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A Weekly Review

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Friday, August 24, 2001

OVERVIEW

◆ Trade surplus down slightly

Exports declined 1.4% in June compared with May, while imports rose 0.8%, resulting in an overall slight drop in the merchandise trade surplus.

◆ Composite index remains unchanged

After a slight increase in June, the leading indicator was unchanged in July, pulled down by a moderation in housing after a sharp gain the month before.

◆ Manufacturing shipments fall

Manufacturing shipments contracted 1.9% in June, following strong declines in the motor vehicle, computer and electronic product sectors.

◆ Wholesale sales rise slightly

Wholesale sales reached \$32.9 billion, a modest increase of 0.2% from May to June, as a result of strong sales in the automotive sector.

◆ One household in 10 affected by food insecurity

About 10% of Canadians were considered to be living in what is known as a "food-insecure" household at some point during 1998/99. This situation was not limited to low-income households.

Trade surplus down slightly

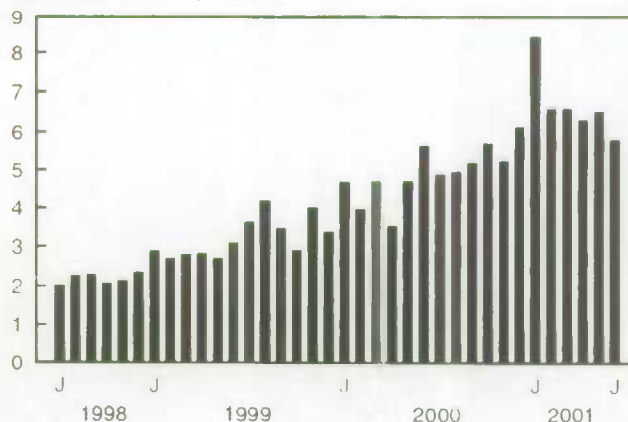
A sharp decline in the value of energy exports (-9.3%), along with weakness in most major sectors, resulted in an overall decline in exports in June, down 1.4% from May to \$36.1 billion. Imports, meanwhile, gained a slight 0.8%, rising to \$30.3 billion. As a result, Canada's overall merchandise trade surplus fell to \$5.8 billion.

Merchandise exports to the United States declined 1.1% to \$30.7 billion, whereas imports from south of the border rose 1.5% to \$22.3 billion. Consequently, the trade surplus with the United States fell from just under \$9.0 billion in May to \$8.3 billion in June. For the first half of 2001, Canada's cumulative merchandise trade surplus stood at \$40.3 billion—\$13.2 billion higher than the same period in 2000.

Exports of automotive products increased 2.7% to \$8.2 billion in June. Powered by favourable financing rates and manufacturers' incentives, passenger car exports rebounded 6.9%. Motor vehicle parts exports rose 1.9%. Machinery and equipment exports rose slightly (+0.8%) to \$8.4 billion, mainly a result of strong growth

Merchandise trade balance

\$ billions, seasonally adjusted



... Trade surplus down slightly

in the aircraft sector and an end-of-quarter jump in the wireless and telecommunications industries. Aircraft exports increased 7.4%, while telecom and related equipment exports rallied 2.3%.

Energy exports dropped 9.3% to \$5.4 billion, a result of a decline of 68.0% in the value of exports of electricity. Lower market prices, mainly to customers in the southwestern United States, coupled with dry weather, which reduced Canadian hydroelectric generation capacity, resulted in the drop in electricity export value. Exports of coal and bituminous substances used in smelting operations fell 26.8%. Natural gas exports fell 0.3%; conversely, exports of metal ores rose 5.8%.

Exports of the forestry products sector fell 1.2%, as newsprint and woodpulp products continued their decline. Lumber exports, primarily softwood lumber to the United States, increased 2.5% in response to increased unit price and demand in the U.S. housing market.

