



Infomat

A Weekly Review

Friday, May 17, 2002

INSIDE

◆ Record sales of new motor vehicles in first quarter

Despite declines in both March and February, new motor vehicle sales reached an all-time high in the first quarter. In all, 139,936 new motor vehicles were sold in March, down 5,458 units from February. The decline was mainly attributable to a steep drop in truck sales.

◆ Computer investment strongest where employee education levels highest

Workers with a university education are more likely to be found in the most technology-intensive workplaces. Conversely, companies that invest heavily in technology generally have employees who are more highly educated than workers in other businesses.

◆ Life expectancy gap between sexes narrows

A woman born in 1999 could still expect to live, on average, longer than a man, but the gap in life expectancy between the sexes continues to close. From 1979 to 1999, life expectancy for women improved by 2.9 years, while life expectancy for men improved a substantial 4.9 years.

◆ Wide range of regional health data available for first time

The first extensive set of data from the new Canadian Community Health Survey, covering 28 variables from obesity to drinking, marks a turning point in collecting information on the health of Canadians.

Consumer demand boosts trade employment

Continuing the strong upward trend that began at the start of the year, employment increased by 37,000 in April, bringing gains over the first four months of the year to 207,000. The unemployment rate edged down 0.1 percentage points to 7.6% in April.

The strength in the housing market continued to fuel consumer demand for household-related items. As a result, employment rose in furniture and home furnishings stores, general merchandise stores, and building material and garden equipment and supplies dealers. Overall, trade employment increased by 24,000, bringing gains in the last two months to 42,000.

The manufacturing sector lost 19,000 jobs in April. Nevertheless, the sector is still up 81,000 jobs since the start of the year. Employment in health care and social assistance rose by 25,000, continuing the upward trend that began last July. Employment increased by 11,000 in transportation and warehousing, although 42,000 jobs have been lost in this sector since August.

(continued on page 2)

Labour Force Survey, April 2002
Seasonally adjusted¹

	Labour force		Employment		Unemployment	
	'000	% change, previous month	'000	% change, previous month	'000	rate (%)
Canada	16,559.1	0.2	15,296.7	0.2	1,262.5	7.6
Newfoundland and Labrador	257.4	-0.1	217.9	1.4	39.4	15.3
Prince Edward Island	76.5	1.1	67.9	2.4	8.6	11.2
Nova Scotia	473.5	0.7	427.4	0.6	46.2	9.8
New Brunswick	386.4	-0.3	347.2	0.0	39.2	10.1
Quebec	3,920.6	0.5	3,584.3	0.8	336.3	8.6
Ontario	6,463.9	0.0	6,012.6	0.0	451.3	7.0
Manitoba	595.7	-0.3	563.0	-0.8	32.7	5.5
Saskatchewan	502.8	-0.3	473.0	-0.5	29.8	5.9
Alberta	1,743.2	0.1	1,650.7	-0.3	92.5	5.3
British Columbia	2,139.2	0.4	1,952.7	0.7	186.5	8.7

¹ Data are for both sexes aged 15 and over.

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Canada

Consumer demand boosts... (continued from page 1)

Employment in public administration fell by 22,000 in April, mainly because of losses in Ontario, Quebec and British Columbia. The downward trend in natural resources employment continued with a decrease of 8,000, all in Alberta. Losses in this industry since September are estimated at 26,000.

April's increase was concentrated in full-time employment among adult men. Self-employment increased by 30,000, due almost entirely to gains among men. This was the first major increase in self-employment in nearly two years. Employment among women and youths changed little in April.

Quebec employment continued to surge, adding another 29,000 jobs to bring the total so far this year to 98,000. April's increase was concentrated in retail and wholesale trade, and in management of companies, administration and other support services. The unemployment rate fell 0.3 percentage points to 8.6%.

Employment in British Columbia was also up (+13,000), bringing gains so far this year to 40,000. An increase of 17,000 jobs in trade in April offset losses in the first three months of the year. The unemployment rate in April was 8.7%, down from 9.0%. For the second consecutive month, employment in Newfoundland and Labrador increased by 3,000, pushing the unemployment rate down from 16.6% to 15.3%.

Employment in Prince Edward Island grew by 1,600, with gains divided equally between manufacturing and trade. The unemployment rate fell from 12.4% to 11.2%. Manitoba experienced a decline of 4,000 jobs, causing the unemployment rate to rise half a percentage point to 5.5%.

