



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, November 10, 2000

OVERVIEW

◆ Economy continues on steady course

After advancing in both June and July, gross domestic product rose 0.4% in August. A rise in manufacturing output, especially in electrical and electronic products, accounted for about two-fifths of the economy's overall advance.

◆ GDP grew in all provinces and territories last year

Gross domestic product advanced in all provinces and territories in 1999. The fastest growth rates were in Ontario and Newfoundland. Nova Scotia's surpassed the national average of 4.5%, while Quebec turned in its best performance in five years.

◆ Manufacturers remain positive about prospects

Manufacturers' production and employment prospects for the fourth quarter remain positive. However, a growing number of manufacturers are concerned about their current level of orders.

◆ Registered pension plan coverage declines

Employer-sponsored registered pension plans remain an integral part of the retirement saving system for Canadians, although their coverage declined from 45% in 1992 to 41% at the end of 1998.

◆ RRSP contributions and number of contributors: both make up lost ground

After falling in 1998 for the first time since 1991, RRSP contributions rebounded in 1999 to their second highest level ever and a record number of taxfilers contributed to an RRSP.

◆ More full-time jobs, fewer part-time jobs

Employment rose by an estimated 20,000 in October, with an increase in full-time employment and a decrease in part-time employment. The unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage point to 6.9%.

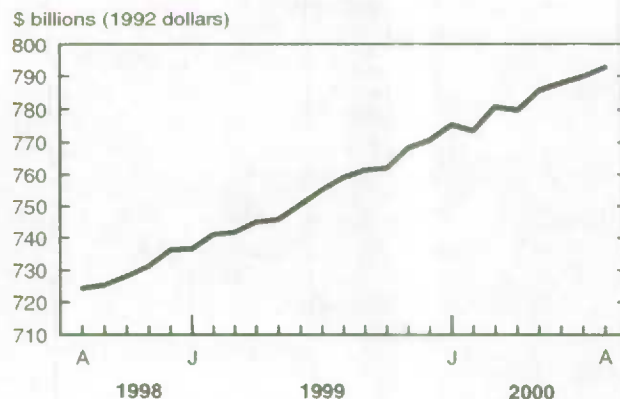
Economy continues on steady course

The economy continued on a steady course in August, as gross domestic product (GDP) rose 0.4% after advancing 0.3% in both June and July.

Manufacturing output, buttressed by another solid increase in electrical and electronic goods production (+4.0%), rose 0.8%, accounting for about two-fifths of the economy's overall advance. Leading the charge were makers of telecommunications equipment, followed by manufacturers of electronic parts and components. However, production in the computers and peripherals industry fell back after a sharp rise in July.

The electrical and electronic products industry has been garnering an increasingly important share of overall manufacturing production: it accounted for 13.2% of total factory output in August, compared with 9.9% in August 1999 and 7.5% throughout 1996. In addition, it has driven most of the growth in manufacturing output during the last three quarters. The telecommunications equipment and computers and peripherals sub-industries, which have expanded 57.3% and 67.2% respectively since August 1999, together accounted for about two-thirds of the growth in electrical and electronic products manufacturing.

Gross domestic product at factor cost



(continued on page 2)



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Canada

... Economy continues on steady course

Makers of automotive products raised their output for a second straight month, reflecting an upward sales trend for cars and trucks in both Canada and the United States. Producers of fabricated metal products raised their output by 1.1%. Manufacturers of scientific equipment also had a good month, following the general trend toward strong demand for leading-edge goods.

Output of sawmills edged up a slight 0.6% in August. The increase followed four months of declines. Lumber exports fell in five of the seven months up to the end of August, reflecting the general slowdown in home-building in the United States during this time. Pulp and paper mills saw record production for a second month. In contrast, output in the printing and publishing industries fell 2.4%.

Activity in the finance industries rose 1.3% in August, bolstered by a surge in stock market-related activity. Banks saw substantially increased activity, while investment and securities dealers were buoyed by a surge in new bond issues and heavy stock trading. Also, mutual fund sales advanced significantly after several lacklustre months. Business services advanced 0.8%; about half of the growth originated in computer consulting services.

