



# Infommat

## A Weekly Review

Friday, November 3, 2000

### OVERVIEW

#### ◆ Energy costs continue to lift industrial and raw material prices

In September, energy costs continued to give upward momentum to the prices manufacturers got for their products and to the prices they paid for their raw materials.

#### ◆ Leading indicator's deceleration ends

The deceleration in the leading indicator that began in April came to an end in September with a 0.6% increase that was led by household spending.

#### ◆ Large retailers' sales rolling along

Large retailers' sales in August were up from a year earlier by 6.7%. Double-digit sales growth occurred for many items and for four major categories.

#### ◆ Canadian investors flocking to foreign stocks and bonds

In August, Canadians remained enthusiastic buyers of foreign securities. The \$39.1 billion that Canadians invested in foreign markets over just the first eight months of this year far exceeded any previous annual total. The vast majority of this investment went into foreign stocks.

#### ◆ Growth of average weekly earnings outpaces inflation

August's annual increase in earnings outpaced the month's annual inflation rate. In August, average weekly earnings were estimated at \$630.37, up 0.6% from July and an increase of 3.0% from August 1999.

#### ◆ Fewer giving to charity, but they are giving much more

Slightly fewer taxfilers reported charitable donations on their 1999 income tax returns, but they gave substantially more.

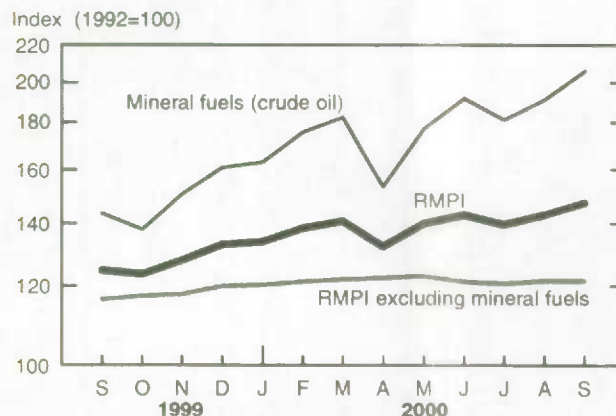
### Energy costs continue to lift industrial and raw material prices

Manufacturers' prices gained 4.0% between September 1999 and September 2000, surpassing August's annual growth rate of 3.9%. Except for a spike in May, the annual increase had been slowing since its peak of 6.1% in February. Rising petroleum and coal product prices accounted for more than half of September's annual increase. Paper and paper products also contributed, whereas lower prices for lumber had a dampening effect.

For raw materials, manufacturers paid 18.1% more in September than they did in September 1999. Once again, mineral fuels were at the forefront, though prices for animal products and non-ferrous metals also increased. The 18.1% was slower than August's rate (+19.3%) and remained well below the peak of 37.3% in February.

On a month-to-month basis, industrial prices rose 0.5% in September after staying stable in August. This rise can be attributed to petroleum and coal product prices. Raw material prices were up 3.0% overall in September, on the strength of crude oil prices. Non-ferrous metal prices were also up, whereas animal product prices fell.

#### Raw materials price index



(continued on page 2)



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### ... Energy costs continue to lift industrial and raw material prices

Looking at the price movers, crude oil prices climbed a further 7.6% from August to September, on concerns that output increases by OPEC members would be insufficient to meet demand. Those fears spilled over to manufacturers' prices, as petroleum and coal product prices surged 7.0%. As well, newsprint prices increased 3.0% from August to September. Ongoing strong demand has been keeping newsprint prices buoyant since April. September's prices were the highest since January 1999.

On the raw material side, copper concentrate prices continued to climb in September (+5.4%) on signs of strong demand, boosted in part by recovering Asian economies. (Prices were similarly robust for manufacturers of primary copper products.) Pork prices remained under pressure in September, dropping 11.4% at the raw material level and 13.5% at the manufacturing level. The downward pressure on manufacturers' pork prices was concentrated in the domestic market. Despite the recent weakness, pork prices remained well above year-earlier levels.