While labour market conditions were little changed in Ontario in April, employment is up 43,000 since the start of the year. The information, culture and recreation sector posted gains in April, while declines were observed in public administration and in management of companies, administrative and other support services. The unemployment rate remained at 7.0%.

Employment strength in Canada over the first four months of 2002 (+1.4%) is in sharp contrast to the weakness in the United States, where employment over the same period declined 0.1 percentage points.

The publication **Labour force information** (Internet: 71-001-PIB, \$8/\$78; paper: 71-001-PPB, \$11/\$103) is now available. To order data, or for general information, contact the Client Services Unit (1-866-873-8788; 613-951-4090; labour@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Geoff Bowlby (613-951-3325) or Vincent Ferrao (613-951-4750), Labour Statistics Division. (See also "Current trends" on page 7.)

Employer pension plans (trusteed pension funds)

The results of the biennial census of trusteed pension funds are now available for free as a set of printed tables. These tables provide data on revenues, expenditures, and assets cross tabulated by the following classification variables: contributory status, type of plan, asset size group, membership size group, type of industry, type of organization, sector, and investment decision. As well, there are some secondary cross tabulations of the classification variables themselves. No analysis of the results is provided with these tables.

For analysis of trusteed pension fund data, consult the **Quarterly estimates of trusteed pension funds** (Internet: 74-001-XIB, \$14/\$47; paper: 74-001-XPB, \$19/\$62). For a copy of the free tables, or for more information, contact Client Services (1 888 297-7355 or 613 951-7355; income@statcan.ca), Income Statistics Division.

Record sales of new motor vehicles in first quarter

New motor vehicle sales reached an all-time high in the first quarter, despite declines in both March (-3.8%) and February (-0.6%). In all, 139,936 new motor vehicles were sold in March, down 5,458 units from February.

Sales in the first quarter of 2002 were 1.5% higher than in the fourth quarter of 2001, when a sizable increase was observed (+7.5%). Compared with the first quarter of 2001, sales in the first three months of 2002 were up 13.7%.

After moving upward throughout 2001, new motor vehicle sales have levelled off in recent months. Sales were generally stable for most of 2000, except for significant declines in the fall.

In March, truck sales fell more sharply than sales of passenger cars. In all, 63,038 new trucks were sold, down 6.9% from February. This was the largest drop since October 2000.

Of all the trucks sold in March (excluding heavy trucks and buses), roughly 40% were light trucks, 30% were sport-utility vehicles and another 30% were minivans. These proportions, calculated from data unadjusted for seasonality, were basically unchanged from March 2001.

After moving upward since the summer of 2001, new truck sales have stalled in recent months. In the first part of 2001, truck sales were generally stable, following declines in the fall of 2000.

Sales of new passenger cars declined for a second straight month. In March, 76,898 vehicles were sold, down 1.0% from February. Most of this decline was attributable to overseas-built cars, which were down 3.1% from February. Nevertheless, March's sales for these cars were 22.2% higher than in March 2001. Sales of North American-built passenger cars showed almost no change in March compared with the previous month.

New motor vehicle sales declined in all provinces except Prince Edward Island (+2.1%), New Brunswick (+1.1%) and Nova Scotia (+0.6%). New motor vehicle sales in the Maritime provinces have maintained an upward movement since the start of 2001.

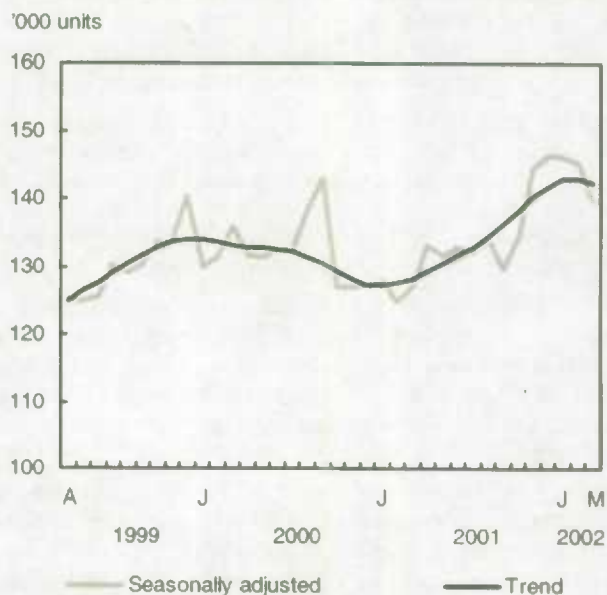
The other provinces all registered losses greater than the national average (-3.8%) except Ontario (-1.2%) and Quebec (-3.3%). This was the third straight decline for both of these provinces. The upward movement sustained by new motor vehicle sales in these two provinces since the start of 2001 has stalled due to losses registered in the first three months of 2002. Even so, quarterly sales were still at least 10.0% higher than a year earlier for each of these provinces.

