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MAJOR RELEASES

- **Consumer Price Index, March 1992**
 In March, the CPI year-to-year increase was 1.6%, down from the 1.7% increase reported in February.
- **Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade, February 1992** 9
 Following the considerable increase in imports and exports during January, there was no significant overall improvement in the trade figures for February.
- **Sales of Natural Gas, February 1992** 11
 Sales of natural gas (including direct sales) in Canada during February 1992 totalled 6 390 million cubic metres, an 8.5% increase from February 1991.

DATA AVAILABILITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Department Store Sales - Advance Release, March 1992 12
- Export and Import Price Indexes, February 1992 12
- Steel Primary Forms, Week Ending April 11, 1992 12
- Stocks of Frozen Poultry Products, April 1, 1992 12

PUBLICATION RELEASED 13

MAJOR RELEASE DATES: Week of April 21-24 14



MAJOR RELEASES

Consumer Price Index

March 1992

National Highlights

All-items

The All-items Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada increased 1.6% between March 1991 and March 1992 to a level of 127.5 (1986=100). In the first three months of the year, the 12-month increases remained relatively stable, 1.6% in January, 1.7% in February and 1.6% in March.

On a month-to-month basis, the All-items index rose 0.3% between February and March, following a moderate 0.1% increase in February. In March, six of the seven major component indexes registered increases ranging from 0.2% for Clothing to 1.2% for Transportation. The Housing index declined 0.1%. The largest contribution to the 0.3% rise in the CPI was attributable to the Transportation index, followed by the Food index.

In seasonally adjusted terms, the All-items index moved up 0.4% after no change in December 1991 and after increasing 0.1% in January and 0.2% in February.

The compound annual rate of increase, based on the seasonally adjusted index levels over the latest three-month period (December 1991 to March 1992) was 2.5%. This was higher than in recent months and suggests a moderately accelerating trend.

Food

The Food index climbed 0.4% in March, following a 0.2% rise in February. In March, the Food Purchased from Stores index advanced sharply by 0.7% (0.1% in February), while the index for Food Purchased from Restaurants edged up 0.1%.

A large proportion of the 0.7% rise in the index for Food Purchased from Stores was attributable to an 8.1% increase in the Fresh Vegetables index. In March, prices of salad vegetables (tomatoes, lettuce, cucumbers and celery) usually fall, causing the Fresh Vegetables price index to decline. In March of this year, however, tomato prices rose 22.2%, attributable mainly to the cold, damp Spring in the growing areas of the United States. As well, some price increases

were noted for fresh fruit (apples and bananas), beef, eggs, bakery products, breakfast cereal and fruit juices. However, lower prices for low-fat milk, chicken, pork, veal and carbonated beverages partly counterbalanced these increases. A price war among grocery chain stores in Ontario that began in January and continued into March explained the lower prices.

Over the 12-month period from March 1991 to March 1992, the Food index fell 0.7%, following declines of 1.0% in January and 0.8% in February. As in January and February, it was the decline in the Food Purchased from Stores index that pulled the Food index down, while price increases in the Food Purchased from Restaurants index continued to be registered.

All-items excluding Food

On a month-to-month basis, the All-items excluding Food index increased 0.3% in March, following a slight 0.1% rise in February. The 1.2% advance in the Transportation index was the major contributor to the latest change. Lesser contributions were made by Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages (0.3%) and Recreation, Reading and Education (0.2%). A small proportion of the overall increase was eroded by a 0.1% decline in the Housing index.

The largest influence on the 1.2% rise in the Transportation index resulted from an average 2.8% increase in the prices of new automobiles. In turn, much of this increase resulted from reductions in manufacturers' rebates associated mainly with North American models. Increased insurance premiums in Manitoba and Alberta were also a factor. Further upward pressures emerged from an increase in fares introduced by the Toronto Transit Commission. In addition, air fares rose an average 3.2% due to increases in domestic excursion fares, a seasonal rise in fares to southern destinations and in seat sale fares to Europe. A notable offset to these increases came from a 1.4% drop in gasoline prices. Gasoline prices were 5.0% lower on average than their March 1991 levels.

The Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages index rose a moderate 0.3%. Cigarette prices increased 0.4% as tax increases came into effect in British Columbia. Prices of liquor purchased from stores also rose.

