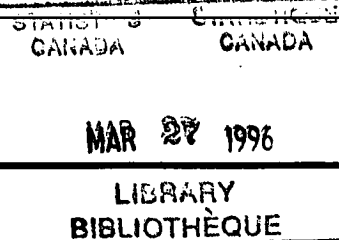




The Daily

Statistics Canada

Wednesday, March 27, 1996
For release at 8:30 a.m.



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Industrial prices fell 0.2% in February. This third monthly decline in five months was almost entirely due to plummeting pulp prices. A weaker Canadian dollar and an improving market for softwood lumber partly offset the decline.
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Manufacturers paid significantly more for their raw materials in February. Overall prices increased 1.6% over January, mainly due to higher prices for hogs, crude oil, metals and wood.

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MAJOR RELEASES

Industrial product price index

February 1996 (preliminary)

Industrial prices fell 0.2% in February. This third monthly decline in five months was almost entirely due to plummeting pulp prices. A weaker Canadian dollar and an improving market for softwood lumber partly offset the decline.

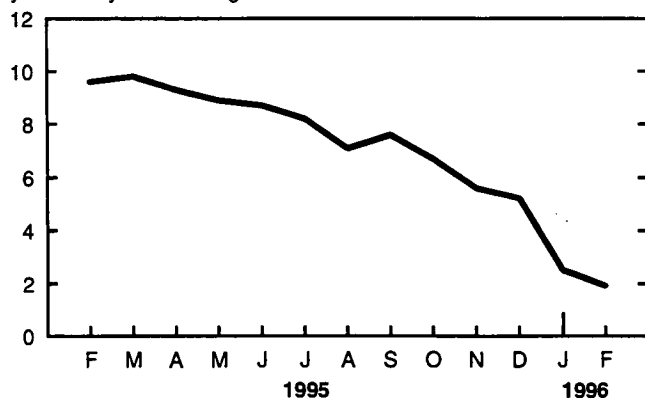
A 1.3% decline in gasoline and fuel oil prices was the second most significant contributor to the decline in industrial prices in February.

The weakening dollar had the effect of reducing February's change in industrial prices from -0.4% to -0.2%.

On a year-over-year basis, industrial prices rose 1.9%, the smallest gain since August 1992. The 12-month change in industrial prices, which peaked at +10.3% in January 1995, declined to +2.5% in January 1996.

The 12-month change in industrial prices

year-over-year % change



Weakening Canadian dollar partly offset February's decline

The U.S. dollar gained 1% in value against the Canadian dollar between mid-January and mid-February, raising the value of all export prices quoted in U.S. currency. Price levels for motor vehicles, pulp, paper and wood products were particularly affected by the movement of the exchange rate because producers frequently quote export prices for these items in U.S. dollars.

In the case of motor vehicles, the weaker Canadian dollar was mainly responsible for a 1% increase in the

Note to readers

The industrial product price index (IPPI) reflects the prices producers receive as goods leave their plants. It does not reflect what consumers pay. Unlike the consumer price index, the IPPI excludes indirect taxes and all costs (including the transportation, wholesale, and retail costs) occurring between when a good leaves a plant and when a final user takes possession.

Canadian producers export many goods. They often quote prices in foreign currencies, particularly for motor vehicles, pulp, paper and wood products. A rise or fall in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar therefore affects the IPPI. A 1.0% change in the value of the Canadian dollar against the U.S. dollar has been estimated to change the IPPI by about 0.2%.

export prices of automobiles and trucks. Car prices rose 0.9% and truck prices were up 0.8%.

Pulp prices down 21% since November

The most significant price decline in February was for pulp. Pulp prices, which began dropping in December, fell a further 12.4% in February for a total decline of 21% since November. Recent declines have left pulp prices at virtually the same level as in February 1995. In the United States, pulp prices fell almost 10% in February, to about 1% higher than a year previous.

Certain pulp products showed signs of weakness. This included some types of paper and various types of converted paper products.

But newsprint prices rose 1.2%. The decline in the Canadian dollar contributed to the increase. Most of the projected price increases for newsprint were not realized, however.

In the United States, paper prices fell 0.8% in February, compared with a 0.1% increase in Canada.