Prices that manufacturers received for finished goods edged up from August (+0.3%), primarily owing to higher prices for petroleum and coal products. In contrast, the autos, truck and other transportation equipment category saw downward price pressure. On an annual basis, prices received for finished goods rose 2.8%, up from August (+2.6%) but still below the peak of 3.8% in June. This upward price pressure was concentrated in petroleum and coal products, autos, trucks and other transportation equipment, meat and beverages.

Intermediate (or input) goods were up 0.8% in price compared with August, boosted by petroleum and coal product prices.

### Industrial product and raw materials price indexes, September 2000

	Index (1992=100)	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
<b>Industrial product price index (IPPI)</b>	<b>128.4</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>4.0</b>
IPPI excluding petroleum and coal products	125.4	0.0	1.9
Intermediate goods	129.9	0.8	4.8
Finished goods	126.1	0.3	2.8
<b>Raw materials price index (RMPI)</b>	<b>149.1</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>18.1</b>
RMPI excluding mineral fuels	122.8	-0.1	4.6
Mineral fuels (crude oil)	206.5	7.3	42.1
Vegetable products	112.2	0.5	0.6
Animals and animal products	115.5	-2.8	5.4
Wood	142.6	0.4	4.8
Ferrous metals	118.0	-0.2	-1.1
Non-ferrous metals	122.5	3.6	6.7
Non-metallic minerals	122.3	0.0	3.4

Weaker meat prices provided most of the downward pressure. In September, producers of input goods received 4.8% more for their products than they did a year earlier. That was up slightly from August's annual rate of 4.7%. Petroleum and coal products and paper and paper products were the primary sources of the higher price level. Falling lumber prices provided some offset.

*The September 2000 issue of **Industry price indexes** (62-011-XPB, \$22/\$217) will be available at the end of the month. For further information, contact Client Services (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-1539; [infounit@statcan.ca](mailto:infounit@statcan.ca)). Prices Division.*

### Leading indicator's deceleration ends

The deceleration in the leading indicator that began in April came to an end in September with a 0.6% increase, up from a revised gain of 0.5% in August. Led by household spending, 7 of the Composite Index's 10 components advanced, 1 more than in August.

Household demand resumed its upswing, in line with labour market conditions, which improved late in the summer. The housing index posted its first gain in three months, as starts in Western Canada pulled out of their summer doldrums; the West also led in job growth. Outlays for durable goods jumped 1.3%, after a large gain in labour income in the second quarter.

Firms continued to contribute to overall growth. Their new orders remained on a strong upward trend, led again by high-tech products. Employment in business services continued to dominate overall growth in services, which accelerated again in September to record its largest gain in three years.

In the United States, the leading indicator continued to retreat. The drop that began with rising short-term interest rates spread to the labour market.

*The October 2000 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227) is now available. For further information, contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. See also "Current trends" on page 7.*



## Large retailers' sales rolling along

**L**arge retailers' sales in August totalled \$6.3 billion, up from a year earlier by 6.7%. Sporting and leisure goods recorded the largest year-over-year sales increase in August. Strong sales growth occurred for all types of sporting goods, ranging from a 13.0% sales gain for team equipment and supplies to a 64.3% sales jump for exercise and fitness equipment. August sales of leisure goods (includes items such as toys, CDs, books, magazines and craft supplies) advanced 9.8%.

Sales of hardware, lawn and garden products posted August's second best growth. Large retailers' sales of lawn and garden products alone climbed 20.9%, benefiting from robust sales of lawn and garden furniture (+38.5%), nursery stock and cut flowers (+22.5%) and outdoor power equipment (+17.1%). The large retailers' hardware sales were up 9.8%.