Imports of automotive products resumed an upward trend in June, rising 7.6% despite fears of an economic slowdown. Incentives continued to lure consumers as imports of passenger autos increased 25.2% to \$2.2 billion, the highest level recorded

for this sector. Aircraft and other transportation equipment imports jumped 14.9% as carriers added new passenger aircraft to their fleets in June. Machinery and equipment imports rose slightly (+0.7%); imports of engines, turbines and motors (used in electricity generation plants) expanded 25.1%.

Agricultural and fishing products imports increased 1.9%, following increases in meat and meat preparation imports and in fish and marine animals imports. On May 31, 2001, Canada and the United States relaxed their ban on the import of animals and raw meat products from Europe, after determining there is a reduced risk of foot-and-mouth disease.

*The June 2001 issue of **Canadian international merchandise trade** (Internet: 65-001-XIB, \$14/\$141; paper: 65-001-XPB, \$19/\$188) includes tables by commodity and country. Current account data (which incorporate merchandise trade statistics, service transactions, investment income and transfers) are available quarterly in **Canada's balance of international payments** (Internet: 67-001-XIB, \$29/\$93; paper: 67-001-XPB, \$38/\$124). For further information, call 1-800-294-5583 or contact Jocelyne Elibani, (613-951-9647), International Trade Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)*

Composite index remains unchanged

The leading indicator was unchanged in July after a slight increase in June, pulled down by a moderation in housing after a sharp gain the month before. Manufacturing contracted again. Five of the 10 components rose, the same as in June, while four fell and one was unchanged.

Household demand lost some of its recent vigour. While still positive, the trend of durable goods sales slowed, especially for furniture and appliances. Housing fell by 1.4%, as housing starts in Ontario backed off from the 10-year high set in June. However, continued low vacancy rates should keep new construction at high levels.

In manufacturing, there was no respite from the weakening trend. Shipments fell again and stocks rose, pushing their ratio 10% below the most recent peak of a year ago, to its lowest level since 1996.

The slump in demand was led by electronic products, where new orders have fallen by around 30% so far this year. This slowdown was felt by business services, where employment fell for a second time in three months, its worst performance since January 1991. Jobs in this industry were one of the pillars of growth last year.

The U.S. leading indicator edged up for a second straight month, with gains of 0.2% in June and 0.1% in May. The sources of growth remained narrow, centering on the impact of looser monetary policy on the money supply and the yield curve. The sources of weakness were the same as in Canada, notably manufacturing, housing and the stock market.

*For more information, consult the July 2001 issue of **Canadian economic observer** (paper: 11-010-XPB, \$23/\$227), or contact Francine Roy (613-951-3627), Current Economic Analysis Group. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)*

Manufacturing shipments fall

Manufacturing shipments contracted 1.9% in June to \$43.3 billion, led by sharp declines in the motor vehicle and computer and electronic product industries. June's result is the third monthly decrease in 2001, erasing the increase in May, and compounding the declining trend in manufacturing shipments that started in the autumn of 2000.

After three months of increased manufacturing activity, June shipments of motor vehicles decreased 6.1%. During the first six months of 2001, auto manufacturers cut back shipments by 14.6% compared with the same period of 2000. Shipments of computer and electronic products also continued to slide in June, following a brief reprieve in May. June shipments were reported at

\$2.1 billion, down 11.5% from May, and the lowest level since January 1999.

Shipments of computers and electronic products declined 42% from their August 2000 peak. High finished-product inventories, over-capacity and reduced demand continued to influence this industry. The petroleum and coal product industry, which decreased 6.1%, also contributed to June's lower shipments.

Shipments in 16 of 21 industries, representing 83% of total shipments, decreased in June. The aerospace product and parts industry was the one bright spot, reporting an increase of 16.6% in manufacturing shipments and partially offsetting the month's decline of all shipments.

(continued on page 3)

... Manufacturing shipments fall

Lower demand and rising finished-product inventories have challenged manufacturers in 2001, resulting in production slowdowns and layoffs in some industries. In July 2001, manufacturers still expected some reduction in production for the coming three months, but were mildly less pessimistic than in the previous quarter. Employment in the manufacturing sector edged up in July (+12,000); however, from January to July of 2001, manufacturing jobs fell by 41,000, more than in any other industry.

