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Catalogue 11-001E (Français 11-001F) ISSN 0827-0465

The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, November 2, 1994
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

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MAJOR RELEASES

Quarterly business conditions survey, manufacturing industries

October 1994

In early October, manufacturers' satisfaction with orders received reached an unprecedented high. High finished products inventories are no longer a concern as a large majority of manufacturers indicated inventories are "about right". For the next three months, production prospects are still strong and employment prospects have inched upward.

Satisfaction with orders received reaches an unprecedented high

In the October survey 40% of manufacturers indicated that orders received are rising, whereas only 4% stated they are declining. October's balance of opinion of +36 replaces July's +29 as the record high (subtract the "declining" 4% from the "rising" 40% for the balance of opinion). Of the 22 major industry groups surveyed, 19 groups (accounting for 98% of shipments) posted overall increases in confidence. The major contributors to this record were the paper and allied products and the transportation equipment industries. These record levels are consistent with results from the monthly survey of manufacturering: from June to August 1994, orders received increased 8.1% to $30.7 billion.

High finished products inventories are no longer a concern

The October 1994 balance of opinion regarding current levels of finished products inventories remained unchanged from the July survey at -4. A record 86% of manufacturers said that the current level of their finished products inventories was "about right". Encouraged by strong order books, manufacturers do not seem worried about the current high level of finished products inventories, which, according to the monthly survey of manufacturing, stood at $12.7 billion in August 1994.

Note to users

Except for the data on production difficulties, data in this release are seasonally adjusted.

The balance of opinion is the difference between the proportion with a positive response (higher volume of production) and the proportion with a negative response (lower volume of production). Both unadjusted and seasonally adjusted data are given for the balance. The seasonally adjusted value for the neutral component (expected production about the same) is calculated by subtracting the sum of the seasonally adjusted values of the other two components (the positive and negative components) from 100.

The business conditions survey is conducted in January, April, July and October; the majority of responses are recorded in the first two weeks of these months. Results are based on replies from about 5,000 manufacturers.

The business conditions survey's responses on production, inventories and orders are weighted by the value of the respondent's shipments reported to the 1989 annual survey of manufactures. Weights for the responses on employment prospects are based on the number of employees reported to the annual survey of manufactures.

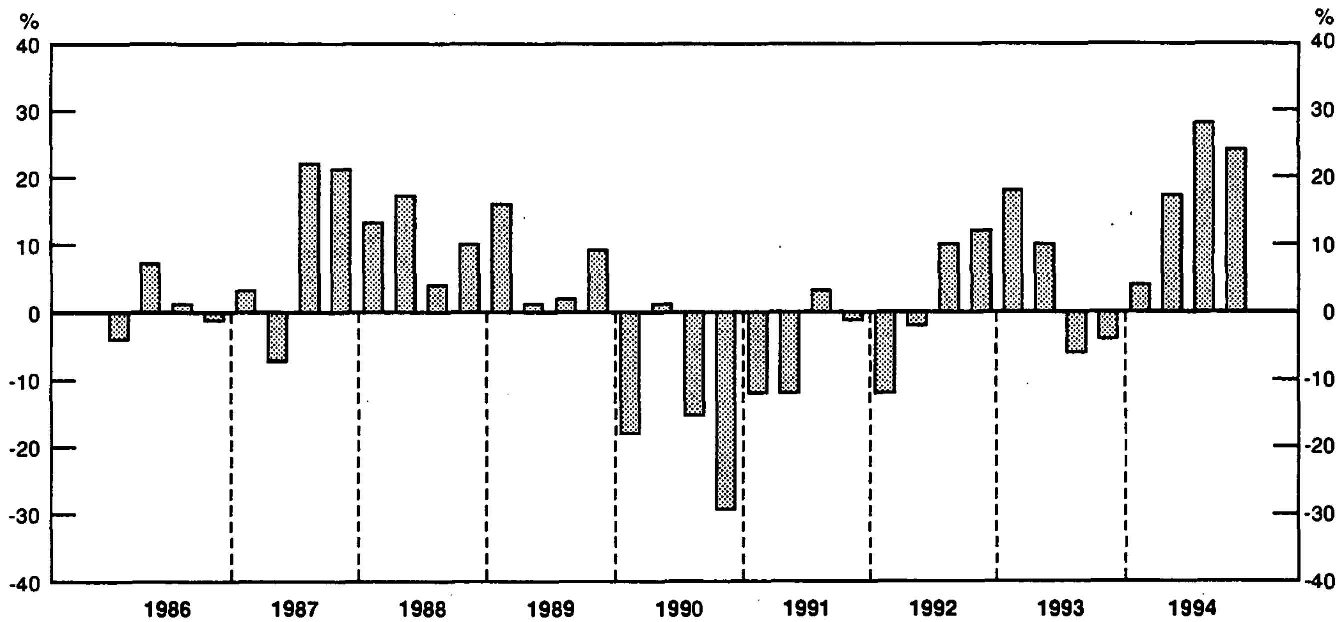
Production prospects for the next three months are still strong