### Large retailers' sales

Not seasonally adjusted

	August 1999	August 2000	August 1999 to August 2000
	\$ millions		% change
<b>All commodities</b>	<b>5,891</b>	<b>6,285</b>	<b>6.7</b>
Food and beverages	1,964	2,127	8.3
Clothing, footwear and accessories	1,294	1,229	-5.1
Home furnishings and electronics	831	893	7.5
Health and personal care products	437	494	13.1
Housewares	287	307	7.1
Sporting and leisure goods	243	283	16.7
Hardware, lawn and garden products	199	228	14.4
All other goods and services	636	724	13.8

### Note to readers

*The composition of the surveyed group of large retailers changed in 1999. This especially affects the comparisons of sales in the food sector. All comparisons in this article are with the year-earlier period, and all data are unadjusted for seasonal factors.*

In the all other goods and services category, though gasoline prices were down 3.5% from July 2000, prices at the pump remained well above the August 1999 level and continued to be the major contributor to the overall sales increase in this category. Also, significant sales increases were posted for pet food and supplies (+20.4%), services (+15.3%) and stationery, office supplies, cards and gift wrap (+14.6%).

Health and personal care products also recorded healthy sales growth at the large retailers, as sales of prescription and over-the-counter drugs continued to advance briskly (+19.3%). As well, sales of personal care products rose 8.2%.

In home furnishings and electronics, sales were buoyed by home electronics (+13.8%), especially telephones and other home office electronics (+31.8%). Furniture sales were up 6.0%, while appliance sales advanced more slowly, at 4.8%. Household furnishings posted a weaker 1.1% increase.

Consumers spent less on clothing, footwear and accessories at the large retailers in August. Except for infant and children's clothing/accessories (unchanged), sales were down for all major components in the category. August was the fourth month since April where sales of clothing, footwear and accessories declined year-over-year.

To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (613-951-3549 or 1 877 421-3067; [retailinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:retailinfo@statcan.ca)). For further analytical information, contact Catherine Draper (613-951-0669; [drapcat@statcan.ca](mailto:drapcat@statcan.ca)), Distributive Trades Division.

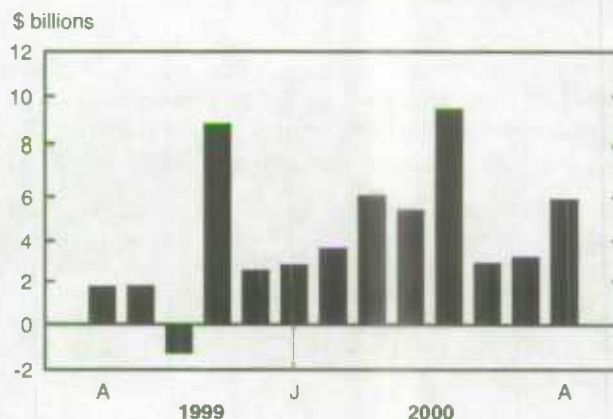
## Canadian investors flocking to foreign stocks and bonds

**I**n August, Canadians remained enthusiastic buyers of foreign securities, adding a further \$5.9 billion to their holdings. At the same time, foreign buyers returned to Canadian securities with a large investment in Canadian stocks. The \$39.1 billion that Canadians invested in foreign markets over just the first eight months of 2000 far exceeded any previous annual total. The vast majority of this investment went into foreign stocks.

Canadian investors continued to be enthusiastic buyers of foreign stocks in August (+\$3.2 billion), bringing their investment in the first eight months of 2000 to \$34.5 billion. In June and July, the largest share of their buying was directed to U.S. equities. However, for the first eight months of the year, more than 40% was poured into equities overseas.

As for foreign bonds, Canadian investors made a substantial investment in August (+\$2.7 billion), mainly U.S. treasuries. Moreover, August's investment exceeded the amount invested in

### Canadians' investment in foreign securities<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Includes bonds and stocks only.

(continued on page 4)

### ... Canadian investors flocking to foreign stocks and bonds

the first seven months of this year, bringing the total to \$4.6 billion, double the total for all of last year.

Meanwhile, foreign investors added to their holdings of Canadian equities in August (+\$4.2 billion). In the first eight months of this year, their holdings grew by an unprecedented \$40 billion. August's foreign investment in Canadian equities, which was a full \$2 billion higher than July's, stemmed primarily from foreign buying of existing shares in the technology sector. Once again, Americans continued to account for all the foreign buying of Canadian shares.