In Canada, inventory buildups have been putting downward pressure on the prices of pulp and pulp products. According to the most recent Monthly Survey of Manufacturing, inventories of paper and allied products continued to increase in January despite declining shipments of these commodities.

Lumber prices up

The strongest industrial sector in February was sawmilling, where prices rose 2.2%. The price increases were led by softwood lumber (+3.1%).

Softwood prices rose across the country. The strongest increases were in Quebec (+7.2%). In British Columbia, which accounts for more than 60% of production, prices rose 2.2%. In the United States, softwood lumber prices also increased, but by much less (+0.6% overall).

Contributing to February's price increases for softwood were signs of improvement in residential construction in both Canada and the United States. In Canada, building permits were up in January. In February, both housing starts (except of single detached dwellings) and existing home sales both increased. In the United States, housing starts also increased in February.

The 12-month change in prices continued falling for both consumers and manufacturers

The 12-month change in the prices of goods paid by consumers (as measured by the consumer price index) continued to fall, dropping from +1.1% in January to +0.9% in February. The 12-month change in the prices charged by manufacturers (as derived from the industrial product price index) also continued to decline, dropping to about +2.5%.

Both have been tending to decline since October 1995. Usually, about half of the consumer dollar goes to manufacturers. The rest goes to wholesalers, retailers, transporters and governments.

Perspective

February's decline in industrial prices, mainly due to falling prices for pulp, occurred as the economies of both Canada and the United States showed signs of improving. In Canada, overall employment continued to rise in February, as did manufacturing employment. In the United States, industrial production rose in February as the unemployment rate dropped from 5.8% to 5.5%. In early March, consumer sentiment in the United States was showing a clear improvement over the previous month.

Overseas, industrial production in Japan was still improving in January. In Europe, the picture was less encouraging. The most recent figures for unemployment rates showed increases in Germany (11.1%, February), France (11.8%, January) and Italy (12.6%, December).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 2000-2008.

The February 1996 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$21/\$210) will be available at the end of April. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Paul-Roméo Danis (613-951-3350, fax: 613-951-2848, the Internet: shadsan@statcan.ca), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. □

Industrial product price indexes
(1986=100)

| | Relative importance | Feb. 1995 | Jan. 1996 ^f | Feb. 1996 ^p | Feb. 1995 to Feb. 1996 | Jan. 1996 to Feb. 1996 |
|---|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | | | % change | |
| Industrial product price index (IPPI) | 100.0 | 127.3 | 129.9 | 129.7 | 1.9 | -0.2 |
| IPPI excluding petroleum and coal products | 93.6 | 129.5 | 132.2 | 132.0 | 1.9 | -0.2 |
| Intermediate goods¹ | 60.4 | 130.4 | 133.2 | 132.7 | 1.8 | -0.4 |
| First-stage intermediate goods ² | 13.4 | 144.5 | 143.4 | 140.3 | -2.9 | -2.2 |
| Second-stage intermediate goods ³ | 47.0 | 126.4 | 130.4 | 130.6 | 3.3 | 0.2 |
| Finished goods⁴ | 39.6 | 122.5 | 124.8 | 125.1 | 2.1 | 0.2 |
| Finished foods and feeds | 9.9 | 122.9 | 124.4 | 124.6 | 1.4 | 0.2 |
| Capital equipment | 10.4 | 125.1 | 127.6 | 128.1 | 2.4 | 0.4 |
| All other finished goods | 19.3 | 120.9 | 123.6 | 123.7 | 2.3 | 0.1 |
| Aggregation by commodities | | | | | | |
| Meat, fish and dairy products | 7.4 | 120.5 | 121.2 | 121.4 | 0.7 | 0.2 |
| Fruit, vegetable, feed, miscellaneous food products | 6.3 | 123.6 | 129.0 | 129.2 | 4.5 | 0.2 |
| Beverages | 2.0 | 127.4 | 129.0 | 129.0 | 1.3 | 0.0 |
| Tobacco and tobacco products | 0.7 | 166.9 | 172.7 | 172.7 | 3.5 | 0.0 |
| Rubber, leather, plastic fabric products | 3.1 | 126.1 | 127.2 | 126.9 | 0.6 | -0.2 |
| Textile products | 2.2 | 116.3 | 118.8 | 119.0 | 2.3 | 0.2 |
| Knitted products and clothing | 2.3 | 117.4 | 119.1 | 119.3 | 1.6 | 0.2 |
| Lumber, sawmill, other wood products | 4.9 | 160.9 | 152.4 | 154.8 | -3.8 | 1.6 |
| Furniture and fixtures | 1.7 | 123.8 | 125.5 | 125.5 | 1.4 | 0.0 |
| Pulp and paper products | 8.1 | 140.6 | 166.6 | 160.5 | 14.2 | -3.7 |
| Printing and publishing | 2.7 | 162.8 | 175.4 | 174.1 | 6.9 | -0.7 |
| Primary metal products | 7.7 | 139.8 | 129.7 | 130.3 | -6.8 | 0.5 |
| Metal fabricated products | 4.9 | 125.6 | 129.0 | 129.2 | 2.9 | 0.2 |
| Machinery and equipment | 4.2 | 125.8 | 128.9 | 129.0 | 2.5 | 0.1 |
| Autos, trucks, other transportation equipment | 17.6 | 121.3 | 123.4 | 124.3 | 2.5 | 0.7 |
| Electrical and communications products | 5.1 | 117.7 | 118.5 | 118.5 | 0.7 | 0.0 |
| Non-metallic mineral products | 2.6 | 121.3 | 124.6 | 124.5 | 2.6 | -0.1 |
| Petroleum and coal products ⁵ | 6.4 | 94.8 | 97.0 | 96.1 | 1.4 | -0.9 |
| Chemicals and chemical products | 7.2 | 134.7 | 132.2 | 132.4 | -1.7 | 0.2 |
| Miscellaneous manufactured products | 2.5 | 121.8 | 123.5 | 124.2 | 2.0 | 0.6 |
| Miscellaneous non-manufactured commodities | 0.4 | 103.0 | 96.9 | 95.8 | -7.0 | -1.1 |