Note to readers

North American-built new motor vehicles include vehicles manufactured or assembled in Canada, the United States or Mexico. All other new motor vehicles are considered manufactured overseas.

For reasons of confidentiality, Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut are included in British Columbia.

New motor vehicle sales



The March 2002 issue of *New motor vehicle sales* (Internet: 63-007-XIB, \$13/\$124) is now available. For general information or to order data, contact the Client Services Unit (1-877-421-3067; 613-951-3549; retailinfo@statcan.ca). For analytical information, contact Clérance Kimanyi (613-951-6363; clerance.kimanyi@statcan.ca), Distributive Trades Division.

Technical report on the analysis of small groups in the General Social Survey

The *Technical report on the analysis of small groups in the 1999 General Social Survey* (GSS) describes the technical and methodological challenges involved in analysing small groups, such as Aboriginal people, immigrants and visible minorities.

It contains a general description of these challenges, including over-sampling, response rates, non-response due to language, sampling variability and whether the data can be released. In addition, it discusses the findings from the 1999 GSS with respect to the victimization, perceptions and fear of these small groups.

Technical report on the analysis of small groups in the 1999 General Social Survey (Internet: 85F0036XIE, \$25) is now available. For more information, contact Information and Client Services (1-800-387-2231; 613-951-9023), Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics.

Computer investment strongest where employee education levels highest

Workers with a university education are more likely to be found in the most technology-intensive workplaces. Conversely, companies that invest heavily in technology generally have employees who are more highly educated than workers in other businesses.

Since computer use on the job has expanded so rapidly, doubling from one-third to two-thirds of all workers during the 1990s, the links among computers, training and education could have a large impact on the demand for labour. Some analysts have linked computerization to increasing demand for highly educated or skilled workers, a process termed skill-biased technological change.

Due to rapidly changing computer hardware and software, technological leaders may favour workers who possess the educational credentials that demonstrate they have learned how to learn. This notion is further supported by the elevated training levels observed for more highly educated workers and their greater self-reliance in learning software applications.

The link between education and computer technologies is strongest at the highest levels of educational attainment and computer investments. Highly-educated employees, or those with at least a university degree, were more likely to work in companies that spent more than \$2,500 per employee to implement innovations in hardware or software during the previous year.

Another indicator of the link between education and computerization is the level of education of employees hired when the hardware or software is being implemented. Individuals newly hired in computer-implementing workplaces had higher levels of education than their co-workers who had worked at the company longer.

Among workplaces that did not invest in new hardware or software in the previous year, there was no difference in the education levels between longer-serving employees and those

Note to readers

This article is based on a study using data from the 1999 Workplace and Employee Survey (WES). The WES provided detailed information on major hardware and software implementations in workplaces for a broad range of industries covering the 12 months leading up to April 1999. It also contains detailed information on computer use, computer training and other types of training and education of a sample of employees within each of those workplaces.

newly hired. Thus, the hiring of highly educated employees is not simply a reflection of higher levels of education among labour force entrants.

Computer investment is associated with increased computer-related training. This is not surprising since employees need to learn how to use new hardware and software. It also makes sense that highly educated workers should be better able to train themselves.

Employer-provided computer training is only part of the picture. In fact, just 23% of computer users cited employer-provided formal training as the most important method in learning their main, work-related computer application. Far more employees mentioned self-training (45%) or informal training from co-workers or supervisors (44%) as their most important learning method.

The reliance on computer self-training was greatest among the highly educated. About 57% of university graduates claimed it was the most important learning method. The comparable rate for other workers was 40%.

