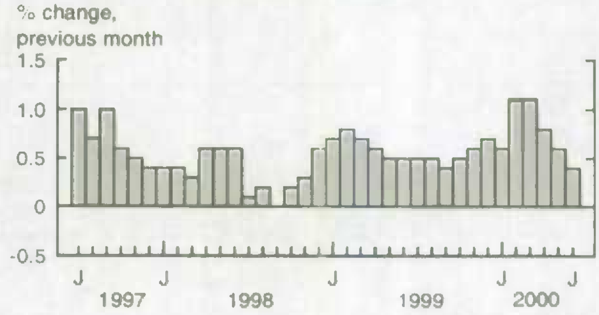
Current trends

Gross domestic product



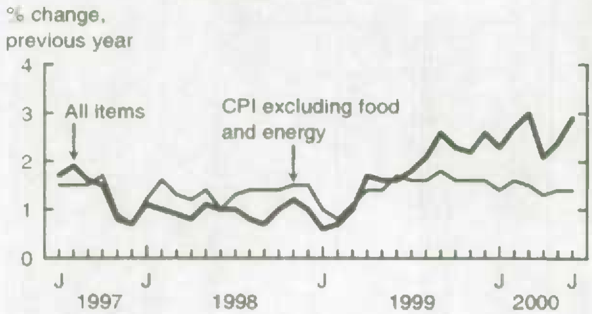
Gross domestic product rose 0.6% in May after pausing in April.

Composite Index



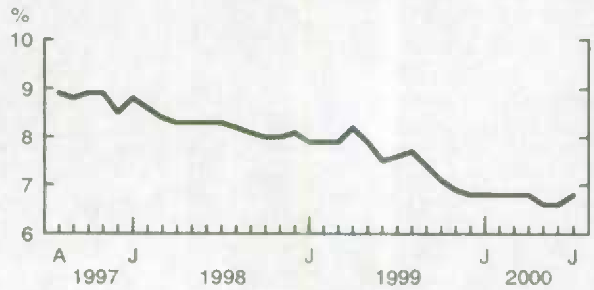
The growth of the leading indicator continued to moderate to 0.4% in June, influenced mostly by the housing component.

Consumer Price Index



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.9% higher in June 2000 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.4%.

Unemployment rate

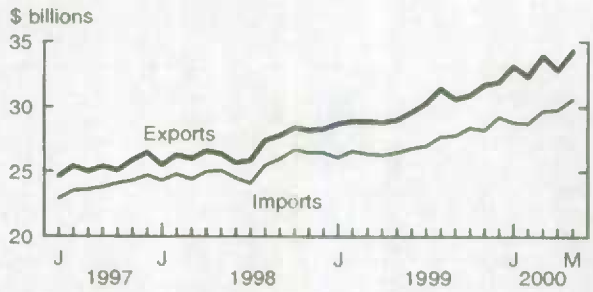


In July, the unemployment rate increased 0.2 percentage points to 6.8%.

Manufacturing

Manufacturers' shipments rebounded 3.4% in May to $44.8 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders decreased 1.3% to $52.9 billion.

Merchandise trade



In May, the value of merchandise exports rebounded 4.6% from April to $34.3 billion. Imports grew 2.4% to $30.6 billion, up for a third consecutive month.

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	779.9	0.6%	4.8%
Composite Index (1992=100)	June	163.0	0.4%	8.1%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q1 2000	53.3	12.3%	37.5%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q1 2000	87.6	1.1†	4.3†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	May	22.7	0.4%	6.2%
Department store sales ($ billions)	June	1.52	1.5%	2.4%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	May	128.9	-2.7%	4.2%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	May	31.9	1.3%	8.5%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	July*	14.87	-0.1%	2.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	July*	6.8	0.2†	-0.8†
Participation rate (%)	July*	65.6	-0.1†	0.0†
Average weekly earnings ($)	May	625.43	0.3%	2.6%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	July	171	1.2%	6.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	May	34.3	4.6%	18.4%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	May	30.6	2.4%	15.3%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	May	3.7	0.8	1.3
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	May	44.8	3.4%	11.9%
New orders ($ billion)	May	44.1	2.0%	9.3%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	May	52.9	-1.3%	2.8%
Inventory/shipments ratio	May	1.31	-0.02	0.00
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	June	113.7	0.6%	2.9%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	June	127.3	0.0%	5.5%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	June	144.8	2.1%	28.3%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	May	103.0	0.3%	2.4%

Note: *All series are seasonally adjusted with the exception of the price indexes.*
* *new this week*
† *percentage point*

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A weekly review

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Products released from August 3 to 9, 2000

Subject area/Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price ($) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Cereals and oilseeds review	May 2000	22-007-XIB	11/112
Cereals and oilseeds review	May 2000	22-007-XPB	15/149
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNTS			
Tables and analytical document: Estimates of labour income, monthly estimates	May 2000	13F0016DDB	250/1,000
Tables and analytical document: Estimates of labour income, monthly estimates	May 2000	13F0016XPB	20/200
INDUSTRY MEASURES AND ANALYSIS			
Gross domestic product by industry	May 2000	15-001-XIE	11/110
INTERNATIONAL TRADE			
Exports by commodity	May 2000	65-004-XMB	37/361
Exports by commodity	May 2000	65-004-XPB	78/773
LABOUR STATISTICS			
Labour force information, week ending July 15	July 2000	71-001-PIB	8/78
Labour force information, week ending July 15	July 2000	71-001-PPB	11/103
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY			
Cement	June 2000	44-001-XIB	5/47
Production and shipments of steel pipe and tubing	June 2000	41-011-XIB	5/47
Steel wire and specified wire products	June 2000	41-006-XIB	5/47
Supply and disposition of crude oil and natural gas	April 2000	26-006-XPB	19/186

Catalogue numbers with an -XIB 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, while -XCB denotes a compact disc.
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