Manufacturers' shipments, June 2001

Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month
Canada	43,346	-1.9
Newfoundland	187	0.6
Prince Edward Island	103	2.9
Nova Scotia	742	2.7
New Brunswick	1,063	-10.5
Quebec	10,330	2.2
Ontario	22,835	-3.5
Manitoba	983	-0.4
Saskatchewan	598	0.2
Alberta	3,599	-2.0
British Columbia	2,902	-2.5
Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut	5	18.8

Inventories edged up 0.1% to \$65.5 billion in June, led by the fourth rise of finished product inventories in six months. Conversely, unfilled orders slipped 0.6%, led by diminishing orders for the aerospace product and parts, and the computer and electronic products industries. Goods-in-process and raw material inventories both decreased in June (-1.0% and -0.6%, respectively).

The largest contributor to the increase in inventories in June was the aerospace product and parts industry, which reported a 5.2% increase. The value of inventories in the wood products industry rose 3.2%, even though prices were down 1.7%. Decreases in inventories, meanwhile, were reported in the railroad rolling stock (-10.4%) and petroleum and coal products (-5.8%) industries.

The inventory-to-shipment ratio reached 1.51 in June, after declining to 1.48 in May. The trend, which had been consistently climbing since the fourth quarter of 1999, remained virtually unchanged for the third month in a row. Meanwhile, the finished product inventory-to-shipment ratio increased to 0.47, which was the highest level since July 1998.

The value of unfilled orders decreased 0.6% to \$49.5 billion, the first decrease since March. A 2% drop in the aerospace product and parts industry led the decline. Also dominated by the aerospace product and parts industry, new orders fell sharply in June, down 3.7% to \$43.1 billion.

The June 2001 issue of the *Monthly Survey of Manufacturing* (Internet: 31-001-X1B, \$15/\$147) is now available. For more information, contact the Dissemination Officer (1 866 873-8789; 613-951-9497; manufact@statcan.ca), or Craig Kuntz (613-951-7092; kuncrai@statcan.ca), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Wholesale sales rise slightly

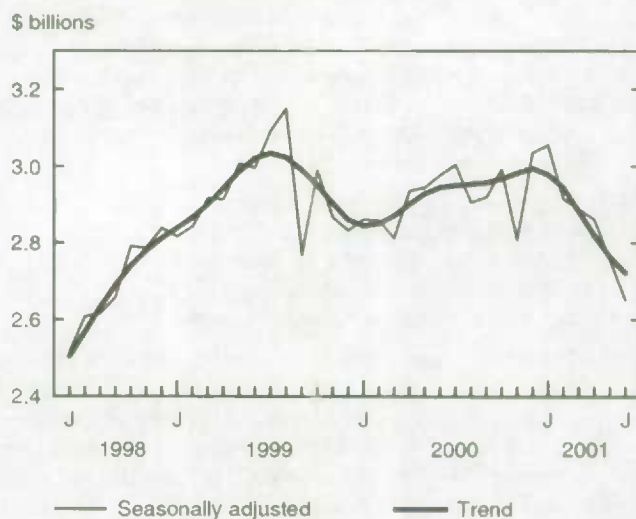
Wholesale sales rose a modest 0.2% to \$32.9 billion in June, after posting a record level in May. This increase originated in a strong growth in sales (+3.7%) in the automotive sector, which in turn is a result of strong imports and exports. If not for the sales reported by wholesalers of motor vehicles, parts and accessories, June sales would have fallen 0.5%.

Sales in this sector have been generally rising since the start of 2001. Among all wholesalers, this sector reported the highest growth in the second quarter, up 6.7%. Apart from the strong wholesale sales in the automotive sector, notable increases were also reported in the wholesaling of farm machinery and equipment (+4.2%), beverage, drug and tobacco products (+2.0%), and apparel and dry goods (+2.0%).