*The study **Working smarter: The skill bias of computer technologies**, 1999 is now available (Internet: 71-584-MIE, free) from the Statistics Canada's website (www.statcan.ca). From the Our products and services page, choose Free publications and then Labour. A paper version (71-584-MPE, \$15) will be available soon. For more information, contact Ted Wannell (613-951-3546), Business and Labour Market Analysis Division.*

Life expectancy gender gap narrows

The gap in life expectancy between the sexes has been narrowing over the past two decades. From 1979 to 1999, life expectancy for women improved by 2.9 years, while life expectancy for men improved a substantial 4.9 years.

Life expectancy at birth, a key indicator of a population's health status, reached record highs for both sexes in 1999. A man born in 1999 could expect to live 76.3 years, up 0.2 years from 1998. A woman's life expectancy at birth reached 81.7 years, also up 0.2 years.

Age-standardized mortality rates from all causes of death declined 2% for both sexes to 637.7 deaths per 100,000 population. The rate for men, while remaining higher than that for women, decreased to 816.5 deaths per 100,000 population. The rate for women fell to 505.4 deaths.

After five years of declines, the infant mortality rate stayed the same in 1999 at 5.3 deaths per 1,000 live births. The mortality rate of infant boys was 5.7 deaths, slightly higher than 4.8 for infant girls.

The infant mortality rate has declined by 16% since 1993. In this period, the infant mortality rate of boys dropped 18%, while that of girls declined 15%. From 1998 to 1999, the infant mortality rate declined in all provinces and territories except Manitoba, Ontario and Alberta.

About 36% of deaths in 1999 were due to diseases of the circulatory system (over 78,900 deaths), while malignant neoplasms accounted for 28% (61,650 deaths). Among diseases of the circulatory system, the most common causes of death were ischaemic heart disease (19%) and cerebrovascular disease (7%).

Over one-half of cancer-related deaths were in one of four areas: lung; colorectal; female breast; and prostate. Lung cancer age-standardized mortality rates for both sexes increased slightly.

Age-standardized mortality rates for female breast cancer fell for the third straight year. There was similar good news for men, as age-standardized mortality rates for prostate cancer fell for the fourth straight year.

Deaths due to the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) fell 11% to 431 in 1999, the lowest level since Canada began classifying them in 1987. Among men, 365 died from HIV infection, down 12% in 1999, while 66 women died, down 6%.

Note to Readers

Life expectancy is calculated from birth and death data that exclude: stillbirths; births and deaths of non-residents of Canada and residents of Canada whose province/territory of residence was unknown; deaths for which age of deceased was unknown.

Age-standardized mortality rates are calculated to compare death rates in populations that differ in age composition across time and/or geographic area.

Life expectancy at birth, 1999

	Men	Women
	in years	
Canada	76.3	81.7
Newfoundland and Labrador	75.2	80.2
Prince Edward Island	75.7	81.2
Nova Scotia	75.7	81.6
New Brunswick	75.1	81.6
Quebec	75.4	81.5
Ontario	76.8	81.8
Manitoba	75.1	80.8
Saskatchewan	75.4	81.8
Alberta	76.6	81.7
British Columbia	77.3	82.6
Yukon ¹	75.9	79.0
Northwest Territories ¹	72.6	78.6
Nunavut ¹	67.7	70.2

¹ Life expectancy for Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut should be interpreted with caution due to small underlying counts of births and deaths.

Deaths reported as suicides (4,074) were up a sharp 10% in 1999, the biggest percentage increase since 1986. There were 3.8 suicides among men for every suicide among women. Suicides increased 10% among both sexes.

People in their 40s accounted for almost one-quarter of the suicides (1,002), up 24% from 1998. The second largest number of suicides were by people in their 30s, while the number of teen suicides fell 6% to 284.

The shelf tables *Causes of death, 1999* (paper: 84F0208XPB, \$20) are now available. To order this product or custom tabulations, call Client Services (613-951-1746), Health Statistics Division. For more information, contact Patricia Tully (613-951-1759; patricia.tully@statcan.ca) or Leslie Geran (613-951-5243; leslie.geran@statcan.ca).

Stillbirths

The number of stillbirths with a gestational age of 28 weeks or more, known as late fetal deaths, rose slightly in 1999, halting six straight years of declines. Canada registered 1,087 stillbirths at 28 weeks or more, up from the record low of 1,079 in 1998.