On the other hand, retail sales levelled off in August (+0.1%), after three consecutive months of growth. A modest gain at auto dealers offset a sharp decline in department store sales. Wholesaling activity fell in August (-0.7%), for the first time in four months. The bulk of this decline was accounted for by

Note to readers

The gross domestic product of an industry is the value added by labour and capital in transforming inputs purchased from other producers into outputs. Monthly gross domestic product by industry is valued at 1992 prices. The estimates presented here are seasonally adjusted at annual rates.

distributors of computers and software, whose receipts dropped for a second straight month.

Total mining output slipped for a third consecutive month in August (-1.0%). With crude oil and natural gas prices at high levels, exploration was hampered by equipment and personnel shortages as well as poor weather.

Construction activity increased for a third straight month. However, residential building activity remained below its most recent peak, reached in April. Output in the logging industry, where a strike in British Columbia by 10,000 forestry workers had constrained output in June and July, fell again in August.

*The August 2000 issue of **Gross domestic product by industry** (15-001-XIE, \$11/\$110) is now available. A print-on-demand version is also available. To purchase data, contact Yolande Chantigny (1-800-877-4623; imad@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Richard Evans (613-951-9145; evanric@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

GDP grew in all provinces and territories last year

Gross domestic product (GDP) advanced in all provinces and territories in 1999. The fastest growth rates were in Ontario and Newfoundland. Nova Scotia's surpassed the national average of 4.5%, while Quebec turned in its best performance in five years.

Several trends dominated Canada's economic landscape last year. Commodity prices stabilized, after falling precipitously in 1998. Investment to increase plant capacity wound down, while Y2K- and Internet-related demand for computers and telecommunications equipment continued unabated. Computer-related services also flourished. A strong U.S. economy fuelled rapid export growth, particularly for manufactured goods. The year marked the end of the war on government deficits. Surpluses burgeoned, particularly at the provincial level, and governments loosened spending after several years of restraint.

Newfoundland continued to reap benefits from an emerging oil sector. The province's GDP advanced a robust 6.0% on the strength of soaring oil production, exploration and investment in a second offshore drilling platform.

In the Maritimes, Prince Edward Island enjoyed higher housing investment stimulated by population growth, while major construction projects boosted growth in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Nova Scotia's GDP accelerated after two years of moderate growth to a healthy 5.2% increase. Manufacturing output there shot up thanks to a large contract to build railway cars, the re-opening of a shipyard and sharply higher demand for newsprint on export markets. Boosted by energy-related projects, business investment in non-residential construction climbed nearly 30%.

Note to readers

In this article, all references to production (output) and to expenditure are at constant prices; all references to income are in current prices. Separate estimates for the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are available for the first time for the year 1999. Although the territories were officially divided on April 1, 1999, the data represent the full calendar year. Because prior data are unavailable, growth rates for the two separate territories are not possible for 1999.

In Quebec (+4.7%), three industries shared the spotlight. Aircraft production took off as the demand for regional jets continued to grow. Telecommunications equipment makers and carriers also posted remarkable advances, responding to soaring demand related to the Internet and cellular phones. Computer manufacturers hiked production as Y2K approached. Corporate profits climbed 18.0% and business investment in machinery and equipment advanced rapidly. The province's annual unemployment rate fell to 9.3%—its lowest level in more than 20 years. Labour income rose steadily and consumer spending on durables posted a healthy advance.

Ontario's GDP posted a robust 6.1% gain, surpassing the national average on the strength of its booming manufacturers. Exports of autos and parts soared more than 20%. Exports of computers and other electronic equipment were also a significant source of strength. Corporate profits climbed in tandem and business investment in machinery and equipment rose a Y2K-induced 14.1%. Consumer spending grew 4.2%, stimulated by solid personal income gains. The housing market took off; investment in residential housing climbed nearly 15% after a flat 1998.

