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Statistics Canada

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MAJOR RELEASES

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MAJOR RELEASES

Building permits

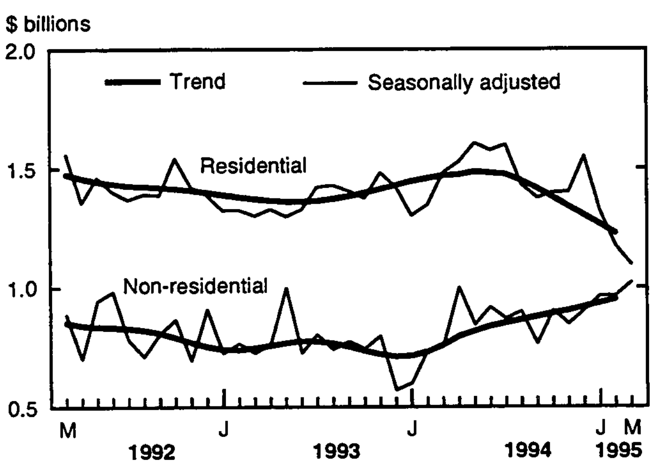
First quarter 1995 and March 1995

In the first quarter of 1995, municipalities issued the lowest level of residential building permits in four years—a result of limited job gains, homebuyers' concerns about job security, and higher mortgage rates.

The value of permits for new housing fell to $3.6 billion in the first quarter of 1995, down 17.5% from the fourth quarter of 1994. It was the third consecutive quarterly decrease in the residential sector and the lowest level since the first quarter of 1991.

In March, residential permits fell for a third straight month, to $1.1 billion, offsetting a 5.7% increase in the non-residential sector. Overall, municipalities issued permits valued at $2.1 billion in March, a 1.0% drop from February.

Non-residential sector is the only bright spot



A bleak outlook for housing in 1995

Except for a few increases late last fall, the monthly value of residential building permits has been generally declining since mid-1994. This may signal a bleak outlook for the new housing market in 1995.

The declines in residential activity were also reflected in actual housing starts and in the resale market. The resale housing market fell to its lowest level in 11 years in March, the Canadian Real Estate Association has reported. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, housing starts in March plunged 18.4% to their lowest level since the 1982 recession.

The drop in residential permits also augurs further cuts in construction employment over the next few months. According to the Labour force survey, in the first three months of 1995 alone, 15,000 construction jobs (excluding engineering; machinery and equipment installation) were lost.

Note to readers

Unless otherwise stated, this release presents seasonally adjusted data, which ease comparisons by removing the effects of seasonal variations.

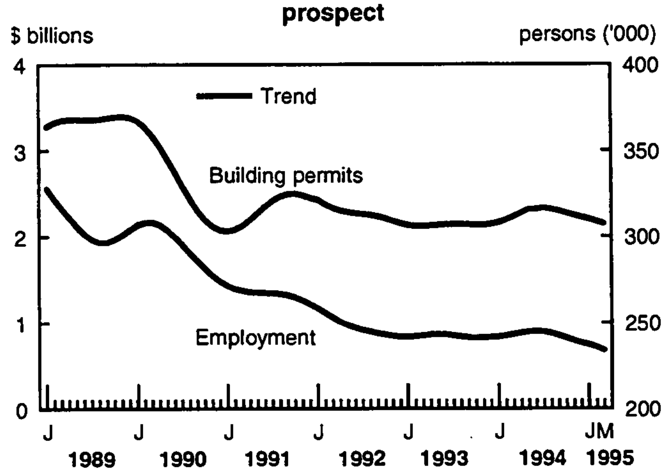
The monthly Building and demolitions permits survey covers 2,400 municipalities representing 93% of the population. It gives an early indication of building activity. The communities representing the other 7% of the population are very small, and their building activithies have little impact on the total.

In this release, the value of planned construction activities excludes engineering projects (for example, waterworks, sewers, culverts, etc.) and land.

The number of units authorized refers to the number of dwellings on which municipalities have permitted construction to start.

The annual rate is a monthly figure that has been seasonally adjusted and multiplied by 12 to reflect annual levels.