The Recreation, Reading and Education index rose a moderate 0.2%, with the increase concentrated in the Recreation index, which was up 0.4%. Quotations on packaged holiday tours increased 2.5%, mainly for Florida destinations (March is a peak month for vacations in Florida). Less noticeable price increases were registered for the purchase of recreational vehicles and for photographic goods. A small offset resulted from a 0.5% drop in book prices.

Both the Clothing index (up 0.2%) and the Health and Personal Care index (up 0.2%) contributed marginally to the latest change in the All-items index. The Clothing index reflected a 0.7% rise in the Men's Wear index, but this was substantially eroded by declines of 0.1% in the Women's Wear index and 0.3% in the Clothing Materials index. The rise in the Men's Wear index was largely due to previously discounted prices returning to their regular levels, while the drop in the Women's Wear index resulted from large discounts offered on new seasonal stocks by several retailers. The rise in the Health and Personal Care index resulted from price increases for prescribed medicines, prescription eye-glasses and selected personal care supplies.

The marginal 0.1% decline in the Housing index provided some counterbalancing effect. Most of the decline resulted from a 0.3% drop in the Owned Accommodation index associated with declines in

mortgage interest costs, home maintenance and repair charges, homeowners' insurance premiums and prices of new homes. March marked the fifth consecutive month in which the Owned Accommodation index has fallen largely as a result of continuous declines in mortgage interest costs and in the prices of new homes. Lower prices were also observed for long-distance telephone services, detergent and soap, textiles, area rugs and mats and selected appliances. On the other hand, higher charges for rented accommodation and for basic telephone services were registered.

Over the 12-month period from March 1991 to March 1992, the All-items excluding Food index increased 2.1% compared with increases of 2.1% for January and 2.2% for February.

Energy

Between February and March, the Energy index fell 0.6%, down from the 2.6% decline observed in February. This latest decline was due entirely to a 1.4% drop in gasoline prices, as all the other energy components registered small increases. Over the 12-month period from March 1991 to March 1992, the Energy index fell 0.2%, marking the sixth month in a row in which this index has registered declines.

The Consumer Price Index and Major Components (Not Seasonally Adjusted), Canada

(1986 = 100)

	Indexes			Percentage change March 1992 from	
	March 1992	February 1992	March 1991	February 1992	March 1991
All-items	127.5	127.1	125.5	0.3	1.6
Food	120.4	119.9	121.3	0.4	-0.7
Housing	125.9	126.0	123.6	-0.1	1.9
Clothing	130.6	130.4	129.3	0.2	1.0
Transportation	120.5	119.1	118.7	1.2	1.5
Health and personal care	129.4	129.2	127.6	0.2	1.4
Recreation, reading and education	131.7	131.4	129.4	0.2	1.8
Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages	167.4	166.9	156.0	0.3	7.3
All-items excluding food	129.1	128.7	126.4	0.3	2.1
All-items excluding food and energy	130.0	129.6	127.1	0.3	2.3
Goods	123.6	123.0	122.5	0.5	0.9
Services	132.2	132.0	129.0	0.2	2.5
Purchasing power of the consumer dollar expressed in cents, compared to 1986	78.4	78.7	79.7		
All-items (1981 = 100)	168.8				

All-Items excluding Food and Energy

In March, the All-items excluding Food and Energy index rose 0.3% compared to increases of 0.2% in January and 0.4% in February. Over the 12-month period ending in March 1992, the index edged up 2.3%, noticeably less than the increases of 2.9% and 2.8% posted in January and February, respectively. A similar type of pattern was observed with the Clothing price index.

Goods and Services

The Goods index rose 0.5% and the Services index rose 0.2% in March. In February, the Goods index was unchanged while the Services index had increased 0.2%. The latest rise in the Goods index was influenced heavily by a 1.2% increase in the price of durables (due mainly to automobile prices) and by a more moderate 0.2% rise in the prices of non-durables. At the same time, the prices of semi-durables declined 0.1%. Between March 1991 and March 1992, the Goods index rose 0.9% and the Services index advanced 2.5%. These compared to increases of 1.2% in the Goods index and 2.3% in the Services index in the 12 months ending in February 1992.

