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Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, January 26, 2001

OVERVIEW

◆ **Imports grow faster, causing trade surplus to decline**

Imports increased at almost three times the pace of exports in November, causing Canada's merchandise trade surplus with other countries to decline from $4.9 billion in October to $4.5 billion.

◆ **Inflation at highest level since December 1990**

Just as in November, consumer prices were 3.2% higher in December than 12 months earlier. The inflation rates registered in November and December are the highest since December 1990, when inflation reached 5.0%.

◆ **Retail sales advance on partial rebound in automotive sector**

A partial rebound by retailers in the automotive sector pushed total retail sales up by 0.4% in November. Since July, however, overall spending in retail stores has been essentially flat.

◆ **Wholesale sales decline at end of 2000**

Wholesale sales dropped 0.7% in November, mainly as a result of decreases in the automobile and computer sectors. Provincially, wholesale sales were broadly lower, with six provinces reporting declines.

◆ **Pace of growth in manufacturers' shipments continues to soften**

Rising prices for refined petroleum and coal products led to a modest 0.3% increase in manufacturers' shipments in November. Excluding this industry, shipments were virtually unchanged overall from October.

◆ **Twice as many female police officers as 10 years ago**

At June 2000, there were 7,658 female police officers, accounting for almost 14% of all officers. In 1990, there were 3,573 female police officers, representing just over 6% of the total.

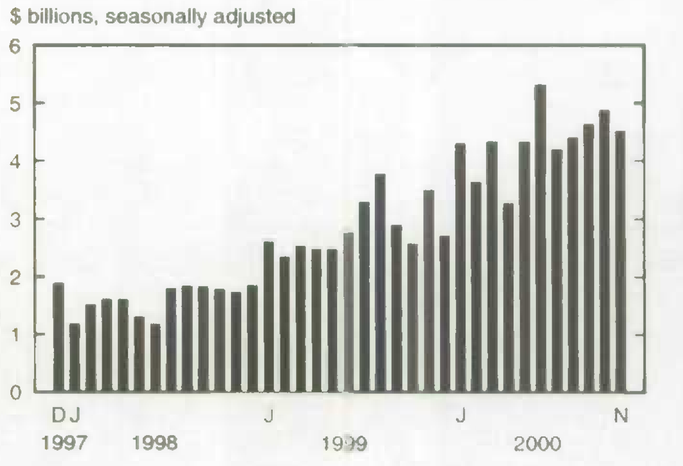
Imports grow faster, causing trade surplus to decline

Canadians imported $31.1 billion worth of goods in November, up 2.2% from October. Exports rose 0.8% to $35.5 billion. Since imports increased at almost three times the pace of exports, the merchandise trade surplus stood at $4.5 billion, down from $4.9 billion in October.

November's increase in imports was largely due to the strong recovery of petroleum imports as well as record imports of industrial goods and materials. After two months of decline, imports of crude petroleum climbed 45.3%. Imports of refined petroleum products were down 19.8%, as the drop in gasoline imports was greater than the rise in imports of aviation fuels. Overall, imports of energy products increased 22.7%.

Imports of industrial goods and materials reached a record level of $6.1 billion in November, up 5.6% over October. The pharmaceutical industry had record imports of drug manufacturing products (in terms of quantity and value), propelling imports of organic chemical products. Plastics imports also reached a peak, with an increase of 2.5% to $793.8 million. Furthermore, imports

Merchandise trade balance



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... Imports grow faster, causing trade surplus to decline

of metals in ores for refining in Canada, such as copper and zinc, increased 20.6%, while imports of precious metals rose 24.5%.

Machinery and equipment imports rose 2.7% in November. In this sector there were increased imports of aircraft and other transportation equipment, telecommunications equipment (especially parts and modules to be assembled and later exported), various industrial machinery, and gas turbines and parts.

In contrast, imports of motor vehicle products declined 4.2%, tempering the overall rise in imports. Imports of passenger cars and chassis were the major contributors to the drop in the sector, falling 7.0%. Imports of trucks as well as engines and parts were also down.

On the export side, energy product exports rose 11.0% in November. The chaos in the California electricity market propelled exports to a record $500 million, more than double October's level. Natural gas exports rose 7.9% and crude petroleum exports rose 2.8%.