Older mothers incurred the highest rate of stillbirths of 20 weeks or longer gestation. In 1999, there were 8.3 stillbirths for every 1,000 total births to mothers aged 35 and older. Mothers aged 20 to 34 had the largest share of stillbirths (72%). But because they had the largest number of total births, they experienced the lowest stillbirth rate, 5.5 for every 1,000 total births.

The shelf tables *Births, 1999* (paper: 84F0210XPB, \$20) are now available. To order this product or custom tabulations, call Client Services (613-951-1746). For more information, contact Patricia Tully (613-951-1759; patricia.tully@statcan.ca) or Leslie Geran (613-951-5243; leslie.geran@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.

Wide range of regional health data available for first time

The first extensive set of data from the new Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS), covering 28 variables from obesity to drinking, marks a turning point in collecting information on the health of Canadians.

For the first time, health-related characteristics of the population can be compared not only at provincial and territorial levels, but at the health region level as well. From September 2000 to November 2001, the CCHS collected information from more than 130,000 individuals, aged 12 and older, in 136 health regions covering all provinces and territories.

These data will help researchers and analysts track population health and the impact of health programs by health region. The results will also allow more detailed study of groups with special circumstances, including seniors and single mothers.

The 28 variables include dietary practices, frequency of heavy drinking, exposure to second-hand smoke, body mass index, pap smear, screening mammography, life stress, high blood pressure, diabetes, leisure-time physical activity, and many more. Information on all these variables is available by age, sex and various levels of geography, down to the local health region level. Other new and updated data, particularly on unmet health care needs, are also available.

Overall, CCHS data show that 61% of Canadians aged 12 and over rated their health as either very good or excellent in 2000/01. However, some large urban centres had significantly higher than average proportions of residents reporting very good or excellent, while some regions in the Far North had significantly lower than average proportions.

One-fifth (20%) of Canadians were considered heavy drinkers, according to the CCHS. That is, they had consumed five or more drinks on one occasion at least 12 times in the year prior to the survey. Predominantly urban health regions had the lowest proportions of people who were considered heavy drinkers. Health regions in the Far North were proportionately high in heavy drinkers.

The CCHS looked at traditional indicators of health, but also collected revealing new measures, including contact with alternative health care providers and exposure to second-hand smoke.

Almost 28% of the non-smoking population aged 12 and older reported to the CCHS that they were exposed to second-hand smoke on most days in the month prior to the survey. Teenagers aged 15 to 19 were the age group most often exposed to second-hand smoke, followed by individuals aged 20 to 24.

Just over one-tenth (11%) of Canadians had consulted an alternative health care provider at least once during the 12 months prior to the survey. Alternative health care providers include massage therapists, homeopaths, herbalists and acupuncturists. Women were almost twice as likely as men to have consulted such providers. People living in rural health regions had significantly low rates of contact.

Although the proportion of people who are active in their leisure time has grown, the proportion who are obese has also increased.

Between 1994/95 and 2000/01, the number of obese Canadians aged 20 to 64 increased 24%, or more than 500,000 to almost 2.8 million. These individuals represented about 15% of the adult population, or one out of every seven people, up from 13% six years earlier.

At the same time, 7.8 million Canadians in the same age group were classified as active or moderately active in their leisure time, up 21% from 1994/95. They represented 41% of the population in 2000/01, compared with 37% six years earlier.

However, the CCHS showed clearly that the individuals who were most in need of physical activity – that is, obese people – were the least active. In 1994/95, about 33% of obese people participated in at least moderate physical activity. This proportion remained essentially unchanged in 2000/01.

Rather, the increase was entirely attributable to individuals whose weight was in the acceptable range, or who were considered overweight. In 1994/95, 38% of these people were at least moderately active. Six years later, that proportion had increased to 43%.