Of the 11 wholesale sectors, declines were reported in 5—accounting for about 51% of total wholesale activity. Nevertheless, as a result of the two consecutive monthly increases, wholesalers on balance also saw a second consecutive quarterly rise in sales, up 1.5% over the previous quarter. In general, wholesale sales have been rising in 2001 after levelling out during the latter half of last year.

A notable decline was again observed in the wholesaling of computers and other electronic products—down 3.8%. This was the fifth consecutive monthly decline for this sector. As a result,

Wholesale sales in electronics sector



wholesale sales have fallen sharply since the start of 2001, having eroded to September 1998 levels, despite a general rise during 2000. As well, there was a notable 2.4% drop in the wholesaling of industrial machinery and equipment.

(continued on page 4)

... Wholesale sales rise slightly

Wholesale trade, June 2001
Seasonally adjusted

	\$ millions	% change, previous month	% change, previous year
Canada	32,903	0.2	2.8
Newfoundland	214	0.4	-2.5
Prince Edward Island	60	-7.2	14.3
Nova Scotia	565	-0.2	-1.1
New Brunswick	412	-3.4	2.2
Quebec	6,651	-0.1	2.3
Ontario	16,353	0.8	1.0
Manitoba	953	-0.2	9.9
Saskatchewan	1,170	-3.0	31.9
Alberta	3,318	1.7	9.1
British Columbia	3,179	-1.1	-1.7
Yukon	10	-3.6	11.3
Northwest Territories	15	4.3	31.0
Nunavut	2	-42.1	-29.1

Only three provinces recorded sales increases: Alberta (+1.7%), Ontario (+0.8%), and Newfoundland (+0.4%). Not surprisingly, Ontario benefited from the strong wholesale sales in the automotive sector. Wholesalers in Alberta and Newfoundland reported healthier sales in the industrial machinery sector and in the hardware, plumbing and heating sector, despite the fact that these areas reported weaker sales nationally.

Wholesale inventories remained relatively unchanged at \$44.0 billion for a seventh consecutive month (-0.1%). Inventory levels have been at a plateau during all of 2001 after having climbed over the past several years. The June inventory-to-sales ratio remained unchanged from May at 1.34, somewhat below the levels recorded earlier in the year.

The June 2001 issue of *Wholesale trade* (Internet: 63-008-XIB, \$14/\$140) is now available. 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.

One household in 10 affected by food insecurity

An estimated 3 million Canadians, or about 10% of the population, were considered to be living in what is known as a "food-insecure" household at some point during 1998-99. About 8% of Canadians, or just under 2.5 million people, had to compromise the quality or the quantity of their diet at least once in 1998-99 because of a lack of money.

An additional 0.5 million people worried that they would not have enough to eat because they were short on cash. In general, households with food insecurity have limited or uncertain access to enough food for a healthy, active life. These households have reduced quality and variety of meals, and may have irregular food intake. There may be a need for recourse to emergency food sources or to other services to meet basic food needs. About one-fifth of individuals in food-insecure households received help from food banks, soup kitchens or other charitable agencies in the year before the survey.

Children up to the age of 17 were the group most likely to live in a food-insecure household (14%), and seniors aged 65 or older, least likely (4%). But children in such households are not necessarily undernourished—adult caregivers tend to sacrifice their own diet so that children will not be hungry.

Food insecurity in Canada is strongly associated with household income. More than one-third (35%) of people in low-income households reported some form of food insecurity in 1998-99. About 30% felt that their diet had been compromised. About 14% of middle-income households reported some form of food insecurity, and nearly 12% reported that their diet had been compromised.