The strong exports of electricity and natural gas almost offset the 2.4% drop in exports of machinery and equipment. In this sector, exports of telecommunications equipment declined 4.9%, while exports of other equipment and tools, such as measuring instruments and optical instruments, fell 3.8% after setting a record in October.

Exports of motor vehicle products remained stable in November; the 3.3% increase in passenger cars and chassis was offset by the combined effect of a 3.7% drop in parts exports and a 4.6% drop in truck exports.

The November 2000 issue of ***Canadian international merchandise trade*** *(Internet: 65-001-XIB, $14/$141; paper: 65-001-XPB, $19/ $188) includes tables by commodity and country on a customs basis. Current account data are available quarterly in* ***Canada's balance of international payments*** *(Internet: 67-001-XIB, $29/ $93; paper: 67-001-XPB, $38 /$124). For more information, contact Jocelyne Elibani (1 800 294-5583; 613-951-9647), International Trade Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Inflation at highest level since December 1990

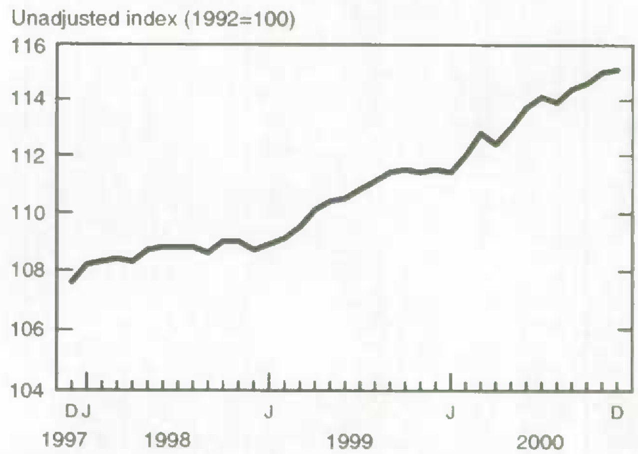
Consumers paid 3.2% more in December 2000 than in December 1999 for the goods and services included in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) basket. This annual inflation rate was the same as in November 2000. If the 1991 increase, which was affected by the introduction of the GST, were not taken into account, November's and December's 12-month increases would be the highest observed since December 1990 (+5.0%).

Higher energy prices accounted for more than one-third of the rise in the CPI between December 1999 and December 2000. The energy index rose 13.6% during that period. Gasoline and natural gas accounted for about three-quarters of the increase. By comparison, the All-items index, excluding energy, rose 2.2%.

Consumer Price Index, December 2000
% change, previous year, not seasonally adjusted

	All items	Food	Shelter	Transportation	Energy
Canada	**3.2**	**3.2**	**5.0**	**3.2**	**13.6**
Newfoundland	2.6	0.4	7.2	3.0	12.9
Prince Edward Island	3.7	1.6	7.2	6.6	22.1
Nova Scotia	3.6	1.7	7.6	3.9	15.3
New Brunswick	2.8	1.3	5.2	4.3	12.2
Quebec	2.9	4.4	3.7	2.7	9.1
Ontario	3.5	3.1	5.2	2.5	12.0
Manitoba	2.9	4.7	3.6	1.5	9.7
Saskatchewan	4.0	3.8	6.8	3.5	14.8
Alberta	3.9	3.5	8.9	3.4	24.2
British Columbia	2.4	1.4	2.9	5.7	20.0
Whitehorse	2.5	1.3	5.3	3.2	19.1
Yellowknife	1.6	1.5	3.4	2.6	12.3

Consumer Price Index



Other important factors that played a role in the 12-month increase in the All-items CPI in December included mortgage interest cost, fresh vegetables, fresh or frozen meat (excluding poultry), food purchased from restaurants and rent. These advances were partially offset by price declines for air transportation, computer equipment and supplies and child care.

For 2000 as a whole, the annual average inflation rate was 2.7%. In 1999, it was 1.7%. If the 1991 increase, influenced by the introduction of introduction of the GST, were not taken into account, the inflation recorded in 2000 would be the highest since 1990 (+4.8%). As in 1999, energy prices exerted the greatest influence on CPI growth, rising 16.2% on average in 2000. This was the largest increase since 1982 (+19.8%). Excluding energy, the All-items index rose by 1.5% in 2000. This increase is in line with the annual average increases seen since 1996.