¹ Intermediate goods are goods used principally to produce other goods.

² First-stage intermediate goods are items used most frequently to produce other intermediate goods.

³ Second-stage intermediate goods are items most commonly used to produce final goods.

⁴ Finished goods are goods most commonly used for immediate consumption or for capital investment.

⁵ This index is estimated for the current month.

^f Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

Raw materials price index

February 1996 (preliminary)

Manufacturers paid significantly more for their raw materials in February. Prices increased 1.6% over January, mainly due to higher prices for hogs, crude oil, metals and wood.

Compared with February 1995, raw material prices declined 1.2%. Lower prices for metals and logs partly offset higher prices for grain, milk and hogs.

Excluding mineral fuels (mostly crude oil), raw material prices were up 1.5% in February. On a 12-month basis, raw material prices, excluding mineral fuels, fell 1.6%, which compares with a 2.7% drop in January.

Crude oil prices climbed

Crude oil prices rose 1.5% in February to the same level as in February 1995. However, market forces may portend further increases in crude oil. Refiners' demand for crude remains strong, and oil inventories are at their lowest since the American Petroleum Institute began measuring them in 1987. If and when Iraq returns to the world market, oil supplies will increase by about 1%. Canadian crude oil output rose 3.9% in 1995.

Natural gas production increased 6.9% last year. However, lower natural gas prices in 1995, down almost 20%, were responsible for the significant decline in the value of natural gas production. More than 50% of the natural gas produced in Canada is exported to the United States. Further increases appear unlikely in the near future because the pipelines to the United States have nearly reached capacity. In the year 2000, a giant new plant in Joffre, Alberta will begin producing ethylene (a natural gas derivative), providing a new market opportunity for natural gas.

Prices rose for animals and animal products

In February, higher prices for hogs, hides, skins and chickens were marginally offset by lower prices for cattle.

Chicken prices, which declined in 1994 and 1995, increased by almost 7% in January and February. Operating costs for chicken production have escalated. The price of feed wheat for chickens climbed 30% over the past year. Canadians ate more than 25 kilograms of chicken per capita in 1994, twice the consumption of 20 years ago. While consumption of chicken has been favourable to the health of Canadians, it appears it may be less favourable to their pocketbooks in the coming months.