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... GDP grew in all provinces and territories last year

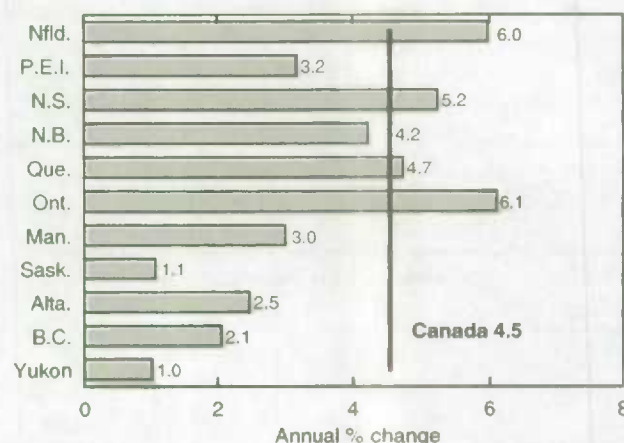
Manitoba's GDP grew 3.0%, an acceleration from 1998 but still shy of the national average. Manufacturers of aircraft and parts hiked production 11.7% to satisfy export demand. Output of service industries also advanced solidly, boosted by the Pan American Games, held in Winnipeg during the summer. Agriculture suffered from heavy rains in the spring; declining harvests of grains and oilseeds, coupled with low world prices, pulled down farm incomes in the province.

The rate of economic growth in Saskatchewan continued to slow (+1.1%). By the end of 1999, oil prices had more than doubled, and the value of exports of crude oil soared nearly 50%, even though production and exports declined in volume terms. Drilling activity remained low. Corporate profits finished the year 27.1% higher and investment in plant and equipment picked up after substantial declines in 1998. In agriculture, harvests of wheat, canola, flaxseed and barley all increased, but poor prices held down farm incomes for a third straight year. Stagnant population growth went hand in hand with moderate labour income gains.

Alberta's GDP grew a modest 2.5%, as production stalled in the oilpatch. However, by the end of 1999, profits in the oil and gas industry swelled to record highs. Exports of crude oil were down slightly in volume terms, but their value increased more than 50%. Despite a wet and cool summer, agricultural production jumped 8.4%. World prices for most grains remained at historic lows, however. Capital investment by governments surged. Personal income increased 5.3%, and consumer spending grew at a healthy pace, stimulated by population growth.

British Columbia's growth improved from 1998's stagnant performance, but remained well short of the national average. Strong U.S. demand and a recovery from the Asian economic crisis spurred exports of lumber, wood pulp and newsprint. Manufacturers of computers and other electronic products benefited from Y2K-related strong demand south of the border.

Gross domestic product at 1992 prices, 1999



The territories continued to suffer because of low prices for metals. Mining output continued to tumble in the Yukon. However, diamond production gave the Northwest Territories a boost. The new territory of Nunavut benefited from construction related to the establishment of public services.

Provincial economic accounts, annual estimates (diskette: 13-213-XDB, \$80; print: 13-213-PPB, \$50) is now available. To order, contact Client Services (613-951-3810; lead-info-dcrd@statcan.ca), Income and Expenditure Accounts Division. **Provincial gross domestic product at factor cost by industry, 1984-1999** (online: 15-203-X1B, \$39) is also now available. To order provincial data on gross domestic product by industry at factor cost, contact Yolande Chantigny (613-951-9163; chanyon@statcan.ca), Industry Measures and Analysis Division. For further analytical information, contact Andrée Desaulniers (613-951-9149) or Bruce Cooke (613-951-9061), System of National Accounts Branch.

Manufacturers remain positive about prospects

Manufacturers' production and employment prospects for the fourth quarter remain positive, according to the Business Conditions Survey conducted in October. However, a growing number of manufacturers are concerned about their current level of new and unfilled orders. Even so, they do not expect this to lead to reduced employment during the quarter.

Nearly two-thirds of manufacturers said their production would remain the same in the fourth quarter as it was in the third. However, the number of manufacturers expecting to increase production fell 5 percentage points to 20% from July to October. Manufacturers in the transportation equipment and primary metals industries were the major contributors to the decrease.

Regarding employment prospects, for the next three months manufacturers' overall expectations are unchanged. The proportion indicating the size of their workforce will increase this quarter was up 1 percentage point to 17%. But this was offset by the proportion expecting to decrease employment: 11% in October compared with 10% in July.

Note to readers

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

Satisfaction with the level of orders received has dropped among manufacturers. In July, 17% of manufacturers said that orders are rising. That fell to 12% in October. At the same time, the share who say that orders received are declining increased to 17%, up from 12%. Still, 7 out of 10 manufacturers report that orders received are about the same as in July. Those in the primary metals, paper and allied products, wood and transportation equipment industries were the major contributors to the decrease in overall satisfaction with orders received.