(continued on page 3)

... Inflation at highest level since December 1990

Consumer prices edged up by 0.1% from November to December. Prices of fresh vegetables increased by 16.8% and those of fresh fruit by 6.5%, owing to unseasonable weather conditions in the major growing regions of Mexico and the southwestern United States. After rising in October and November, fuel oil prices increased by 4.6% in December. Fuel oil prices were higher in all provinces except Prince Edward Island. Prices for fresh or frozen meat (excluding poultry) rose by 2.3%, propelled by strong consumer demand both in Canada and abroad. The 6.2% annual average increase for these products in 2000 is the highest recorded since 1987 (+8.9%).

However, these month-over-month price increases were offset by various declines, including a 4.0% decrease in the price of gasoline. Greater offshore oil supplies contributed to the drop. Prices for traveller accommodation declined (-2.7%), continuing the off-peak-season decline that began in September. Prices for air transportation fell by 2.8% from November to December. This decrease is mostly attributable to greater availability of cheaper airfares on routes to the U.S. and southern destinations.

*The December 2000 issue of **Consumer Price Index** (paper: 62-001-XPB, $11/$103) is now available. For more information, contact the information officer (613-951-9606; fax: 613-951-1539; infounit@statcan.ca), Prices Division. See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Retail sales advance on partial rebound in automotive sector

A partial rebound by retailers in the automotive sector pushed total retail sales up by 0.4% in November to $23.4 billion. This follows a 0.7% decline in October. In constant dollars, sales were stable in November.

Since July, overall spending in retail stores has been essentially flat, after significant increases in May, June and July. Despite flat sales in recent months, the cumulative value of goods and services sold by retailers in the first 11 months of 2000 was 6.3% higher than in the same period of 1999. In comparison, the sales growth in 1999 for the same period was 5.4%.

The largest increase in November was posted by stores in the automotive sector (+1.6%), followed by drug stores (+0.5%) and furniture stores (+0.3%). In contrast, sales fell in general merchandise stores (-1.5%) and stores classified as other retail (-0.9%). (The other retail category includes liquor stores, sporting goods stores, hardware stores and bookstores.) Sales were essentially unchanged in the food (+0.1%) and clothing (-0.1%) sectors.

Retailers in the automotive sector recouped slightly more than half the loss in sales they reported in October. Sales by motor and recreational vehicle dealers, which represent about two-thirds of sales in the automotive sector, advanced 1.8% in November. The increase was largely due to higher prices of new model year vehicles. Despite weaker sales gains in recent months and in the early months of 2000, motor and recreational vehicle dealers showed a 9.1% gain in cumulative sales for the first 11 months of 2000 compared with the same period of 1999.

Sales at gasoline service stations rose for the third consecutive month in November, advancing 1.9%. November 2000 sales were 21.8% above those reported in November 1999 and 49.7% above those of November 1998.

However, consumers stayed away from department stores in November. Weaker sales by department stores (-3.3%) led to the decline in the overall general merchandise sector (-1.5%). In the past few months, the upward movement in department store sales since the spring of 2000 has faltered. In other general merchandise stores, sales increased by 0.7% in November, continuing the strong upward movement of the last four years.

Retailers in Central Canada saw weak sales in November. Among the provinces, Quebec posted the only sales decline, while sales remained essentially unchanged in Ontario. Retail sales in both Quebec and Ontario were down or showed little progress in most sectors. Retailers in the remaining provinces, except Manitoba, reported sales increases of at least 1.0% after significant declines in October.