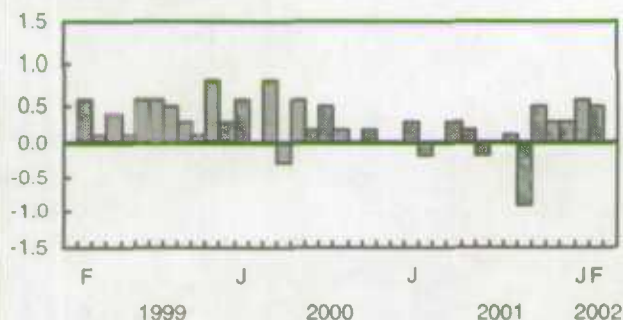
Obesity is an extreme form of being overweight. While adults measuring 1.6 metres are considered overweight if they weigh more than 68 kg, they are considered obese if they tip the scales at 81 kg. An adult who is 1.75 metres is overweight at 77 kg, and obese at 93 kg.

*Data from the Canadian Community Health Survey is available in the latest issue of **Health indicators** (Internet: 82-221-XIE, free). See Statistics Canada's website (www.statcan.ca). For more information, contact Jason Gilmore (613-951-7118; jason.gilmore@statcan.ca), Health Statistics Division.*

Current trends

Gross domestic product

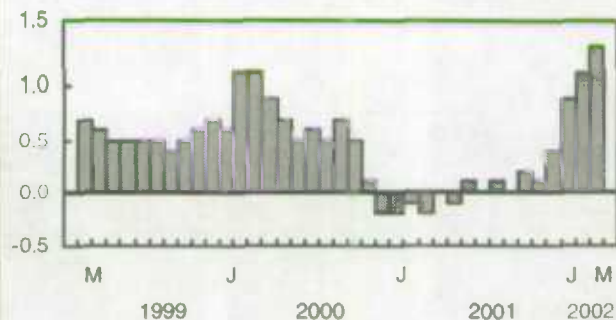
% change, previous month



Total economic activity advanced 0.5% in February, after rising 0.6% in January.

Composite index

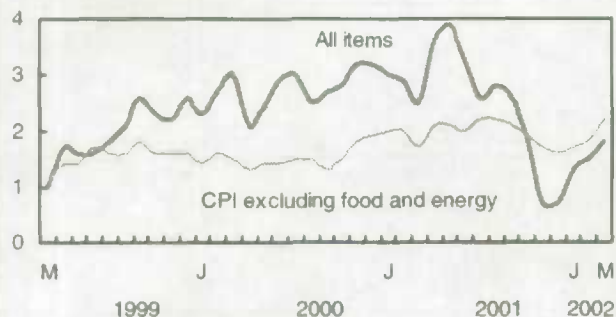
% change, previous month



The leading indicator gained 1.3% in March. Household demand remained a pillar of strength, while manufacturing continued to lag.

Consumer price index

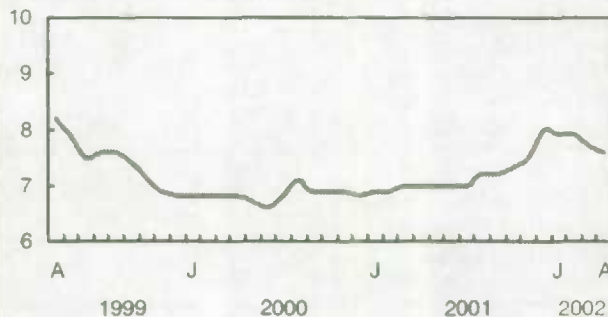
% change, previous year



Consumer prices for goods and services were 1.8% higher in March than they were a year earlier. Excluding food and energy, prices rose 2.2%.

Unemployment rate

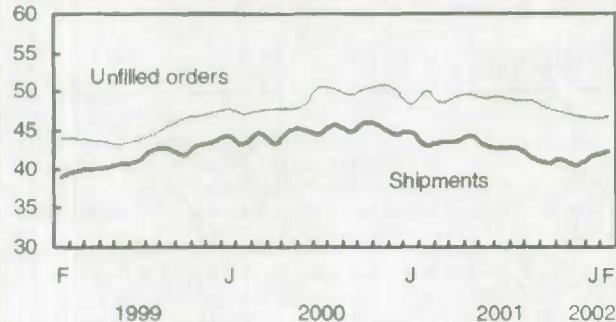
%



In April, the unemployment rate fell 0.1 percentage points to 7.6%.