There is also greater concern over the current level of unfilled orders. The number who report that unfilled orders are declining

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... Manufacturers remain positive about prospects

rose from 12% in July to 21% in October. The proportion of manufacturers indicating that their backlog of unfilled orders is higher than normal decreased 2 percentage points to 8%. Again, the major contributors to the decrease are the primary metals and wood industries.

Few manufacturers report production impediments. Notably, 80% report an absence of production impediments, down 5 percentage points compared with July. A shortage of skilled

labour continues to concern 8% of manufacturers. Manufacturers reporting "other" production impediments rose from 2% in July to 5% in October. Concerns over increasing inventory levels and low-priced imports are notable in the primary metals industries. The majority (81%) is not concerned about the current level of finished-product inventory.

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

Manufacturers' expectations and business conditions

Seasonally adjusted

	October 1999	January 2000	April 2000	July 2000	October 2000
% of manufacturers who said					
Volume of production in next three months will be:					
About the same as in previous three months	46	47	54	62	66
Higher	34	39	32	25	20
Lower	20	14	14	13	14
Employment in next three months will:					
Change little from previous three months	68	72	75	74	72
Increase	18	17	15	16	17
Decrease	14	11	10	10	11
Backlog of unfilled orders is:					
About normal	75	81	79	78	71
Higher than normal	17	11	12	10	8
Lower than normal	8	8	9	12	21
Orders received are:					
About the same	69	62	62	71	71
Rising	25	29	30	17	12
Declining	6	9	8	12	17
Finished-product inventory is:					
About right	85	84	83	82	81
Too low	4	6	3	2	2
Too high	11	10	14	16	17

Registered pension plan coverage declines

Employer-sponsored registered pension plans (RPPs) remain an integral part of the retirement savings system for Canadians, although their coverage has been declining throughout the 1990s. At the end of 1998, 41% of paid workers were covered by RPPs, down from 45% in 1992.

The number of members has also been falling, from a peak of 5.3 million at the beginning of the decade. Just under 5.1 million workers belonged to about 14,900 RPPs at the end of 1998. However, the drop in membership appears to have slowed in recent years.

Registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) continued to outstrip RPPs in terms of both contributions and the number of contributors. In 1998, Canadians contributed \$62 billion to the three main retirement income programs: RPPs accounted for 27% of that amount, compared with 43% for RRSPs and 30% for the

Note to readers

Registered pension plans (RPPs) are an important component of Canada's retirement savings system. They are established by employers or unions for their employees. Other components include the government-sponsored programs and registered retirement savings plans.

Canada/Quebec Pension Plans (CPP/QPP). Just over 6.1 million taxpayers contributed to an RRSP, compared with 5.1 million members covered by an RPP. The contributors to the CPP/QPP (13.6 million) far exceeded those of both RPPs and RRSPs because that program is mandatory for all workers.

One of the main reasons that RRSP growth has outstripped that of RPPs is the nature of the programs. RRSPs are available to almost all workers in Canada. In contrast, access to a pension plan depends on whether an individual's employer offers one.

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... Registered pension plan coverage declines

The number of female workers belonging to an RPP has risen, from 2.25 million at the end of 1996 to 2.27 million at the end of 1998. At the same time, the number of male workers covered by an RPP declined from 2.87 million to about 2.82 million. RPP coverage for men has gradually declined, from 48% in 1992 to 42% in 1998. For women, the decline in coverage was less pronounced than for men, from 42% to 39% over the same period. The decline in unionization rates and employment shifts toward low-coverage industries explain most of the decline in pension coverage.

The number of RPP members in the public sector decreased 7% between 1992 and 1998. This decline was a result of the cutbacks in federal and provincial government employees in recent years. In contrast, the number of RPP members in the private sector grew by a slight 1% between 1992 and 1998, because of greater participation by women in RPPs in the private sector.

About 53% of paid workers in Newfoundland belonged to RPPs, the highest proportion of any of the provinces. Coverage tends to be higher for unionized employees, and the unionization rate is the highest in Newfoundland. Alberta had the lowest coverage rate, 31%, owing in part to its low rate of unionization.