Retail sales, November 2000
Seasonally adjusted

	$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	**23,389**	**0.4**	**6.1**
Newfoundland	379	1.0	5.6
Prince Edward Island	103	1.3	3.3
Nova Scotia	716	1.8	3.4
New Brunswick	585	2.6	4.3
Quebec	5,292	-1.2	3.7
Ontario	9,008	0.1	6.9
Manitoba	787	0.5	4.1
Saskatchewan	677	1.1	2.9
Alberta	2,714	1.4	8.4
British Columbia	3,050	2.1	8.1
Yukon	29	-0.6	4.1
Northwest Territories	33	-2.6	5.0
Nunavut	17	1.7	13.3

*The November 2000 issue of **Retail trade** (Internet: 63-005-XIB, $16/$155; paper: 63-005-XPB, $21/$206) will be available soon. To order data, or for general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Paul Gratton (613-951-3541; gratpau@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

Wholesale sales decline at end of 2000

Wholesale sales dropped 0.7% to $31.7 billion in November. This was primarily a result of declines in the automobile and computer sectors, which account for nearly 30% of total wholesale sales. If not for these two sectors, wholesale sales would have risen a modest 0.4%. Despite October's increase, wholesale sales have been weakening in recent months.

In November, wholesale sales in the computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery sector fell by 4.7%. After rebounding in the first six months of 2000, sales have been weakening since the summer. Wholesalers in the computer sector have been feeling the effects of lower demand for personal computers.

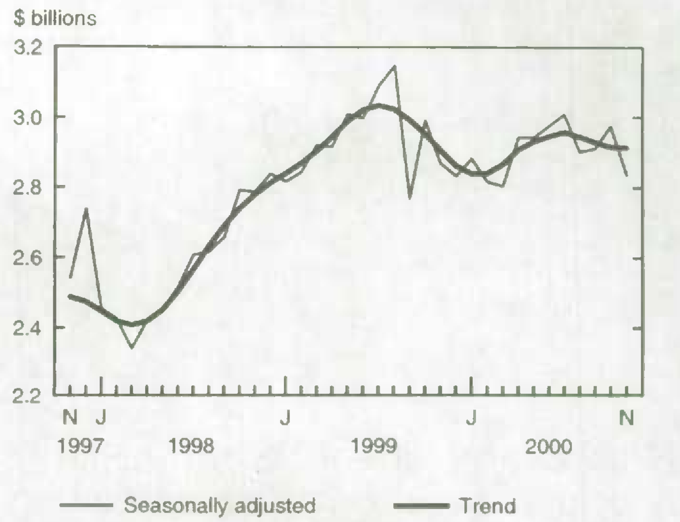
In the automobile sector, sales were down 3.2% in November. Sales in this sector have been falling since the spring of 2000. Weaker demand for new motor vehicles and parts in the United States and Canada has contributed to this decline.

Wholesalers of lumber and building materials, however, reported their second consecutive monthly increase (+2.0%) in November, following four monthly declines. Wholesalers within the building material component of this sector reported healthy sales. This is in line with the positive thrust of the housing market and the construction sector as well as the rise in building permits in November.

Wholesale trade, November 2000
Seasonally adjusted

	$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	**31,749**	**-0.7**	**2.1**
Newfoundland	230	0.6	5.1
Prince Edward Island	54	0.3	7.3
Nova Scotia	577	-0.9	7.0
New Brunswick	401	-0.3	1.7
Quebec	6,669	1.3	6.2
Ontario	15,678	-1.4	0.2
Manitoba	908	-2.2	3.3
Saskatchewan	881	-5.5	1.4
Alberta	3,122	0.2	9.3
British Columbia	3,201	-0.2	-3.9
Yukon	10	0.9	16.2
Northwest Territories	14	8.0	20.5
Nunavut	3	-4.0	-7.8

Wholesale sales in the computer sector



Provincially, there was a broadly based decline in wholesale sales, with six provinces reporting decreases in November. In Ontario, the main contributors to the 1.4% decrease were the motor vehicles, parts and accessories sector and the computers, packaged software and other electronic machinery sector. Together, these two sectors account for approximately 40% of total sales in that province.

Among the provinces to report increased wholesale sales, Quebec posted a notable 1.3% rise. In that province, strongly increased sales were reported by wholesalers of industrial and other machinery, equipment and supplies, beverages, drug and tobacco products, and apparel and dry goods.

Inventories reached $43.4 billion in November, up for the fourth month in a row (+0.7%). Increases were observed in 8 of the 11 trade groups. Wholesale inventories have been generally rising over the last several years. The inventory-to-sales ratio rose from 1.35 in October to 1.37 in November. After levelling off in late 1999, the ratio has recently started to increase.