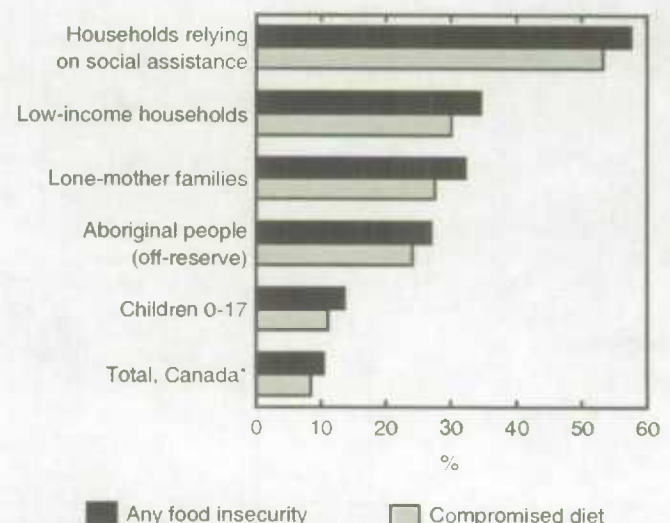
To some extent, the existence of food insecurity at higher income levels may have to do with the fact that annual income is a static measure that may not be sensitive to sudden economic changes that contribute to temporary bouts of food insecurity. For example, the impact of a job loss around the time of the NPHS

Note to readers

A household is considered to be **food insecure** if the person responding on behalf of the household acknowledged any of three circumstances stemming from a lack of money: worry that funds would be insufficient to buy food; not eating the quality or variety of food desired; or not having enough to eat. A household of three or four people was considered **low-income** if it had total income of less than \$20,000.

The study on food insecurity is based on data from the National Population Health Survey (NPHS).

Prevalence of food insecurity, 1998/99



*Excluding territories.

(continued on page 5)

... One household in 10 affected by food insecurity

interview would not be reflected in annual income, which covered the previous 12 months. As well, the possibility of some misinterpretation of the questions cannot be discounted.

Food insecurity also varied with the source of household income. About 58% of households relying on social assistance reported food insecurity. It was also relatively common in households dependent on Employment Insurance, Workers' Compensation, the Child Tax Benefit, support or alimony, or that had no income.

Many lone-parent households, particularly those headed by women, have low incomes and depend on social assistance. Not surprisingly, one-third (32%) of all single-mother households were food insecure to some extent, and 28% reported their diet had been compromised.

Several health problems were more prevalent among people in food-insecure households than among those in households where the financial ability to acquire food was not a concern. Seventeen

per cent of individuals in food-insecure households described their health as "fair" or "poor"—more than twice the proportion (7%) for those who did not experience food insecurity. Almost one-third (31%) of people in food-insecure households reported emotional distress—three times the rate of 10% in food-secure households.

Paradoxically, food insecurity was associated with obesity. Some research has shown that food-insecure people are more likely to "binge eat" or choose higher calorie foods when food is available. The analysis of NPHS data indicates that 15% of residents of food-insecure households were obese, compared with 12% of residents of households where food security was not a problem.

For more information, consult *Health reports*, Vol. 12, no. 4 (Internet : 82-003-XIE, \$15/\$44; paper : 82-003-XPE, \$20/\$58), or contact Janet Che (613-951-2544; cheajan@statcan.ca) or Jiajian Chen (613-951-5059; chenjia@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

New from Statistics Canada

Focus on culture Spring 2001

Statistics Canada's quarterly publication for culture statistics, *Focus on culture*, presents reports and analysis of current issues and trends in culture. The spring 2001 issue features two articles: "Larger cinemas outperform smaller ones" and "Rebuilding the movie theatre industry."

The first article describes how the film exhibition industry has had to restructure to compete more effectively against home entertainment. The second article describes the restructuring of the film exhibition industry on a global level.

The spring 2001 edition of *Focus on culture*, Vol.13, no.1 (Internet: 87-004-XIE, \$7/\$20; paper: 87-004-XPB, \$9/\$27) is now available. For more information, contact Client Services (1 800 307-3382; fax: 613-951-9040; cult.tourstats@statcan.ca), Culture, Tourism and the Centre for Education Statistics.