*The publication **Pension plans in Canada: Statistical highlights and key tables, January 1, 1999** (online: 74-401-SIB, \$30; print: 74-401-SPB, \$40) is now available. A table with data on the labour force and paid workers covered by an RPP is also available, free of charge, on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). On the "Canadian Statistics" page, choose "The People," then "Labour, employment and unemployment," then "Employment Insurance and pensions." To obtain custom tabulations or for more information, contact Client Services (613-951-7355 or 1 888 297-7355; fax: 613-951-3012; revenu@statcan.ca), Income Statistics Division.*

RRSP contributions and number of contributors: both make up lost ground

Contributions to registered retirement savings plans (RRSPs) reached their second highest level ever in 1999, while a record number of taxfilers contributed to an RRSP. Both the number of contributors and the amount of their contributions rebounded, after falling in 1998 for the first time since 1991.

Some 6,207,000 taxfilers contributed to an RRSP during the 1999 tax year, up 1.4% from the previous year. This means that

about 29% of all taxfilers contributed in 1999, or 36% of those eligible to contribute. The number of contributors increased in all provinces except Saskatchewan. In that province, the number of contributors peaked in 1996 but has been decreasing since that time. The largest group of RRSP contributors were those 35 to 44 years of age, followed by those 45 to 54. Each of these groups contributed 30% of the total dollars.

Taxfilers contributed a total of \$27.8 billion to RRSPs, a 2.6% increase from 1998 (after adjusting for inflation). That amount is still short of the record \$28.2 billion set in 1997. Ontario taxfilers contributed \$11.9 billion, 43% of the total, although only 37% of eligible taxfilers are from Ontario. Contributors from Quebec deposited \$5.9 billion, or 21% of the total. Nunavut showed the largest increase (+12.3%). Among the provinces, the largest increase was in New Brunswick (+4.3%).

The average contribution was \$4,477 in 1999, compared with \$4,424 in 1998 and \$4,576 in 1997, after inflation is taken into account. In general, taxfilers with the highest incomes contributed the most. In 1999, the average contribution of those whose total income exceeded \$80,000 was \$12,535, while it was \$6,199 for those with total income between \$60,000 and \$79,999. The median employment income for contributors rose from \$36,253 in 1997 (adjusted) to \$37,700 in 1999. The median is the point at which half of the contributors fall below and half are above.

Databanks for RRSP contributors (17C0006, price is variable) and Canadian taxfilers (17C0010, price is variable) are available for Canada, the provinces and territories, cities, towns, Census Metropolitan Areas, Census Divisions, and areas as small as forward sortation areas (the first three characters of the postal code) and letter carrier routes. For more information, contact Client Services (613-951-9720; fax: 613-951-4745; saadinfo@statcan.ca), Small Area and Administrative Data Division.

RRSP contributors and contributions, 1999

	Number of contributors	% change, previous year	Contributions (\$ millions)	% change, previous year (adjusted)
Canada	6,207,190	1.4	27,789.3	2.6
Newfoundland	65,520	1.7	274.0	1.2
Prince Edward Island	145,220	2.0	587.4	-0.1
Nova Scotia	21,070	1.3	81.0	-1.4
New Brunswick	108,100	3.1	418.2	4.3
Quebec	1,456,950	2.9	5,889.7	4.2
Ontario	2,479,610	1.4	11,911.3	2.5
Manitoba	231,450	0.2	882.9	0.0
Saskatchewan	197,180	-2.5	758.6	-2.2
Alberta	664,340	0.8	3,109.2	3.5
British Columbia	822,640	0.2	3,800.6	1.7
Yukon	5,900	2.3	26.3	-2.0
Northwest Territories	7,060	0.9	36.9	-1.3
Nunavut	2,150	5.4	13.1	12.3

More full-time jobs, fewer part-time jobs

Some 20,000 new jobs were created in October. Despite some weakness in the labour market in the early summer, employment was up 344,000 (+2.3%) from October 1999. The unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage point from September to 6.9% as more people participated in the labour market.

While full-time employment rose by 52,000 jobs in October, part-time employment moved in the opposite direction, declining by 32,000. In comparison with October 1999, full-time employment growth of 2.6% outpaced the 1.1% increase in self-employment.

Adult women (those 25 and over) accounted for most of the full-time job gains (+35,000) in October. However, since adult women's unemployment increased by 12,000, their unemployment rate edged up slightly to 6.0%. Adult men's unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.5%. Youths (15 to 24) saw little change in overall employment, but their unemployment rate edged up 0.2 percentage points to 12.9%.