*The November 2000 issue of **Wholesale trade** (Internet: 63-008-XIB, $14/$140) contains detailed data. For general information, contact Client Services (1 877 421-3067; 613-951-3549; wholesaleinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Alexander Hays (613-951-3552; haysale@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.*

Pace of growth in manufacturers' shipments continues to soften

The pace of growth in manufacturers' shipments continued to soften in November. Those shipments increased by a mere 0.3% to $45.7 billion, owing to rising prices in the refined petroleum and coal products industry. Excluding this industry, shipments were virtually unchanged overall from October.

Owing to both higher prices and increased volumes, shipments in the refined petroleum and coal products industry rose 4.3%. The Industrial Product Price Index showed that petroleum and coal product prices were 2.3% higher than in October. In the fabricated metal products industry, shipments climbed 3.2% to $2.4 billion, their highest level since March 2000.

Shipments in the automotive sector declined 1.6% in November. In recent months, higher retail inventories and lower-than-expected demand have led a number of manufacturers to announce their intention to curtail production at motor vehicle assembly plants. As a result, manufacturers have reduced orders of motor vehicle parts and accessories. In November, these shipments declined 6.7% to $2.6 billion, the lowest level since September 1998. In contrast, manufacturers of new vehicles increased their shipments by 0.9%.

Manufacturers' inventories rose 1.2% in November to $61.7 billion, continuing their upward trend. The increase was largely in goods in process inventories and finished product inventories. A 5.8% jump in the aircraft and parts industry led November's overall climb in inventories. Increased activity in this industry has led to a jump in goods in process inventories, which have been increasing steadily since August 2000.

The major offsetting movements occurred in the railroad rolling stock (-6.1%) and motor vehicle (-5.4%) industries. In the latter industry, manufacturers shipped from finished product inventories.

Manufacturers' shipments, November 2000
Seasonally adjusted

	$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	**45,683**	**0.3**
Newfoundland	168	-5.8
Prince Edward Island	89	12.3
Nova Scotia	729	8.2
New Brunswick	937	4.6
Quebec	11,185	-1.1
Ontario	24,246	0.4
Manitoba	880	-2.9
Saskatchewan	626	1.4
Alberta	3,624	-0.6
British Columbia	3,193	2.2
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	5	13.3

Manufacturers' unfilled orders edged down 0.1% to $55.3 billion in November, thus returning to September's level. The largest decline was in the electrical and electronic products industry, followed by the motor vehicle industry, which saw continued weak demand for heavy trucks. On the other hand, the aircraft and parts industry and the primary metal industry saw an increase in unfilled orders.

The value of new orders slipped 0.1% in November to $45.6 billion, owing in large part to declines in the transportation sector, particularly in the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry. The machinery sector also contributed to the decrease in new orders.

*The November 2000 issue of the **Monthly Survey of Manufacturing** (paper: 31-001-XPB, $20/$196) will be available soon. More detailed data for shipments by province may be available on request. For more information, contact Russell Kowaluk (613-951-0600; kowarus@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division.* *See also "Current trends" on page 8.*

Twice as many female police officers as 10 years ago

There are twice as many female police officers now as there were a decade ago. At June 2000, there were 7,658 female police officers, and they accounted for almost 14% of all officers. By comparison, there were 3,573 female police officers in 1990, representing just over 6% of the total.

British Columbia had the highest proportion of female police officers, with almost 18%. Next came Ontario, with almost 15%. The Atlantic provinces continued to have the lowest proportion of female officers, with around 10%.

Last June, 56,020 persons were employed as police officers, up 1.3% from 1999. This amounted to 182 police officers for every 100,000 population, a rate that has remained relatively stable for the last five years following a 10% decline between 1991 and 1996. However, the current Canadian rate is lower than in both the United States (247 in 1998) and England and Wales (233 in 2000).

Among the provinces, in June 2000 Quebec had 188 police officers for every 100,000 population, the highest rate, followed closely by Manitoba at 187. Newfoundland (143) and Prince Edward Island (148) had the lowest rates.

Among Census Metropolitan Areas, Thunder Bay had the highest rate according to 1999 data, with 196 police officers for every 100,000 population. Next came Regina, with 192. The lowest rates were observed in Sherbrooke (110) and Chicoutimi–Jonquière (118).