City Highlights

Between February and March, increases in the All-items indexes for cities for which CPIs are published ranged from 0.1% in Quebec City to 0.7% in Whitehorse. In Quebec City, the sharp drop in the Transportation index, associated with a major decline in gasoline prices, kept the overall rise in its CPI marginal. In Whitehorse, larger than average increases were registered in its indexes for Housing and Clothing.

Between March 1991 and March 1992, increases in city CPIs varied from a low of 0.6% in Charlottetown/Summerside and Saskatoon to a high of 2.4% observed in Edmonton and Vancouver.

Main Contributors to Monthly Changes in the All-Items Index, by City

St. John's

The All-items index rose 0.4%, with the largest contribution arising from the Transportation index, where price advances for new cars and air travel were recorded. Further upward pressure came from the Food index, particularly for fresh produce. Price increases for men's wear and packaged holiday trips

were also registered. Moderating these advances were decreased charges for personal care supplies, owned accommodation and household furnishings. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 0.9%.

Charlottetown/Summerside

Price increases for clothing, new cars and food (particularly for fresh produce, cereal products and beef) explained a large part of the 0.6% rise in the All-items index. Higher prices for personal care supplies and increased charges for packaged holiday trips added further upward pressure. These advances were partially offset by a drop in the Housing index, reflecting declines in owned accommodation charges, household operating expenses and household furnishings and equipment prices. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 0.6%.

Halifax

Higher transportation charges, most notably for new cars, air fares, vehicle registration fees and drivers' licences, were among the main contributors to the 0.6% rise in the All-items index. Price increases for clothing and food (particularly for fresh fruit, pork, sugar, cereal and bakery products, prepared meats and beef) were also recorded. Charges for packaged holiday trips and personal care supplies advanced as well. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 0.8%.

Saint John

Advances in six of the seven major component indexes (Health and Personal Care declined) explained the 0.4% rise in the All-items index. The largest upward thrust came from the Transportation index, where higher prices for new cars and air travel were registered. Other notable price advances were recorded for clothing, household operating expenses, household textiles and packaged holiday trips. The Food index rose slightly, reflecting higher prices for beef, sugar, fresh vegetables and pork. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.4%.

Quebec City

The All-items index rose a marginal 0.1%, as a number of offsetting effects were recorded. Price increases for food (most notably fresh vegetables and beef), packaged holiday trips, clothing, personal care supplies and prescribed and non-prescribed medicines were among those factors exerting an

upward influence. Moderating these advances were declines in gasoline prices, household operating expenses and in the costs of household textiles. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.8%.

Montreal

Higher prices for food, particularly for fresh vegetables and beef, and increased prices for clothing and new cars accounted for a large part of the 0.2% rise in the All-items index. Higher air fares and increased charges for packaged holiday trips were also recorded. Moderating these advances were lower prices for gasoline, vehicle rentals and personal care supplies. The Housing index fell slightly, reflecting declines in owned accommodation charges, household operating expenses and the costs of household equipment. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 2.1%.

Ottawa

Price increases for new cars, air travel, packaged holiday trips and men's wear were among the main contributors to the 0.2% rise in the All-items index. Other notable increases were recorded for cigarettes, liquor purchased from stores and rented accommodation. Moderating these advances were price decreases for gasoline, vehicle rentals, personal care supplies, owned accommodation, and household furnishings and equipment. The Food index also declined, reflecting lower prices for dairy products, restaurant meals, prepared meats and pork. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.3%.

Toronto

A rise in the Transportation index, reflecting price increases for new cars, local transit and air travel, explained a large part of the 0.4% rise in the All-items index. Further upward pressure came from price increases for fresh produce, liquor purchased from stores, personal care supplies, recreational equipment and packaged holiday trips. Decreased charges for owned accommodation and lower prices for clothing and household furnishings had a moderating effect. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.3%.

Thunder Bay

Advances in new car prices and air fares, and a rise in the Food index (the latter due mainly to higher

prices for fresh produce and cereal and bakery products) helped explain the 0.3% rise in the All-items index. Price increases were also recorded for liquor purchased from stores, recreational equipment and packaged holiday trips. The Housing index rose marginally, as higher prices for household furnishings and equipment were largely offset by decreased charges for owned accommodation. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 2.0%.