In October, private sector employment increased by 21,000 as an increase in the number of employees was partially offset by a decline in self-employment. From October 1999 to October 2000,

Related information on employment insurance

The estimated number of Canadians (not seasonally adjusted) who received regular Employment Insurance benefits in August (the most recent month for which data are available) was 447,900, a decrease of 6.1% from August 1999. Led by Alberta (-19.1%), 10 of the 13 provinces and territories recorded year-over-year decreases. Regular benefit payments (seasonally adjusted) totalled \$611.9 million, up 3.3% from July but down 7.1% from August 1999. From July to August, the number of claims received decreased by 1.8% to 219,520. For more information, contact Justin Lacroix (613-951-4090; fax: 613-951-4087; labour@statcan.ca), Labour Statistics Division.

total employment in the private sector increased by 235,000 (+2.0%). Although public sector employment changed little in October, it has increased by 109,000, or 4.0%, compared with October 1999; most of the job gains have been in hospitals.

Manufacturing employment increased by an estimated 23,000 in October. Employment also rose in transportation and warehousing (+12,000), making up for some of the losses that occurred over the summer. In October, employment in professional, scientific and technical services continued to rise. Year over year, employment in this industry grew by 65,000 (+7.2%). On the other hand, employment in construction declined (-19,000) in October, bringing it to about the same level as at the start of 2000.

In Ontario, the upward employment trend that began more than three years ago continued (+27,000). October's increase brings job gains over the previous 12 months to 183,000 (+3.2%). In Saskatchewan, employment rose by 3,000, bringing it to about the same level as in October 1999. In Alberta, 8,000 jobs were added, bringing gains over the past 12 months to 38,000 (+2.4%).

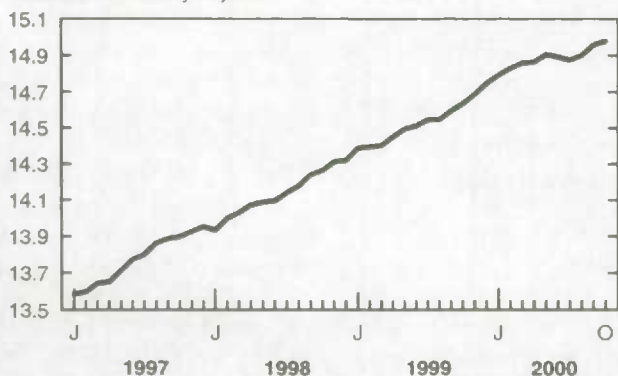
By contrast, employment declined by 20,000 in Quebec in October, but overall it has nevertheless been stable since the start of 2000. There was also a loss of 1,200 jobs in Prince Edward Island, offsetting an increase in September. Despite the October decline, employment in the province was up 3.4% from October 1999. Unemployment rose by 1,700 in October, pushing the unemployment rate up 2.2 percentage points to 13.5%.

The full report, **Labour Force Information** (online: 71-001-PIB, \$8/\$78; print: 71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103), for the week ending October 14, 2000, is now available. For more information, contact Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750) or Jacques Ouellet (613-951-4168), Labour Statistics Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.

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Employment

Millions, seasonally adjusted



... More full-time jobs, fewer part-time jobs

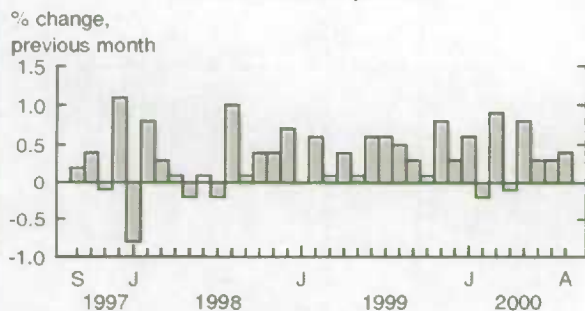
Labour Force Survey, October 2000Seasonally adjusted¹