Construction[1] employment: a bleak short-term prospect



[1]*Labour force survey excluding engineering projects and machinery and equipment installation.*

Among the provinces, the first quarter's decline in the total value of building permits came mainly from British Columbia (-15.2%), Alberta (-11.3%) and Ontario (-7.5%)—in all three provinces, housing construction intentions tumbled to recessionary levels.

Large industrial projects are behind the non-residential sector's advance

The non-residential sector, which has been overshadowed by the slump in the residential sector, recorded its second quarterly gain, up 11.1% over the previous quarter to $3.0 billion.

This coincided with the strong levels of industrial capacity utilization reported by goods-producing industries in 1994, which were fuelled by strong exports and favourable commodity prices.

The recent growth in non-residential construction intentions has been attributable to its industrial component, which jumped 35.6% to $0.9 billion compared with the previous quarter. Important construction projects in the paper and allied products industry ($0.2 billion) have been a major factor behind the significant jump in the industrial sector, where the value of permits issued reached a level not seen since the second quarter of 1990.

Propelled by commercial and industrial projects, Quebec reported a 4.9% quarterly increase in its total value of building permits, which was a second consecutive quarterly gain. Also notable was a fourth consecutive quarterly gain in non-residential construction intentions in Saskatchewan, where the first quarter's 9.0% rise in the total value of permits was attributed to industrial projects.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 80 (levels 3-7, 16-22 and 24-32), 129, 137, 443, 989-992, 994-995 and 4073.

The March 1995 issue of *Building permits* (64-001, $24/$240) will be released on May 11. The April 1995 estimates will be released on June 6.

For further information on this release, contact Joanne Bureau (613-951-9689). For analytical information, contact Nathalie Léveillé (613-951-2025), Current Investment Indicators Section, Investment and Capital Stock Division. □

Value of building permits

Region and type of construction	February 1995	March 1995	February 1995 to March 1995	Fourth quarter 1994	First quarter 1995	Fourth quarter 1994 to First quarter 1995
	seasonally adjusted					
	$ millions		% change	$ millions		% change
Canada	**2,136**	**2,115**	**-1.0**	**7,003**	**6,537**	**-6.7**
Residential	1,171	1,095	-6.5	4,348	3,586	-17.5
Non-residential	965	1,020	5.7	2,655	2,951	11.1
Newfoundland	17	16	-5.9	56	49	-14.0
Residential	12	12	1.3	37	36	-2.5
Non-residential	5	4	-22.9	19	12	-36.5
Prince Edward Island	6	9	34.8	22	25	14.2
Residential	4	5	25.7	12	14	22.9
Non-residential	2	3	52.2	10	11	4.2
Nova Scotia	52	67	30.4	194	181	-6.8
Residential	44	54	22.7	121	144	19.2
Non-residential	8	13	74.7	73	37	-49.6
New Brunswick	36	42	15.8	136	118	-13.4
Residential	18	18	-0.7	62	52	-16.2
Non-residential	18	24	31.8	74	66	-11.0
Quebec	487	655	34.6	1,518	1,594	4.9
Residential	205	221	7.7	839	681	-18.9
Non-residential	282	434	54.2	680	913	34.3
Ontario	757	703	-7.1	2,597	2,402	-7.5
Residential	437	423	-3.2	1,674	1,348	-19.5
Non-residential	319	280	-12.4	923	1,054	14.2
Manitoba	61	33	-46.5	143	137	-4.3
Residential	26	17	-34.8	71	67	-5.9
Non-residential	35	16	-55.0	72	70	-2.7
Saskatchewan	89	24	-72.9	121	132	9.0
Residential	12	11	-7.9	50	37	-26.2
Non-residential	77	13	-83.1	72	96	33.4
Alberta	197	178	-9.8	684	607	-11.3
Residential	101	109	8.0	411	345	-16.1
Non-residential	96	69	-28.5	273	262	-3.9
British Columbia	422	383	-9.2	1,501	1,273	-15.2
Residential	306	220	-28.2	1,055	850	-19.4
Non-residential	116	164	40.7	446	423	-5.3
Yukon	3	2	-23.7	10	8	-15.7
Residential	3	2	-11.2	7	7	5.2
Non-residential	1	0	-69.1	3	1	-62.5
Northwest Territories	9	2	-78.1	19	12	-37.5
Residential	3	2	-38.3	9	6	-40.6
Non-residential	6	0	-96.1	10	6	-34.5