Manufacturers' balance of opinion for production prospects decreased 4 points to +24 in early October. Although it decreased slightly, the current balance contrasts with the negative balances posted in late 1990 and early 1991 (see chart). These results are consistent with capacity utilization rates: manufacturers were operating at 81.1% of capacity in the second quarter of 1994, up from 73.3% in the first quarter of 1991.

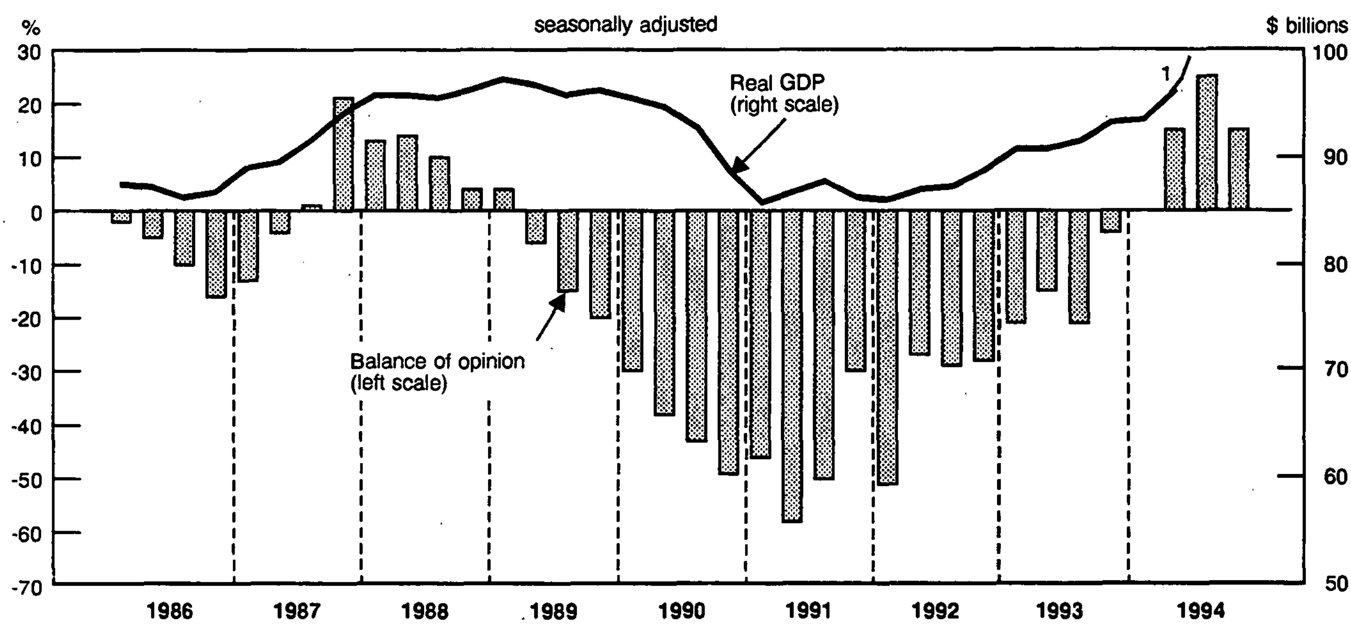
Employment prospects in manufacturing inch upward

In October 1994, the balance of opinion on employment prospects for the next three months increased 2 points to +4. The balance has not been this positive since April 1989, when it stood at +4. This is a major improvement from the low balances posted in 1991 in January (-24) and April (-26). This is in line with the labour force survey, which showed an increase of 98,000 manufacturing jobs in the first nine months of 1994. The Canadian Manufacturers Association recently released a survey of it's members (management issues survey) that also concurs with these results regarding future employment prospects in manufacturing.