Foreign investors' holdings of Canadian bonds shrank further in August (-\$0.9 billion), so that the year-to-date decline totalled \$14 billion. The selling hit existing federal bonds that trade in the secondary market, as new issues exceeded retirements for the first time in seven months. European and Asian investors accounted for all the selling, while American investors added to their holdings.

In the money markets, foreign investors were sellers of Canadian paper for a fourth consecutive month. That brought the foreign sales since May to \$4.7 billion, completely erasing the accumulation that took place in the first four months of the year. The August selling came solely from Americans and was concentrated in federal treasury bills.

### Related market information

The interest rate differential between Canada and the United States on short-term government paper rose 15 basis points to 55 points by the end of August, favouring investment in the United States. This occurred as a result of a rise in U.S. rates relative to Canadian rates, which were virtually unchanged in August. For long-term government bonds, the differential also favoured investment in the United States, but it narrowed marginally to the 20-basis-points range.

The TSE 300 continued to climb in August (+8.1%), gaining a full two percentage points more than the Standard & Poor's 500 in the United States. Over June, July and August combined, the TSE 300 climbed 21.6%, compared with an increase of 6.8% for the Standard & Poor's 500.

The Canadian dollar gained nearly three-quarters of a cent against the U.S. dollar in August, closing the month at 67.96 U.S. cents. This was the highest close since March.

The August 2000 issue of *Canada's international transactions in securities* (print: 67-002-XPB, \$18/\$176; online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 67-002-XIB, \$14/\$132) presents the full report. For further information, contact Don Granger (613-951-1864), Balance of Payments and Financial Flows Division.

## Growth of average weekly earnings outpaces inflation

In August, average weekly earnings for all employees were estimated at \$630.37, up \$3.85 or 0.6% from July and an increase of \$18.57 or 3.0% from August 1999. August's annual increase in earnings outpaced the month's annual inflation rate of 2.5%, as measured by the Consumer Price Index.

By industry, the annual increases in average weekly earnings ranged from 0.1% in retail trade to 5.1% in business services and 5.6% in accommodation, food and beverage services. Salaried employees saw their strongest earnings gain in the past 12 months (+5.1%).

For hourly employees, the average hourly wage in August was \$15.88, up from a year earlier by 3.3%. Their average weekly hours were also up, increasing from July by 0.1 hours to 31.2. Average overtime hours were unchanged.

Payroll employment increased substantially from July to August (+41,900), following three months of more modest growth. By industry, the largest payroll employment growth occurred in business services, wholesale trade and education. The increase was seen in all provinces and territories except Prince Edward Island (-1.9%). The employment gains were largest in British Columbia and Alberta.

### Average weekly earnings, all industries, August 2000 Seasonally adjusted

	\$	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
<b>All industries</b>	<b>630.37</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>3.0</b>
Logging and forestry	824.76	0.4	4.0
Mining, quarrying and oil wells	1,174.72	-0.2	4.0
Manufacturing	791.17	1.2	3.6
Construction	726.98	1.2	3.8
Transportation and storage	745.85	0.0	1.4
Communications and other utilities	820.67	0.1	0.4
Wholesale trade	666.37	0.3	0.3
Retail trade	373.50	1.7	0.1
Finance and insurance	832.10	0.6	2.9
Real estate and insurance agencies	658.93	-0.5	3.4
Business services	737.34	1.3	5.1
Education-related services	668.58	0.1	2.8
Health and social services	544.01	0.3	3.5
Accommodation, food and beverage	244.06	0.8	5.6
Public administration	765.79	0.1	3.2
Miscellaneous services	424.60	0.1	3.1

The August 2000 issue of *Employment, earnings and hours* (72-002-XPB, \$32/\$320) presents the month's industry data and other labour market indicators in detail. Custom tabulations of the data are available on demand. For further information, contact Robert Frindt (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; [labour@statcan.ca](mailto:labour@statcan.ca)), Labour Statistics Division.



## Fewer giving to charity, but they are giving much more

**L**ast year, about 5,394,000 people reported making charitable donations, down slightly from 5,396,000 in 1998. However, the amount of donations reached \$4.8 billion, up 2.7% compared with 1998, after adjusting for inflation. Donations have increased every year since 1991.