Winnipeg

Higher prices for fresh produce and new cars, and a rise in vehicle insurance premiums accounted for a large part of the 0.2% rise in the All-items index. Vehicle registration fees, air fares and vehicle rental charges advanced as well. A considerable dampening effect was exerted by declines in owned accommodation charges and by lower prices for gasoline, household furnishings, and personal care supplies. Decreased charges for recreational equipment and for packaged holiday trips were also recorded. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.0%.

Regina

Increased charges for basic telephone service, for electricity and for natural gas were among the main contributors to the 0.5% rise in the All-items index. Higher transportation charges, notably for new cars, air travel and vehicle rentals, also exerted a considerable upward impact. Higher food prices were recorded as well, particularly for fresh produce. Partially offsetting these advances were lower prices for gasoline and decreased charges for long-distance telephone service. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.4%.

Saskatoon

The All-items index rose 0.3%. Among the main contributors were increased charges for basic telephone services, electricity and natural gas. Higher food prices were also recorded, most notably for fresh produce. The Transportation index advanced marginally, as higher prices for new cars and increased air fares were largely offset by lower prices for gasoline. Moderating these advances were declines in charges for long-distance telephone calls and lower prices for household furnishings and personal care supplies. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 0.6%.

Edmonton

A sharp rise in the Transportation index, due mainly to higher prices for new cars, gasoline and vehicle insurance, explained most of the 0.6% advance in the All-items index. Of the remaining six major components, four registered declines and two remained unchanged. The greatest downward influence was registered by the Food index, where lower prices were recorded for chicken, beef, cereal and bakery products, dairy products, and cured and prepared meats. Declines in owned accommodation charges and household operating expenses also exerted a considerable dampening effect. Lower prices for women's wear and for personal care supplies were registered as well. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 2.4%.

Calgary

A sharp rise in the Transportation index, due mainly to higher prices for gasoline, vehicle insurance, new cars and air fares, accounted for the 0.3% rise in the All-items index. Three of the remaining six major components declined, while the other three remained unchanged. The greatest downward impact originated in the Food index, where lower prices were recorded for chicken, dairy products, cereal and bakery products, fresh fruit and beef. Declines in owned accommodation charges, household operating expenses and personal care supply charges were also registered. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 2.0%.

Vancouver

The All-items index rose 0.6%, with advances recorded in all seven major component indexes. The greatest upward pressure came from the Food index, where higher prices were observed for fresh produce, dairy products, cereal and bakery products, and eggs. Advances in new house prices, household operating expenses, cigarette prices (tax increase) and transportation costs also exerted a considerable upward influence. The rise in Transportation reflected price increases for new cars, air travel and vehicle rentals. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 2.4%.

Victoria

A rise in the Food index (reflecting price increases for fresh vegetables, beef, chicken, cereal and bakery products, dairy products and eggs) and higher prices for cigarettes (tax increase) explained most of the 0.2% rise in the All-items index. Price advances for clothing, household furnishings and equipment and water were also registered. The Transportation index fell slightly, as lower prices for gasoline and vehicle rentals more than offset higher prices for new cars and air travel. Price declines for personal care supplies were recorded as well. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.4%.

Whitehorse

Higher clothing prices and increased transportation costs explained a large part of the 0.7% rise in the All-items index. The rise in Transportation was mainly due to price increases for automotive vehicles, air fares, vehicle insurance and gasoline. Further upward pressure came from higher prices for food, personal care supplies, and recreational equipment. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.4%.

Yellowknife

The All-items index rose 0.3%. Among the main contributors were higher prices for automotive vehicles, air travel, clothing, and food (the latter reflecting higher prices for fresh vegetables, beef, pork and restaurant meals). Increased charges for cablevision services and for recreational equipment were also recorded. Lower prices for personal care supplies and a slight drop in the Housing index moderated the overall rise. Since March 1991, the All-items index has risen 1.5%.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2201-2230.

The March 1992 issue of *Consumer Price Index* (62-001, \$9.30/\$93) is now available. See "How to Order Publications".