Manufacturing

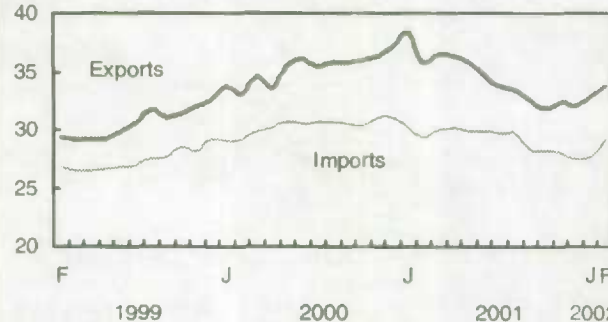
\$ billions



Manufacturers' shipments increased 0.8% in February to \$42.1 billion. The backlog of unfilled orders rose 0.5% to \$46.7 billion.

Merchandise trade

\$ billions



In February, the value of merchandise exports rose 2.7% to \$33.7 billion. Imports climbed 5.1% to \$29.1 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 (\$ billions, 1997) ¹	February	953.1	0.5%	1.8%
Composite Index (1992=100)	March	173.0	1.3%	4.1%
Operating profits of enterprises (\$ billions)	Q4 2001	33.8	-5.6%	-29.9%
Capacity utilization rate (%) ²	Q4 2001	80.3	-1.2†	-4.8†
DOMESTIC DEMAND				
Retail trade (\$ billions)	February	25.2	-0.1%	6.9%
New motor vehicle sales (thousands of units)	March*	139.9	-3.8%	10.2%
Wholesale trade (\$ billions)	February	33.8	0.2%	5.6%
LABOUR				
Employment (millions)	April*	15.3	0.2%	1.4%
Unemployment rate (%)	April*	7.6	-0.1†	0.6†
Participation rate (%)	April*	66.6	0.0†	0.5†
Average weekly earnings (\$)	February	674.50	0.33%	2.12%
Help-wanted Index (1996=100)	April	126.6	0.2%	-21.4%
Regular Employment Insurance beneficiaries (in thousands)	February	553.5	-1.0%	12.1%
INTERNATIONAL TRADE				
Merchandise exports (\$ billions)	February	33.7	2.7%	-5.9%
Merchandise imports (\$ billions)	February	29.1	5.1%	-0.7%
Merchandise trade balance (all figures in \$ billions)	February	4.5	-0.5	-1.9
MANUFACTURING				
Shipments (\$ billions)	March*	41.7	-0.7%	-4.2%
New orders (\$ billions)	March*	42.3	-0.3%	0.9%
Unfilled orders (\$ billions)	March*	47.6	1.4%	-2.1%
Inventory/shipments ratio	March*	1.49	0.01	-0.01
PRICES				
Consumer Price Index (1992=100)	March	117.7	0.7%	1.8%
Industrial Product Price Index (1997=100)	March	107.2	0.6%	-1.2%
Raw Materials Price Index (1997=100)	March	111.0	5.5%	-7.0%
New Housing Price Index (1992=100)	March*	108.7	0.4%	3.3%

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

* new this week

† percentage point

¹ 1997 replaces 1992 as the base year used in determining prices for gross domestic product by industry. Also, valuation has been changed from factor cost to basic prices.

² Calculation of the rates of capacity use is now based on the 1997 North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), which has replaced the 1980 Standard Industrial Classification.

Infomat

A weekly review

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Products released from May 9 to 15, 2002

SUBJECT AREA Title of product	Period	Catalogue number	Price (\$) (issue/subscription)
AGRICULTURE			
Census agricultural region boundary file for the 2001 Census of Agriculture	2001	92F0174XCB	100
Farm data: Initial release	2001	95F0301XIE	free
CANADIAN CENTRE FOR JUSTICE STATISTICS			
Technical report on the analysis of small groups in the General Social Survey	1999	85F0036XIE	25
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES			
New motor vehicle sales	March 2002	63-007-XIB	13/124
HEALTH STATISTICS			
Deaths	1999	84F0211XPB	20
Leading causes of death at different ages, Canada	1999	84F0503XPB	20
HOUSEHOLD SURVEYS			
Labour force information	April 2002	71-001-PIB	8/78
Labour force information	April 2002	71-001-PPB	11/103
INVESTMENT AND CAPITAL STOCK			
Building permits	March 2002	64-001-XIE	14/145
MANUFACTURING, CONSTRUCTION AND ENERGY			
Construction type plywood	March 2002	35-001-XIB	5/47
Natural gas transportation and distribution	December 2001	55-002-XIB	13/125
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