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	16,090.6	0.2	14,977.3	0.1	1,113.3	6.9
Newfoundland	246.5	0.2	205.7	-0.2	40.8	16.6
Prince Edward Island	74.0	0.7	64.0	-1.8	10.0	13.5
Nova Scotia	461.5	0.0	418.4	0.2	43.1	9.3
New Brunswick	373.6	0.1	337.3	0.1	36.4	9.7
Quebec	3,744.9	-0.3	3,428.3	-0.6	316.6	8.5
Ontario	6,296.6	0.5	5,926.4	0.5	370.2	5.9
Manitoba	582.7	-0.4	555.7	-0.5	27.0	4.6
Saskatchewan	512.3	0.6	484.2	0.7	28.1	5.5
Alberta	1,675.9	0.4	1,597.5	0.5	78.3	4.7
British Columbia	2,122.6	0.2	1,959.8	0.3	162.7	7.7

¹ Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.

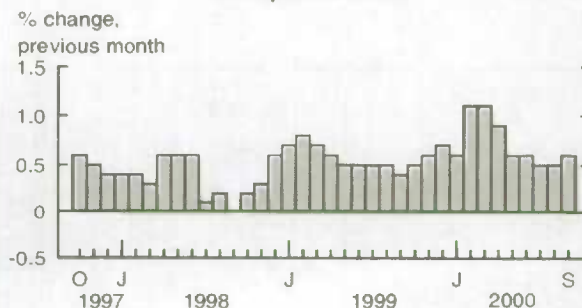
Current trends

Gross domestic product



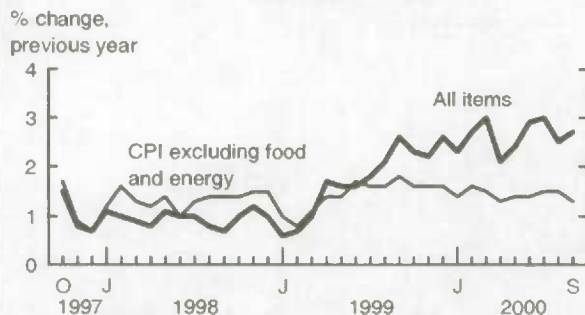
The economy continued on a steady course in August, as gross domestic product rose 0.4%.

Composite Index



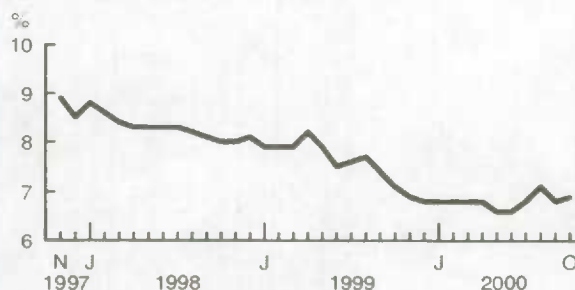
The deceleration in the leading indicator that began in April came to an end in September with a 0.6% advance.

Consumer Price Index



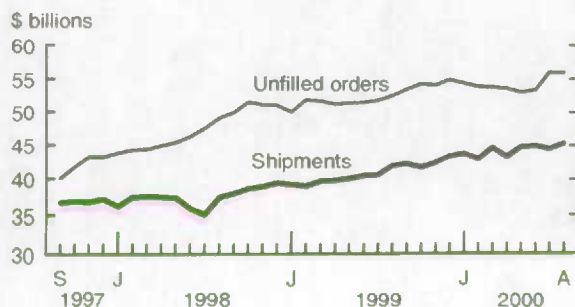
Consumer prices for goods and services were 2.7% higher in September 2000 than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.3%.

Unemployment rate



The unemployment rate edged up 0.1 percentage points to 6.9% in October, as more people participated in the labour market.

Manufacturing



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

Merchandise trade



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 monthly statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
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†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billion)	August	23.4	0.1%	5.7%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	September*	1.49	-1.1%	-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%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	October*	14.98	0.1%	2.3%
Unemployment rate (%)	October*	6.9	0.1†	-0.2†
Participation rate (%)	October*	66.0	0.1†	0.5†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	August	630.37	0.6%	3.0%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	October	178	2.3%	8.5%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
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
MANUFACTURING				
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
PRICES				
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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Published by the Official Release Unit, Communications Division,
 Statistics Canada, 10th floor, R.H. Coats Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0T6.

Price per issue: paper, \$4; online at www.statcan.ca, \$3. Annual subscription:
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