For more detailed information on this release, contact Sandra Shadlock (613-951-9606), Prices Division. ■

Consumer Price Indexes for Urban Centres

The indexes in this table measure within each city the percentage change in consumer prices from the base period to subsequent time periods. They cannot be used to compare levels of prices between cities.¹

	All-items	Food	Housing	Clothing	Transportation	Health and Personal care	Recreation Reading and Education	Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages
St. John's								
March 1992 index	122.1	115.9	117.9	132.3	118.4	125.0	131.2	139.9
% change from February 1992	0.4	0.6	-0.2	1.0	1.8	-1.0	0.5	0.0
% change from March 1991	0.9	-2.0	0.7	2.5	1.5	1.2	3.9	2.6
Charlottetown/Summerside								
March 1992 index	126.8	124.4	119.5	126.1	117.9	134.0	131.9	186.3
% change from February 1992	0.6	0.7	-0.2	3.3	1.1	0.8	0.5	0.0
% change from March 1991	0.6	-1.0	-1.0	4.9	-0.6	1.4	2.5	7.6
Halifax								
March 1992 index	126.5	129.0	119.5	128.9	118.8	127.6	128.4	172.2
% change from February 1992	0.6	0.5	0.0	1.3	1.9	0.6	0.6	0.0
% change from March 1991	0.8	-0.6	0.6	1.3	0.9	0.0	3.3	1.6
Saint John								
March 1992 index	125.5	123.7	119.8	129.2	118.7	127.1	126.7	181.0
% change from February 1992	0.4	0.2	0.2	1.4	1.0	-0.3	0.5	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.4	-0.2	0.3	1.3	2.6	1.0	2.0	7.6
Quebec City								
March 1992 index	126.9	119.6	125.9	135.1	114.1	131.0	133.3	166.2
% change from February 1992	0.1	0.9	-0.1	0.5	-1.0	0.3	0.6	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.8	0.2	2.0	1.4	-0.1	2.7	3.9	8.1
Montreal								
March 1992 index	128.7	120.5	128.3	135.4	116.9	130.1	136.8	170.8
% change from February 1992	0.2	0.5	-0.1	0.5	0.4	0.0	0.5	0.0
% change from March 1991	2.1	-0.4	2.2	1.7	0.8	1.2	4.0	9.3
Ottawa								
March 1992 index	126.9	116.8	125.6	130.0	123.0	132.2	131.6	163.7
% change from February 1992	0.2	-0.2	-0.1	0.2	0.9	-0.5	0.5	0.4
% change from March 1991	1.3	-2.2	1.7	1.0	1.7	0.2	1.2	7.8
Toronto								
March 1992 index	129.4	121.2	130.0	130.1	122.6	134.1	133.3	162.4
% change from February 1992	0.4	0.6	-0.2	-0.2	2.0	0.4	0.2	0.3
% change from March 1991	1.3	-2.6	2.0	0.2	1.4	2.2	1.1	7.8
Thunder Bay								
March 1992 index	126.5	119.2	124.2	130.0	122.2	125.5	130.7	168.0
% change from February 1992	0.3	0.6	0.1	-0.1	0.8	-0.2	0.2	0.2
% change from March 1991	2.0	1.9	3.1	1.3	-0.4	1.0	1.4	6.5
Winnipeg								
March 1992 index	125.8	123.9	123.2	129.9	117.6	126.7	129.9	162.1
% change from February 1992	0.2	0.6	-0.2	0.0	0.4	-0.4	-0.2	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.0	0.7	2.1	1.2	-2.0	0.7	0.6	3.6

Consumer Price Indexes for Urban Centres - Concluded

The indexes in this table measure within each city the percentage change in consumer prices from the base period to subsequent time periods. They cannot be used to compare levels of prices between cities.¹