Balance of opinion for expected volume of production
Next three months vs last three months



Balance of opinion on backlog of unfilled orders and real GDP for manufacturing industries



1 April and May 1994 average.

The balance of opinion on unfilled orders is still positive

Although it decreased 10 points, the October 1994 balance of opinion is still positive at +15. This contrasts with balances in the -50 range posted in 1991 during the downturn in manufacturing. The backlog of unfilled orders will generate future shipments, provided orders are not cancelled.

Shortage of raw materials and skilled labour are a concern

Some 83% of manufacturers did not report any particular production difficulties in the October 1994 survey. However, the proportion of manufacturers who reported a shortage of raw materials as a production impediment stood at 6%, down 1% from the July 1994 survey. A shortage of skilled labour was indicated as a production impediment by 4% of manufacturers, unchanged from the July survey. In October 1994, 4% of manufacturers reported a shortage of working capital impeded production. This is down from 6% one year earlier and from 7% in January 1994. For the 16th consecutive quarter, less than 0.5% of respondents indicated that a shortage of unskilled labour is impeding their production.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2843-2845.

For further information on this release, contact Claude Robillard (613-951-3507) Monthly Survey of Manufacturing Section, Industry Division. □

Business conditions survey, Canadian manufacturing industries

	October 1993	January 1994	April 1994	July 1994	October 1994
	seasonally adjusted*				
Volume of production during next three months compared with last three months will be:					
About the same	52	38	47	50	52
Higher	22	33	35	39	36
Lower	26	29	18	11	12
Balance	-4	4	17	28	24
Balance (unadjusted)	-1	-10	35	19	28
Orders received are:					
About the same	64	61	53	59	56
Rising	21	28	37	35	40
Declining	15	11	10	6	4
Balance	6	17	27	29	36
Balance (unadjusted)	3	12	31	30	33
Present backlog of unfilled orders is:					
About normal	64	68	65	63	63
Higher than normal	16	16	25	31	26
Lower than normal	20	16	10	6	11
Balance	-4	0	15	25	15
Balance (unadjusted)	-2	-4	14	22	20
Finished products inventory on hand is:					
About right	62	65	79	82	86
Too low	7	6	5	7	5
Too high[1]	31	29	16	11	9
Balance	-24	-23	-11	-4	-4
Balance (unadjusted)	-23	-24	-12	-3	-2
Employment during the next three months will:					
Change little	64	62	66	70	72
Increase	14	20	16	16	16
Decrease	22	18	18	14	12
Balance	-8	2	-2	2	4
Balance (unadjusted)	-16	-4	8	3	-2
Sources of production difficulties:					
	unadjusted				
Working capital shortage	6	7	5	4	4
Skilled labour shortage	3	2	2	4	4
Unskilled labour shortage	0	0	0	0	0
Raw material shortage	4	3	5	7	6
Other difficulties	4	4	4	3	3
No difficulties	83	84	83	83	83

1 *No evident seasonality.*
* *Unless otherwise stated.*

Household facilities and equipment
1994

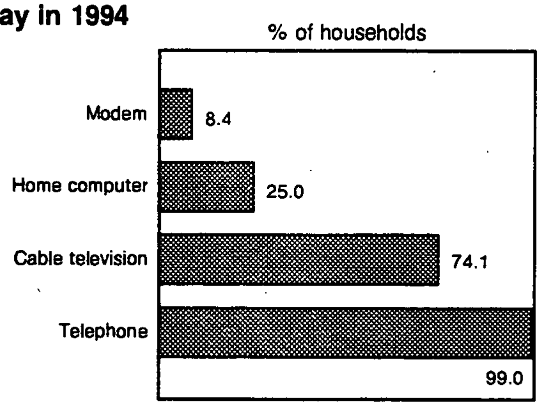
Canadian households continue to enter the high-tech world, a trend that may prove beneficial for accessing the information highway.