Ontario taxfilers gave just under \$2.4 billion, accounting for 49% of last year's total. Ontario was home to 37% of all taxfilers. However, the highest median donations were in Prince Edward Island and Nunavut, each with \$290. This was a considerable jump for Nunavut, where the median was \$264 in 1998. Newfoundland followed closely behind at \$280. Nationally, the median donation was \$180, compared with \$173 in 1998.

In general, people aged 65 or over gave the most. On average, they reported \$1,200 in charitable donations last year. Taxfilers aged 55 to 64 reported the next highest donations, averaging \$1,000.

In 1999, 26% of all taxfilers reported charitable donations. In Manitoba, 30% of taxfilers reported charitable donations—the highest proportion among the provinces and territories. Marginal changes in the number of donors ranged from a 1.7% decline in Prince Edward Island to a 2.0% increase in Nunavut.

The amount donated fell in Prince Edward Island, Quebec, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. Among the provinces, British

### Note to readers

The databank on charitable donors provides information on taxfilers who claimed a tax credit for charitable donations on their income tax return in 1999. Only amounts given to charities and approved organizations for which official tax receipts were provided can be deducted. It is possible to carry donations forward for up to five years after the year in which they were made. Therefore, donations reported and claimed for the 1999 tax year can include donations made in any of the five previous years. According to tax laws, taxfilers are permitted to claim both their donations and those made by their spouses to get better tax benefits. Consequently, the number of persons who made charitable donations may be higher than the number of persons who actually claimed tax credits.

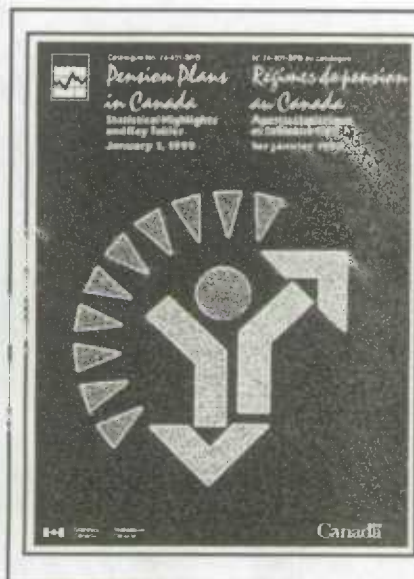
Columbia and Ontario recorded the highest annual growth in donations (+4.0%). In Nunavut, the amount donated to charity jumped 18%.

The databank for **Charitable donors** (13C0014, price varies) is now available for Canada, the provinces/territories, cities, towns, census metropolitan areas, census divisions, as well as forward sortation areas (the first three characters of the postal code) and letter carrier routes. To order, or for further information, contact Client Services (613-951-9720; fax: 613-951-4745; [saadinfo@statcan.ca](mailto:saadinfo@statcan.ca)), Small Area and Administrative Data Division.

### Charitable donations, 1999

	Donors		Donations			
	Number	% change, previous year	Amount (\$'000)	% change, previous year (adjusted)	Median (\$)	All taxfilers (%)
<b>Canada</b>	<b>5,394,070</b>	<b>0.05</b>	<b>4,847,682</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Newfoundland	81,300	-0.5	53,002	2.6	280	1.8
Prince Edward Island	26,070	-1.7	19,134	-1.5	290	0.5
Nova Scotia	158,840	0.0	117,057	0.0	240	3.1
New Brunswick	125,420	0.0	105,233	1.9	260	2.6
Quebec	1,202,680	0.0	504,742	-2.8	100	25.1
Ontario	2,215,400	0.2	2,363,527	4.0	220	37.4
Manitoba	230,440	-1.3	215,680	2.0	230	3.8
Saskatchewan	188,130	-1.1	167,055	-2.3	250	3.3
Alberta	515,090	-0.5	578,555	3.5	220	9.5
British Columbia	641,790	0.2	716,466	4.0	220	12.8
Yukon	3,500	-1.4	2,751	-3.7	170	0.1
Northwest Territories	3,930	0.5	3,176	5.5	150	0.1
Nunavut	1,480	2.0	1,303	18.1	290	0.1

## New from Statistics Canada



### **Pension plans in Canada: statistical highlights and key tables** January 1, 1999

*Pension plans in Canada: statistical highlights and key tables* presents up-to-date information on the terms, conditions and membership of all employer-sponsored registered pension plans (RPPs) in Canada. Topics include province of employment, coverage, size and type of plan, differences between public- and private-sector plans, contributory and non-contributory plans, and employee and employer contributions.