	All-items	Food	Housing	Clothing	Transportation	Health and Personal care	Recreation Reading and Education	Tobacco Products and Alcoholic Beverages
Regina								
March 1992 index	126.0	126.3	118.3	129.7	123.4	139.6	129.3	160.6
% change from February 1992	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.0	0.7	0.4	-0.1	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.4	0.6	1.5	1.6	0.2	1.3	2.6	3.0
Saskatoon								
March 1992 index	125.0	125.8	119.0	128.7	117.7	150.7	127.1	149.7
% change from February 1992	0.3	0.7	0.5	0.0	0.1	-0.1	0.2	0.0
% change from March 1991	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.7	-2.3	1.1	1.7	1.8
Edmonton								
March 1992 index	126.0	119.7	121.8	128.9	120.6	126.9	130.5	178.6
% change from February 1992	0.6	-0.8	-0.2	-0.1	4.0	-0.2	0.0	0.0
% change from March 1991	2.4	1.6	1.9	1.7	3.4	1.1	1.6	5.7
Calgary								
March 1992 index	126.1	120.7	121.7	129.6	118.9	125.1	130.3	178.0
% change from February 1992	0.3	-0.6	-0.2	0.0	3.1	-0.5	0.0	0.0
% change from March 1991	2.0	0.2	1.8	1.1	3.8	0.9	1.5	5.3
Vancouver								
March 1992 index	126.3	127.2	120.3	124.4	127.5	122.6	129.1	158.0
% change from February 1992	0.6	1.4	0.3	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.1	1.1
% change from March 1991	2.4	2.7	1.6	1.1	3.7	0.4	1.9	6.3
Victoria								
March 1992 index	125.4	125.0	118.3	126.1	127.2	123.2	129.5	159.0
% change from February 1992	0.2	0.8	0.1	0.2	-0.2	-0.3	-0.2	1.6
% change from March 1991	1.4	1.7	0.5	1.8	1.1	2.0	-0.5	6.8
Whitehorse								
March 1992 index	123.5	118.7	122.2	130.2	113.5	130.3	125.9	148.5
% change from February 1992	0.7	0.5	0.0	3.7	1.6	1.4	0.5	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.4	0.5	1.8	1.7	0.0	4.2	2.0	2.1
Yellowknife								
March 1992 index	124.5	118.5	119.7	131.7	117.9	119.7	125.9	161.1
% change from February 1992	0.3	0.5	-0.1	0.8	1.4	-1.1	0.7	0.0
% change from March 1991	1.5	1.6	1.5	1.9	-0.8	1.1	1.6	3.9

¹ For inter-city indexes of retail price differentials, refer to Table 23 of the July-September 1991 issue of Consumer Prices and Price Indexes (62-010, \$17.25/\$69.00).

Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade

February 1992

Canada's merchandise trade position continues to reflect uncertainty with respect to the North American economy: following the considerable increase in imports and exports during January, there was no significant overall improvement in the trade figures for February.

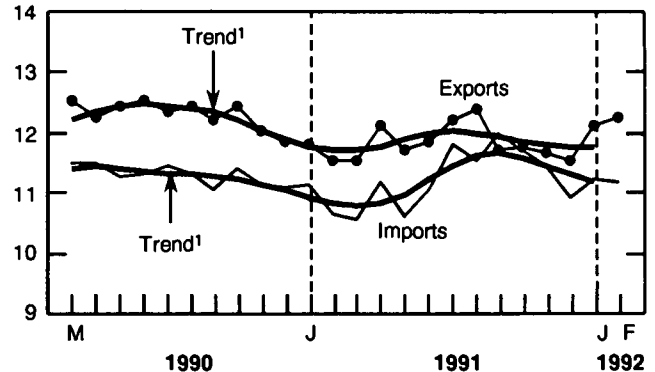
Exports rose \$149 million in February to reach \$12.2 billion. Commodities with volatile month-to-month movements made a positive \$210 million net contribution to the overall increase in exports, while the net contribution of the stable export component was negative (-\$74 million). Among the more volatile products, higher exports were registered for automotive (\$60 million), agricultural and fishing (\$210 million) and energy (\$35 million) products. However, lower exports of aircraft and other transportation equipment (-\$96 million) moderated these increases. In the group of commodities with more stable behaviour, forestry products (\$78 million), machinery and equipment excluding aircraft (\$110 million) and miscellaneous consumer goods (\$45 million) exports increased. In contrast, industrial goods declined, with most of the decrease stemming from a \$286 million drop in metals and alloys exports. Exports to the United States reached \$9.5 billion, their highest level since last August.