In 1994, one in four households (25.0%) have a home computer, double the proportion of six years ago. One in three (33.6%) home computers is equipped with a modem (a device that sends and receives information over telephone lines).

Getting on-line services through telephone lines will not pose a problem for Canadians, as 99.0% of households have a phone. Telephone communication is such an integral part of our lives that 36.2% of homes have three or more phones; in 1984 only 14.3% had three or more phones.

Cable television, another key to electronic information and communication, now allows 74.1% of homes to expand their viewing choice. Ten years ago, 60.1% of homes had cable.

Households chart a course for the information highway in 1994



Compact disc players are becoming a favourite

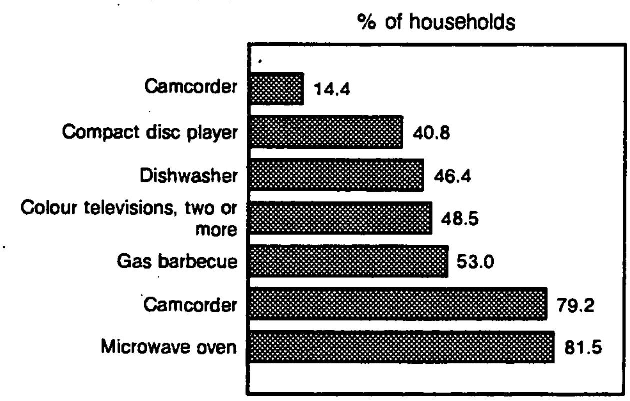
Compact disc (CD) players are rapidly becoming an audio favourite of consumers. In 1994, 40.8% of households have a CD player, up substantially from 33.2% last year and from 11.6% just five years ago. This rapid increase in CD players is matched by soaring sales of compact discs (see *Focus on culture, autumn, 1994,* which was released on October 5th). Despite these trends, cassette players remain popular, with 76.5% of households having one.

> ***Note to users***
>
> *These data are from the household facilities and equipment survey, which was conducted in May 1994. This sample survey of approximately 38,000 households represents virtually all private households in Canada.*
>
> *Data from the survey are linked to household income data from the survey of consumer finances, which was conducted in April 1994 on the same sample of households. These data (by household type, age of head of household, and other categories) will be released in early 1995 in* Household facilities by income and other characteristics *(13-218).*

Almost all homes have a colour television (98.2%), and close to half (48.5%) have two or more. Ten years ago, 18.0% of households had two or more colour sets.

Eight out of ten households (79.2%) can record their favourite show or watch the latest movie with a video cassette recorder (VCR). In 1984 only 12.6% of households had a VCR. Ten years later, 14.1% of homes have two or more. Camcorders, the newer video item, are owned by 14.4% of households.

Cocooning and consumerism in 1994: many households have leisure and time-saving equipment



Quick, easy and high-tech extends to the kitchen

Household requirements for quick, easy and high-tech extend to the kitchen, especially because both spouses work in 60.8% of families (see *Characteristics of dual-earner families, 1992,* which was released on May 9th). For example, 81.5% of households have a microwave oven, up from 16.2% a decade ago.

Automatic dishwashers are found in 46.4% of homes. Built-in models are almost five times more popular than portable models (38.4% vs 7.9%). Gas barbecues are also much more common: 53.0% of homes have one in 1994, compared with 19.9% a decade ago.

The second car is more likely to be a van or truck

Multiple vehicle ownership has increased over the decade. In 1994, 40.8% of households own two or more vehicles, compared with 34.8% in 1984. This increase is the result of a variety of factors, including the popularity of vans and trucks.

Ownership of a van or truck increased to 29.9% in 1994, up 9.7 percentage points from 1984, reflecting consumer preference for a multi-purpose vehicle. Over the same period, automobile ownership decreased slightly to 75.2% from 77.4%. These trends in vehicle ownership are likely to continue, since in 1994 the sales of trucks and mini-vans are increasing at a faster rate than sales of passenger cars (see *New motor vehicle sales, August 1994*, which was released on October 11th).

The percentage of households with at least one vehicle has remained fairly steady over the past decade at 83.4%.