Policing costs in Canada totalled $6.4 billion in 1999, a 2.9% increase from 1998, or a 1.2% rise after adjusting for inflation. This total was the equivalent of $210 for every Canadian. Over the past decade, policing costs have increased 10% in adjusted dollars.

Police officers, 2000

	Total police officers	Police officers per 100,000 population	% change, in rate, 1995 to 2000
Canada	**56,020**	**182**	**-2.8**
Newfoundland	772	143	-5.8
Prince Edward Island	205	148	4.1
Nova Scotia	1,600	170	-2.1
New Brunswick	1,309	173	0.2
Quebec	13,835	188	-4.1
Ontario	21,637	185	-2.3
Manitoba	2,142	187	-3.6
Saskatchewan	1,864	182	-1.1
Alberta	4,613	154	-4.6
British Columbia	6,708	165	0.3
Yukon	120	391	4.2
Northwest Territories	154	366	...
Nunavut	86	311	...
RCMP (headquarters and training academy)[1]	975	...	...

[1] *These officers are included separately as they provide a national service. All other RCMP officers are included in the province or territory in which they work.*

... *Figures not appropriate or not applicable.*

The report ***Police resources in Canada, 2000*** *(Internet: 85-225-XIE, $26) is now available. For more information, contact Information and Client Services (1 800 387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.*

New from Statistics Canada

Canadian economic observer
January 2001

The January issue of Statistics Canada's flagship publication for economic statistics, *Canadian economic observer*, analyses current economic conditions, summarizes the major economic events that occurred in December and presents a feature article entitled "Plugging in: The increase of household Internet use continues."

A separate statistical summary contains a wide range of tables and graphs on the principal economic indicators for Canada, the provinces and the major industrial nations.

*The January 2001 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (11-010-XPB, $23/$227) is now available. For more information, contact Cyndi Bloskie (613-951-3634; ceo@statcan.ca), Current Economic Analysis Group.*

Hate crime
1999

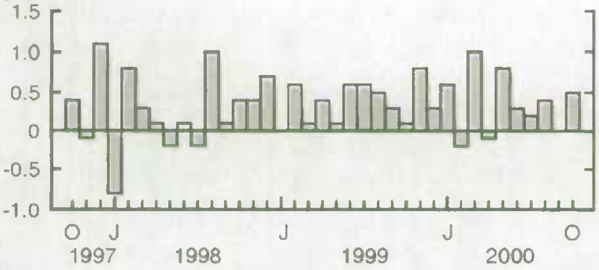
The report *Hate crime in Canada: An overview of issues and data sources* describes a number of issues related to hate-motivated activity, findings from previous studies, international comparisons, current data sources, data collection issues, and a description of police hate-crime initiatives. It also includes findings from the 1999 General Social Survey, which, for the first time, produced estimates of self-reported hate crime victimization incidents at the national level.

The definition of hate crime is based on the 1996 amendments to the *Criminal code* that specify sentencing enhancement principles where there is "evidence that the offence was motivated by bias, prejudice or hate based on race, national or ethnic origin, language, colour, religion, sex, age, mental or physical disability, sexual orientation, or any other similar factor."

***Hate crime in Canada: An overview of issues and data sources** (Internet: 85-551-XIE, $27) is now available. For more information, contact Information and Client Services (1 800 387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.*

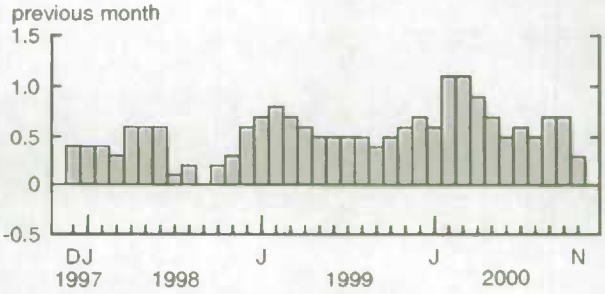
Current trends

Gross domestic product



Gross domestic product advanced 0.5% in October, after levelling off at the end of the third quarter.