Imports declined \$24 million in February to \$11.2 billion. Commodities with volatile month-to-month changes registered a net \$99 million increase and prevented a larger erosion of import levels. In contrast, those commodities that tend to show steadier month-to-month changes exerted significant downward pressure (-\$123 million). Among the more volatile commodities, the most noteworthy improvement was a \$157 million increase for automotive products. Energy products were relatively stable. On the other hand, aircraft imports declined \$70 million to \$139 million, their lowest level since September 1984. The overall decrease noted for the less volatile group of commodities stemmed primarily from a \$224 million decline in imports of industrial goods. Agricultural and fishing products and forestry products registered decreases in imports, also. However, increased imports of machinery and equipment excluding aircraft and of miscellaneous consumer goods moderated the overall decline. Moreover, imports from the United States were up significantly (\$204 million).

Merchandise Trade

Seasonally Adjusted
Balance of Payments Basis

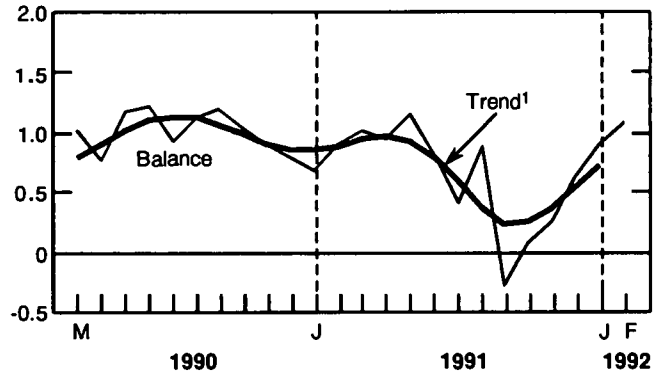
Billions of dollars



Merchandise Trade Balance

Seasonally Adjusted
Balance of Payments Basis

Billions of dollars



¹ The short-term trend represents a weighted average of the data.

Canada's merchandise trade balance rose to \$1.1 billion in February: surpluses were recorded in trade with the United States and with non-O.E.C.D. countries.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3620-3629, 3651, 3685-3713, 3718, 3719 and 3887-3913.

Current account data that incorporate merchandise trade statistics and data concerning trade in services and capital account movements are available on a quarterly basis in *Canada's Balance of International Payments* (67-001, \$27.50/\$110).

For further information on international trade statistics (detailed tables, charts and a more complete analysis), *Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade* (65-001P, \$10/\$100) is now available. For more timely receipt of the data, a fax service is available on the morning of release (10-002, \$250). The February 1992 issue of *Summary of*

Canadian International Trade (65-001, \$18.20/\$182) will be available the first week of May. See "How to Order Publications".

For more detailed information on statistics, concepts and definitions, contact Gordon Blaney (613-951-9647), Trade Information Unit, or Marlene Sterparn (613-951-1711) (for analysis information), or Denis Pilon (613-951-4808) (for price index information), Trade Measures and Analysis Section, International Trade Division. ■

Sales of Natural Gas

February 1992 (Preliminary Data)

Sales of natural gas (including direct sales) in Canada during February 1992 totalled 6 390 million cubic metres, an 8.5% increase from the previous year.

On the basis of rate structure information, sales in February 1992 were broken down as follows, with the percentage changes from February 1991 shown in brackets: residential sales, 1 986 million cubic metres (+11.7%); commercial sales, 1 592 million cubic metres (+7.1%); and industrial sales (including direct sales), 2 811 million cubic metres (+7.0%).

Year-to-date sales of natural gas amounted to 13 180 million cubic metres in February 1992, a 0.3% increase over the same period in 1991.

On the basis of rate structure information, year-to-date sales were broken down as follows, with the percentage changes from 1991 shown in brackets: residential sales, 4 112 million cubic metres (-1.6); commercial sales, 3 274 million cubic metres (-4.0%); and industrial sales (including direct sales), 5 794 million cubic metres (+4.3%).

Based on the sum of the latest 12 months (March 1991 to February 1992), total natural gas sales (including direct sales) posted a 0.4% increase over the previous period (March 1990 to February 1991).

The February 1992 issue of *Gas Utilities* (55-002, \$12.70/\$127) will be available the third week of May. See "How to Order Publications".

For more detailed information on this release, contact Gary Smalldridge (613-951-3567), Energy Section, Industry Division.