Note: *Data may not add to totals due to rounding.*

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OTHER RELEASES

Non-residential building construction price index
First quarter 1995

The non-residential building construction price index (1986=100) for the first quarter of 1995 rose to 127.8, a 1.7% increase over the fourth quarter of 1994 and a 3.8% increase over the first quarter of 1994. This was the largest annual rate of change since the second quarter of 1990.

These indexes measure changes in the prices that general and trade contractors charge for construction of non-residential buildings (commercial, industrial and institutional buildings). The indexes exclude the cost of land and design and real estate fees. Coverage includes seven major metropolitan areas (Halifax, Montréal, Ottawa, Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver) and a composite index for Canada.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2042-2043.

The first quarter 1995 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007, $19/$76) will be available in June. See "How to order publications".

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

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Asphalt roofing
March 1995

Shipments of asphalt shingles totalled 3 306 688 metric bundles in March, a 36.1% increase from 2 429 969 metric bundles shipped in March 1994.

For January to March 1995, shipments totalled 8 942 851 metric bundles, a 68.0% increase from 5 323 790 metric bundles shipped during the same period in 1994.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 32 and 122 (series 27 and 28).

The March 1995 issue of *Asphalt roofing* (45-001, $6/$60) will be available shortly. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Sandra Bohatyretz (613-951-3516), Industry Division.

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Rigid insulating board
March 1995

Shipments of rigid insulating board totalled 2 926 thousand square metres (12.7 mm basis) in March, a 15.5% increase from 2 534 thousand square metres in March 1994.

For January to March 1995, shipments totalled 7 883 thousand square metres, a 15.7% increase from 6 813 thousand square metres in 1994.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 31 (series 1) and 122 (series 4-7).

The March 1995 issue of *Rigid insulating board* (36-002, $6/$60) will be available shortly. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Sandra Bohatyretz (613-951-3516), Industry Division.

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Process cheese and instant skim milk powder
March 1995

Production of process cheese in March totalled 6 717 135 kilograms, up 17.2% from February 1995 but down 2.8% from March 1994. Year-to-date production at the end of March 1995 totalled 17 613 960 kilograms, up from 15 760 775 kilograms the previous year.

Production of instant skim milk powder in March 1995 totalled 312 163 kilograms, a 37.4% rise from February 1995 and up 2.7% from March 1994. Year-to-date production for 1995 totalled 946 400 kilograms, compared with 859 414 kilograms the year before.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 188 (series 1.10).

The March 1995 issue of *Production and inventories of process cheese and instant skim milk powder* (32-024, $6/$60) will be available shortly. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Peter Zylstra (613-951-3511), Industry Division.

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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Coal and coke statistics, February 1995
Catalogue number 45-002
(Canada: $11/$110; United States: US$14/US$132; other countries: US$16/US$154).

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences - Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48 - 1984.
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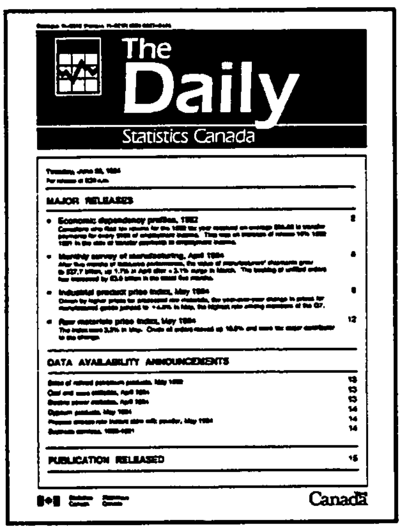

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Canadian economic observer	April 1995	April 20, 1995
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Construction-type plywood	February 1995	April 26, 1995
Consumer price index	March 1995	April 21, 1995
Corrugated boxes and wrappers	March 1995	April 27, 1995
Crushing statistics	February 1995	April 3, 1995
Dairy review	February 1995	April 13, 1995
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