This report, which is a supplement to *Pension plans in Canada* (74-401-XIB; 74-401-XPB), provides analysis and key tables on RPPs. It also summarizes the provincial legislation that governs pension plans and informs about the role of RPPs in Canada's retirement savings programs.

*Pension plans in Canada: statistical highlights and key tables* (online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 74-401-SIB, \$30; print: 74-401-SPB, \$40) is now available. For more information, contact Client Services (1 888 297-7355; 613-951-7355; fax 613-951-3012; [income@statcan.ca](mailto:income@statcan.ca)), Income Statistics Division.

### **Criminal prosecutions resources, expenditures and personnel** 1998/99

According to this new report, the cost of prosecuting criminals in the various levels of courts across Canada increased in 1998/99 compared with both 1994/95 and 1996/97. This report presents detailed information on the human resources and costs associated with delivering criminal prosecution services in Canada. It includes data for all the provinces as well as Justice Canada, which is responsible for prosecution services in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories, as well as for prosecutions under federal statutes.

*Criminal prosecutions resources, expenditures and personnel, 1998/99* (online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 85-402-XIE, \$23) is now available. For more information, contact Information and Client Services (1 800 387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

### **Services indicators** Second quarter 2000

Output in the service sector grew at a healthy rate in the second quarter. The latest *Services indicators* reviews and examines the key indicators and trends.

"An updated look at the computer services industry" is the feature article in this quarter's issue. It looks at differences between small and large firms in the industry, regional differences, details on the industry's cost structure, data on various business activities, and which industries are key clients for computer services firms.

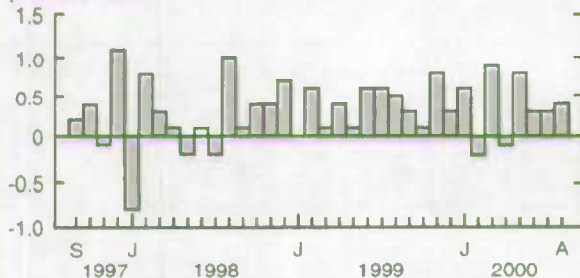
The second quarter 2000 edition of *Services indicators* (online at [www.statcan.ca](http://www.statcan.ca): 63-016-XIB, \$26/\$87; print: 63-016-XPB, \$35/\$116) is now available. For more information about the feature article, contact Jamie Carson (613-951-5663; [jamie.carson@statcan.ca](mailto:jamie.carson@statcan.ca)). For further information about the publication, contact Don Little (613-951-6739; [littidon@statcan.ca](mailto:littidon@statcan.ca)), Service Industries Division.



## Current trends

### Gross domestic product

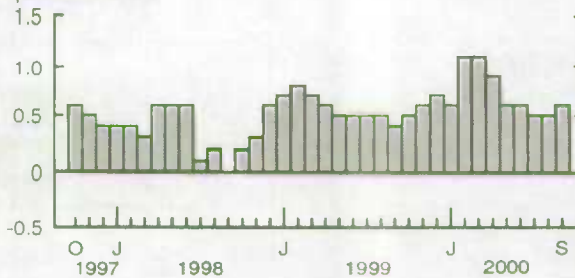
% change,  
previous month



The economy continued on a steady course in August, as gross domestic product rose 0.4%.