Sales of Natural Gas - Preliminary Data

February 1992

	Rate structure				
	Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Direct	Total
	(thousands of cubic metres)				
New Brunswick	-	-	-	-	-
Quebec	111 614	237 802	328 823	3 589	681 828
Ontario	1 077 152	730 738	859 911	176 554	2 844 355
Manitoba	91 232	87 864	44 879	646	224 621
Saskatchewan	117 083	80 752	4 677	155 555	358 067
Alberta	387 953	308 293	943 275	-	1 639 521
British Columbia	201 180	146 691	121 849	171 534	641 254
February 1992 - Canada	1 986 214	1 592 140	2 303 414	507 878	6 389 646
February 1991 - Canada	1 777 540	1 486 404	2 235 779	391 713	5 891 436
% change	11.7	7.1	7.0		8.5
Year-to-date Canada 1992	4 111 661	3 273 925	4 774 825	1 019 390	13 179 801
Year-to-date Canada 1991	4 180 215	3 409 312	4 784 078	768 644	13 142 249
% change	-1.6	-4.0	4.3		0.3
March 1991 - February 1992	13 577 870	11 117 243	24 992 645	5 059 183	54 746 941
March 1990 - February 1991	13 585 576	11 266 260	25 802 023	3 875 769	54 529 628
% change	-0.1	-1.3	1.3		0.4

Note: Revised figures will be available in the "Gas Utilities" publication (Catalogue #55-002) as well as on CANSIM.
- Nil or zero.

DATA AVAILABILITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Department Store Sales – Advance Release

March 1992

Department stores sales including concessions for March 1992 were \$851 million. Sales for the major department stores were \$474 million and sales for the junior category were \$377 million.

For further information on this release, contact Tom Newton (613-951-3552) or David Roeske (613-951-3559), Retail Trade Section, Industry Division. ■

Export and Import Price Indexes

February 1992

Current and fixed-weighted export and import price indexes (1986=100) are now available on a balance of payments basis. Price indexes are listed from January 1986 to February 1992 for the five commodity sections and the 62/61 major commodity groups.

Customs-based current and fixed-weighted U.S. price indexes are also available. Price indexes are listed from January 1986 to February 1992 on a 1986=100 basis. Included with the U.S. commodity indexes are the 10 "All Countries" and "U.S. only" SITC section indexes.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 3620-3629, 3651 and 3685.

The February 1992 issue of *Summary of Canadian International Trade* (65-001, \$18.20/\$182) will be available the first week of May. See "How to Order Publications".

For further information on this release, contact Denis Pilon (613-951-4808), Price Index Unit, International Trade Division. ■

Steel Primary Forms

Week Ending April 11, 1992

Preliminary estimates indicate that Canadian steel primary forms production for the week ending April 11, 1992 totalled 280 273 tonnes, a 0.1% decrease from the preceding week's total of 280 473 tonnes but a 7.1% increase from the year-earlier level of 261 783 tonnes.

The cumulative total in 1992 was 3 819 670 tonnes, a 1.1% increase from 3 777 903 tonnes for the same period in 1991.

For more detailed information on this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-9827), Industry Division. ■

Stocks of Frozen Poultry Products

April 1, 1992

Preliminary data on cold storage of frozen poultry products at April 1, 1992 and revised figures for March 1, 1992 are now available.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 5675-5677.

To order *Production and Stocks of Eggs and Poultry* (\$115/year), a statistical bulletin, contact Guy Gervais (613-951-2453).

For more detailed information on this release contact Benoit Lévesque (613-951-2550), Livestock and Animal Products Section, Agriculture Division. ■

PUBLICATION RELEASED

Preliminary Statement of Canadian International Trade, February 1992.

Catalogue number 65-001P

(Canada: \$10/\$100; United States: US\$12/US\$120;
Other Countries: US\$14/US\$140).

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The Daily, April 16, 1992

MAJOR RELEASE DATES

Week of April 21 – 24, 1992
(Release dates are subject to change)

Anticipated date(s) of release	Title	Reference period
April		
21	Retail Trade	February 1992
22	Wholesale Trade	February 1992
22	Department Store Sales and Stocks	February 1992
22	Marriage and the Conjugal Life in Canada	
23	Canada's International Transactions In Securities	February 1992
23-24	National Balance Sheet Accounts	1991