Composite Index

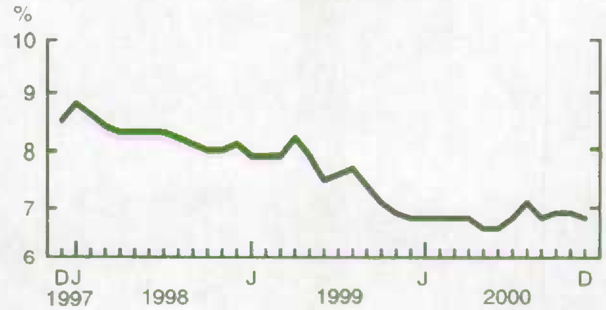


Growth in the leading indicator slowed again in November, rising 0.3%, compared with 0.7% in both September and October.

Consumer Price Index

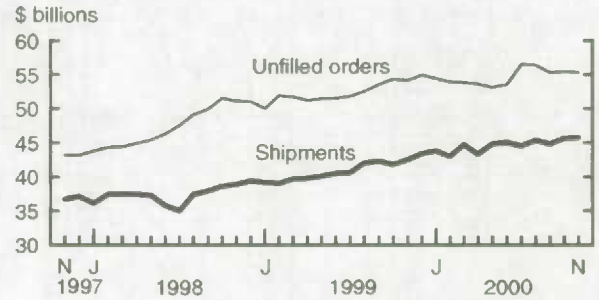
Consumer prices for goods and services were 3.2% higher in December 2000 than they were a year earlier, as they were in November. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 1.9%.

Unemployment rate



In December, the unemployment rate dipped 0.1 percentage points to 6.8%, ending the year where it began.

Manufacturing



Manufacturers' shipments increased by 0.3% in November to $45.7 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders edged down 0.1% to $55.3 billion.

Merchandise trade

In November, the value of merchandise exports rose 0.8% to $35.5 billion. Imports, which increased at almost three times the pace of exports, were up 2.2% to $31.1 billion.

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

Latest statistics

	Period	Level	Change, previous period	Change, previous year
GENERAL				
Gross domestic product ($ billion, 1992)	October	797.0	0.5%	4.6%
Composite Index (1992=100)	December*	166.6	-0.4%	7.0%
Operating profits of enterprises ($ billion)	Q3 2000	52.6	0.1%	15.7%
Capacity utilization (%)	Q3 2000	86.9	-0.1†	1.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade ($ billion)	November*	23.4	0.4%	6.1%
Department store sales ($ billions)	November	1.50	-3.1%	6.3%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	November	127.3	3.4%	-3.3%
Wholesale trade ($ billion)	November	31.7	-0.7%	2.1%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	December	15.07	0.2%	2.2%
Unemployment rate (%)	December	6.8	-0.1†	0.0†
Participation rate (%)	December	66.2	0.1†	0.6†
Average weekly earnings ($)	October	629.83	-0.1%	2.6%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	December	181	0.0%	7.7%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports ($ billion)	November*	35.5	0.8%	12.2%
Merchandise imports ($ billion)	November*	31.1	2.2%	10.1%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in $ billion)	November*	4.5	-0.4	1.0
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments ($ billion)	November*	45.7	0.3%	7.5%
New orders ($ billion)	November*	45.6	-0.1%	7.9%
Unfilled orders ($ billion)	November*	55.3	-0.1%	2.3%
Inventory/shipments ratio	November*	1.35	0.01	0.05
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	December	115.1	0.1%	3.2%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	November	130.1	0.6%	5.2%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	November	153.8	2.1%	18.9%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	November	104.3	0.4%	2.5%

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

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The first (official) release of all statistical information produced by Statistics Canada occurs in *The Daily* (www.statcan.ca), available at 8:30 a.m. *The Daily* presents highlights from new data releases, along with sources, links and contacts for further information. It also contains schedules of upcoming major news releases and announces the Agency's new products and services.

Products released from January 18

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price ($) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Agriculture economic statistics	November 2000	21-603-UPE	26/52
Canadian potato production	2000	22-008-UIB	no charge
Canadian potato production	2000	22-008-UPB	21
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS			
Hate crime in Canada: An overview of issues and data sources	1999	85-551-XIE	27
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS			
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