### Composite Index

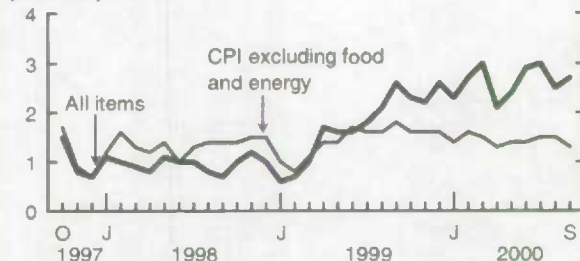
% change,  
previous month



The deceleration in the leading indicator that began in April came to an end in September with a 0.6% advance.

### Consumer Price Index

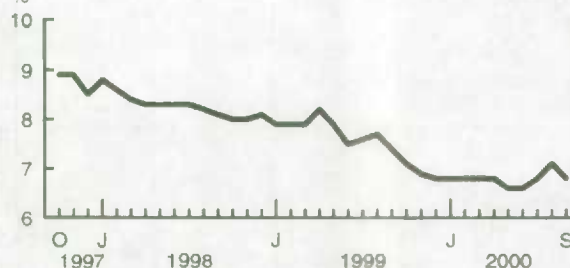
% change,  
previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.7% higher in September 2000 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.3%.

### Unemployment rate

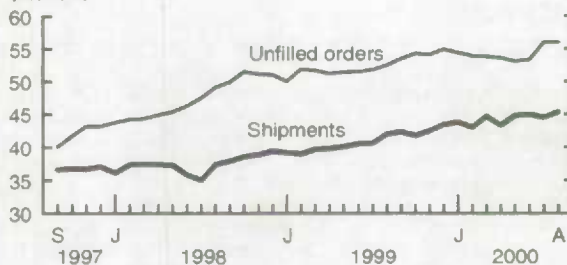
%



With September's gain in employment and drop in unemployment, the unemployment rate declined 0.3 percentage points to 6.8%.

### Manufacturing

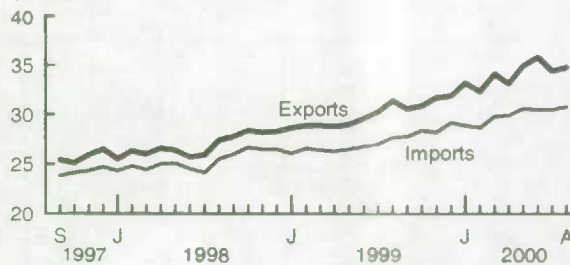
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments rose 2.0% in August to \$45.4 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders remained stable at \$56.0 billion.

### Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In August, the value of merchandise exports rebounded 1.0% from July to \$34.8 billion. Imports increased 0.8% to \$30.8 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)	August*	792.6	0.4%	4.4%
Composite Index (1992=100)	September	166.0	0.6%	8.5%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billion)	Q2 2000	51.9	1.7%	21.6%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q2 2000	87.9	0.4†	4.1†
<b>DOMESTIC DEMAND</b>				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	August	23.4	0.1%	5.7%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	August	1.51	-3.8%	-4.4%
New motor vehicle sales (thousand of units)	August	139.3	5.1%	6.1%
Wholesale trade (\$ billion)	August	32.0	-0.8%	5.6%
<b>LABOUR</b>				
Employment (millions)	September	14.96	0.4%	2.5%
Unemployment rate (%)	September	6.8	-0.3†	-0.6†
Participation rate (%)	September	65.9	0.0†	0.3†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	August	630.37	0.6%	3.0%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	October*	178	2.3%	8.5%
<b>INTERNATIONAL TRADE</b>				
Merchandise exports (\$ billion)	August	34.8	1.0%	10.7%
Merchandise imports (\$ billion)	August	30.8	0.8%	11.3%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billion)	August	4.0	0.1	0.2
<b>MANUFACTURING</b>				
Shipments (\$ billion)	August	45.4	2.0%	8.0%
New orders (\$ billion)	August	45.4	-3.6%	6.2%
Unfilled orders (\$ billion)	August	56.0	0.0%	6.6%
Inventory/shipments ratio	August	1.32	-0.01	0.05
<b>PRICES</b>				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	September	114.4	0.4%	2.7%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	September	128.4	0.5%	4.0%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	September	149.1	3.0%	18.1%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	August	103.5	0.3%	2.4%

*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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