National and provincial estimates of household equipment and housing characteristics are presented in *Household facilities and equipment, 1994* (64-202, $30), which is now available. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release or on the availability of custom tabulations, contact Réjean Lasnier (613-951-4643), Household Surveys Division. ■

Non-residential building construction price indexes
Third quarter 1994

The non-residential building construction price index (1986 = 100) for the third quarter of 1994 rose to 125.1, a 0.6% increase from the previous quarter and a 2.3% increase from the third quarter of 1993. In the third quarter of 1994, contractors said that price increases for materials contributed to higher bid prices (they cited wage rate adjustments in the previous quarter). Manufacturers' selling prices for a selection of non-residential building construction materials rose 7.0% from a year earlier.

For a second consecutive quarter, Toronto recorded the largest quarterly change at +0.9%, followed closely by Edmonton at +0.7%. The composite price indexes rose about 0.5% in the other five cities surveyed (Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, Calgary, and Vancouver) in the third quarter of 1994.

Comparing the third quarters of 1994 and 1993, Toronto showed the greatest change at +3.1%. The year-over-year rates of price increase for all cities except Vancouver have reached levels last seen in 1990. In addition to the pressures from material and labour costs that the contractors have cited, there appear to have been improvements in some underlying market conditions: the value of non-residential building permits issued for industrial and commercial projects increased in the first half of 1994 in the cities surveyed.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2042 and 2043.

The third quarter 1994 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007, $19/$76) will be available in December. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350, fax: 613-951-2848), Information and Current Analysis Unit, Prices Division.

Non-residential building construction price indexes
(1986 = 100)

	Relative importance	Third quarter 1993	Second quarter 1994	Third quarter 1994	Third quarter 1993 to Third quarter 1994	Second quarter 1994 to Third quarter 1994
					% change	
Composite	**100.0**	**122.3**	**124.3**	**125.1**	**2.3**	**0.6**
Halifax	1.7	109.6	111.4	112.0	2.2	0.5
Montréal	16.5	111.7	112.9	113.4	1.5	0.4
Ottawa	9.5	127.1	129.3	130.0	2.3	0.5
Toronto	34.1	125.6	128.3	129.5	3.1	0.9
Calgary	5.0	123.9	125.8	126.4	2.0	0.5
Edmonton	7.0	125.6	127.6	128.5	2.3	0.7
Vancouver	26.2	121.4	123.1	123.7	1.9	0.5

OTHER RELEASES

Short-term expectations survey

According to the majority of a group of economists surveyed by Statistics Canada, real gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to rise 0.4% between August and September. Their predictions ranged from a minimum of +0.1% to a maximum of +0.7%.

Real GDP gained 0.5% in August following a 0.1% drop in July. However, GDP figures for June, July and August were revised upward as more basic data became available.

The economists also predicted that the increase in GDP will be accompanied by an increase in Canada's merchandise trade surplus in September, by no increase in the inflation rate (+0.2%), and by virtually no increase in the unemployment rate (10.1%).

The inflation rate in September came in at +0.2%, just below the economists' mean forecast of +0.3%.

Predictions of the unemployment rate for October varied widely, ranging from 9.8% to 10.3%. A majority forecast that it would remain at 10.1%.

As for merchandise exports, the economists forecast exports of $19.0 billion in September, up from $18.8 billion in August.

Businesses are expected to have imported $17.8 billion in September, compared to August's level of $17.9 billion.

For a set of tables or further information on this release, contact Diane Lachapelle (613-951-0568). ■

Shipments of solid fuel-burning heating products

Third quarter 1994

Shipments of solid fuel-burning heating products totalled $17.2 million for the third quarter of 1994, a 9.6% increase from $15.7 million for the third quarter of 1993.

Data on manufacturers' shipments of solid fuel-burning heating products are now available.

The third quarter 1994 issue of *Shipments of solid fuel-burning heating products* (25-002, $6/$24) will be available later.

For further information on this release, contact Keith Martin (613-951-3518), Industry Division. ■

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

September 1994

Chemical firms produced 146 831 tonnes of polyethylene synthetic resins in September 1994, a 0.1% decrease from 146 947[r] (revised) in September 1993.

For January to September 1994, production totalled 1 371 064 tonnes, up 7.0% from 1 281 559[r] tonnes a year earlier.