Communications in both official languages between Quebec regional offices, headquarters and central agencies 2000

This special study, conducted on behalf of Treasury Board Secretariat, was designed to collect information on the use of both official languages at work in the bilingual regions of Quebec. The 2,100 federal employees contacted for the study were asked about their communications with their headquarters and with central agencies. They were asked about the languages of their communications through various media, such as telephone, e-mail, fax, draft documents and in meetings.

The 2000 special study *Communications in both official languages between Quebec regional offices, headquarters and central agencies* (Internet: 12F0089XIE, free), is available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca). From the Our products and services page, choose Free publications, then Population and demography. For more information, contact Jane Mulvihill (613-951-2293), Social Survey Methods Division.

The future for Canada-U.S. container port rivalries

The future for Canada-U.S. container port rivalries explores how major Canadian container ports might fare in an increasingly competitive environment, which characterizes the ocean container shipping industry. The study includes also a review of the North American container market and competing ports in the United States.

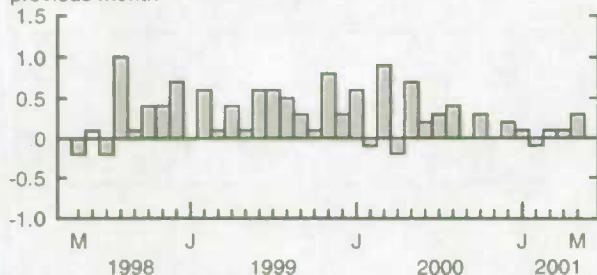
This report uses data from two sources, Statistics Canada's marine international origin/destination database and the U.S. Department of Transport Maritime Administration's Annual Import Export Waterborne Databank.

The *Future for Canada-U.S. Container Port Rivalries* (Internet: 54F0001XIE, free) is available on Statistics Canada's Web site (www.statcan.ca) under Our products and services. Downloadable research papers and Transport and warehousing. For more information, contact Jean-Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; larocque@statcan.ca), Transportation Division.

Current trends

Gross domestic product

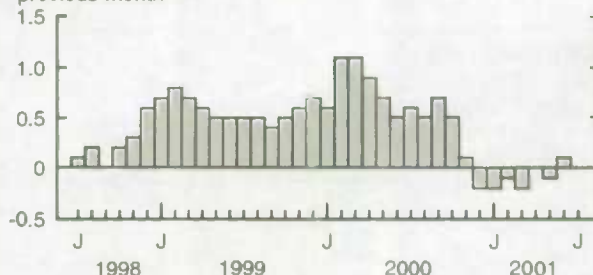
% change,
previous month



Total economic activity advanced 0.3% in May, the strongest showing in seven months.

Composite Index

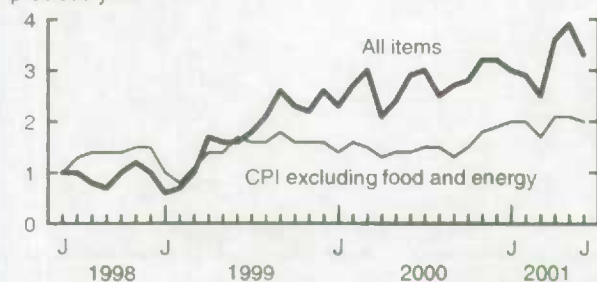
% change,
previous month



The leading indicator was unchanged (0.0%) in July, pulled down by a moderation in housing.

Consumer Price Index

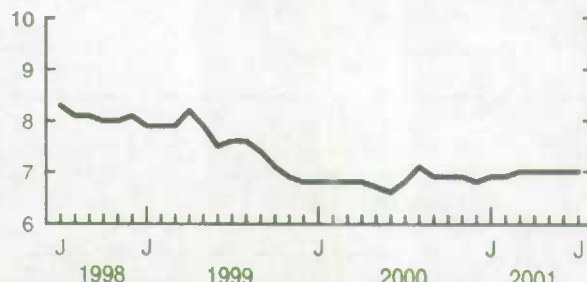
% change,
previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 3.3% higher in June than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 2.0%.