Data are also available on production of three other types of synthetic resins and 24 industrial chemicals for September 1993 and September 1994.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 951.

The September 1994 issue of *Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins* (46-002, $6/$60) will be available later.

For further information on this release, contact Raj Sehdev (613-951-3513), Industry Division. ■

Gypsum products

September 1994

Manufacturers shipped 22 560 thousand square metres of plain gypsum wallboard in September 1994, up 4.3% from 21 621 thousand square metres in September 1993 but down 3.7% from 23 435 thousand square metres in August 1994.

Year-to-date shipments to the end of September 1994 totalled 190 010 thousand square metres, up 14.2% from a year earlier.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 39 and 122 (series 11).

The September 1994 issue of *Gypsum products* (44-003, $6/$60) will be available later.

For further information on this release, contact Roland Joubert (613-951-3527), Industry Division. ■

Hog inventories

October 1, 1994

At October 1, 1994, hog inventories in Canada were estimated at 11.0 million head, a 1% increase from a year earlier. In the East, inventories increased 3% from a year earlier to 6.6 million head. But in the West, inventories decreased 2% to 4.4 million head.

Total slaughter and exports during the third quarter of 1994 increased 2% from a year earlier.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 9500-9510.

The October 1, 1994 hog inventories will be available in mid-November in *Livestock statistics update 3* (10-600E, $144). See "How to order publications". A facsimile service is also available.

For further information on this release, contact Robert Plourde (613-951-8716), Agriculture Division. ■

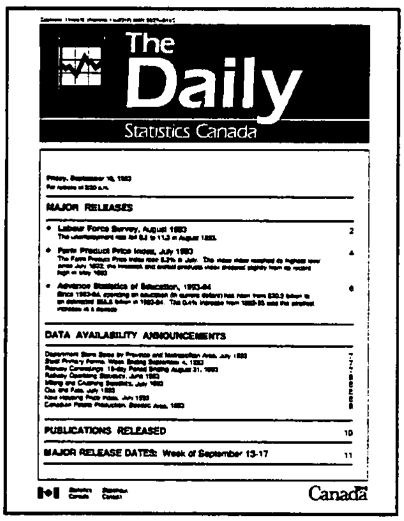
Pack of processed sour cherries

1994

Data on the pack of processed sour cherries for 1994 are now available.

Pack of selected fruits (excluding apples) 1994 (32-234, $14) will be released later. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Peter Zylstra (613-951-3511), Industry Division. ■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Statistics Canada's official release bulletin

Catalogue 11-001E. (Canada: $175; United States: US$210; other countries: US$245.)

Published each working day by the Communications Division, Statistics Canada, 10-H, R.H. Coats Bldg., Tunney's Pasture, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0T6.

To receive *The Daily* from the Internet, send an E-mail message to listproc@statcan.ca. Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message, type "subscribe daily firstname lastname".

Editor: Tim Prichard (613-951-1103)
Head of Official Release: Jacques Lefebvre (613-951-1088)

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

The dairy review, August 1994.
Catalogue number 23-001
(Canada: $14/$138; United States: US$17/US$166; other countries: US$20/US$194).

The crude petroleum and natural gas industry, 1993.
Catalogue number 26-213
(Canada: $28; United States: US$34; other countries: US$40).

Rubber and plastic products industries, 1992.
Catalogue number 33-250
(Canada: $38; United States: US$46; other countries: US$54).

Fabricated metal products industries, 1992.
Catalogue number 41-251
(Canada: $38; United States: US$46; other countries: US$54).

Electrical and electronic products industries, 1992.
Catalogue number 43-250
(Canada: $38; United States: US$46; other countries: US$54).

Coal and coke statistics, August 1994.
Catalogue number 45-002
(Canada: $11/$110; United States: US$14/US$132; other countries: US$16/US$154).

Electric power statistics, August 1994.
Catalogue number 57-001
(Canada: $11/$110; United States: US$14/US$132; other countries: US$16/US$154).

Household facilities and equipment, 1994.
Catalogue number 64-202
(Canada: $30; United States: US$36; other countries: US$42).

Imports by commodity, August 1994.
Catalogue number 65-007
(Canada: $60/$600; United States: US$72/US$720; other countries: US$84/US$840).

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The Daily

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