Unemployment rate

%



In July, the unemployment rate held at 7.0% for the fifth consecutive month.

Manufacturing

\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments declined 1.9% in June to \$43.3 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders posted a 0.6% decrease to \$49.5 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In June, the value of merchandise exports declined 1.4% to \$36.1 billion. Imports increased 0.8% to \$30.3 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 (\$ billions, 1992)	May	798.8	0.3%	1.7%
Composite Index (1992=100)	July*	166.2	0.0%	1.1%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q1 2001	44.9	-6.9%	-9.7%
Capacity utilization rate (%)	Q1 2001	84.1	-1.0†	1.5†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	June*	24.2	-0.3%	5.2%
Department store sales (\$ billions)	June	1.65	0.6%	7.6%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	June	133.8	1.5%	0.0%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	June*	32.9	0.2%	2.8%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	July	15.08	-0.1%	1.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	July	7.0	0.0†	0.2†
Participation rate (%)	July	65.8	-0.2†	0.1†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	May	662.05	0.4%	1.4%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	July	155	-3.7%	-10.9%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	June*	36.1	-1.4%	-0.1%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	June*	30.3	0.8%	-0.6%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	June*	5.8	-0.7	0.2
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)	June	43.3	-1.9%	-3.4%
New orders (\$ billions)	June	43.1	-3.7%	-5.1%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	June	49.5	-0.6%	2.3%
Inventory/shipments ratio	June	1.51	0.03	0.13
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	July*	117.1	-0.3%	2.6%
Industrial Product Price Index (1992=100)	June	129.8	-0.9%	1.7%
Raw Materials Price Index (1992=100)	June	142.4	-1.6%	-1.9%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	June	106.0	0.3%	2.9%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

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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:
paper, \$145; online, \$109. All prices are in Canadian dollars and exclude
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Products released from August 16 to 21, 2001

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS			
Legal aid in Canada: Resource and caseload statistics	1999/2000	85F0015XIE	20
Legal aid in Canada: Resource and caseload data tables	1999/2000	85F0028XIE	24
CULTURE, TOURISM AND THE CENTRE FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS			
Focus on culture, Vol. 13, no. 1	Spring 2001	87-004-XIE	7/20
Focus on culture, Vol. 13, no. 1	Spring 2001	87-004-XPB	9/27
International travel, advance information, Vol. 17, no. 6	June 2001	66-001-PIB	6/55
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES			
New motor vehicle sales	June 2001	63-007-XIB	13/124
Wholesale trade	June 2001	63-008-XIB	14/140
INTERNATIONAL TRADE			
Exports by commodity	May 2001	65-004-XMB	37/361
Exports by commodity	May 2001	65-004-XPB	78/773
Imports by commodity	June 2001	65-007-XMB	37/361
Imports by commodity	June 2001	65-007-XPB	78/773
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY			
Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins	June 2001	46-002-XIB	5/47
Monthly Survey of Manufacturing	June 2001	31-001-XIB	15/147
Oils and fats	June 2001	32-006-XIB	5/47
Primary iron and steel	June 2001	41-001-XIB	5/47
Production and shipments of steel pipe and tubing	June 2001	41-011-XIB	5/47
Pulpwood and wood residue statistics	June 2001	25-001-XIB	36/55
PRICES			
The Consumer Price Index	July 2001	62-001-XIB	8/77
The Consumer Price Index	July 2001	62-001-XPB	11/103
SPECIAL SURVEYS			
Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating	2000	71-542-XIE	free
Caring Canadians, involved Canadians: highlights from the 2000 National Survey of Giving, Volunteering and Participating	2000	71-542-XPE	15
TRANSPORTATION			
Aviation service bulletin, Vol. 33, no. 7	2001	51-004-XIB	8/82

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