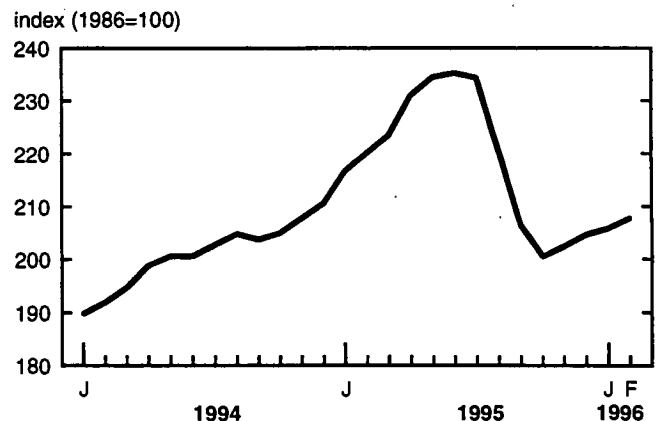
Note to readers

The raw materials price index (RMPI) reflects the prices that Canadian manufacturers pay for key raw materials. Many of these prices are set in world markets. Unlike the industrial product price index, the RMPI includes goods that are not produced in Canada.

Wood prices primed to move up

Log prices increased 2% in February, whereas pulpwood prices fell almost 2.5%. Weakening demand for pulp has almost eliminated any upward pressure on pulpwood prices for now. However, in order to comply with the Canada-U.S. agreement on softwood lumber, it appears that stumpage fees may rise in Quebec, Ontario and Alberta. Higher stumpage fees, potential lumber shortages in the United States, and cutting restrictions in British Columbia could put upward pressure on log prices.

Wood prices are rising again



Metal prices recovered

Metal prices recovered somewhat in February (+2.1%), after falling 6% in January. Prices for all major metals were up, except aluminum material. Higher prices for copper (+2.4%), lead (+8.6%), gold (+3.4%) and nickel (+10.3%) were partly offset by lower prices for aluminum materials (-2.8%). It appears for the most part that the higher metal prices were the result of higher inventories rather than actual demand.

Grain prices advanced

Grain prices moved up in February, led by higher prices for wheat (+3.2%) and barley (+3.1%), the result of strong exports and a winter wheat crop that is anticipated to be poor. The coming winter wheat crop has been rated as one of the century's 10 driest. February grain prices were up more than 40% compared with February 1995.

Among the vegetable products group, other significant price increases were noted for sugar (+1.7%) and coffee. Higher prices for sugar are on the horizon, if smaller-than-expected crops in Cuba and India become a reality. Further price increases for raw sugar are anticipated because of trade restrictions

imposed by the United States. Sugar imports from the United States supply about 23% of the sugar consumed in Canada.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2009.

The February 1996 issue of *Industry price indexes* (62-011-XPB, \$21/\$210) will be available at the end of April. See "How to order publications".

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

Raw materials price index (1986=100)

| | Relative importance | Feb. 1995 | Jan. 1996 ^r | Feb. 1996 ^p | Feb. 1995 to Feb. 1996 | Jan. 1996 to Feb. 1996 |
|---|------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| | | | | | % change | |
| Raw materials price index (RMPI) | 100.0 | 132.2 | 128.6 | 130.6 | -1.2 | 1.6 |
| Mineral fuels | 31.7 | 111.9 | 110.0 | 111.6 | -0.3 | 1.5 |
| Vegetable products | 10.3 | 125.7 | 135.3 | 136.8 | 8.8 | 1.1 |
| Animals and animal products | 25.5 | 111.3 | 111.4 | 114.1 | 2.5 | 2.4 |
| Wood | 13.1 | 220.1 | 205.8 | 207.8 | -5.6 | 1.0 |
| Ferrous materials | 3.6 | 124.9 | 120.7 | 121.1 | -3.0 | 0.3 |
| Non-ferrous metals | 13.2 | 146.9 | 131.6 | 134.3 | -8.6 | 2.1 |
| Non-metallic minerals | 2.6 | 104.8 | 105.3 | 105.6 | 0.8 | 0.3 |
| RMPI excluding mineral fuels | 68.3 | 141.7 | 137.3 | 139.4 | -1.6 | 1.5 |

^r Revised figures.

^p Preliminary figures.

OTHER RELEASES

Unemployment insurance

January 1996 (preliminary)

In January, 752,000 Canadians received regular unemployment insurance (UI) benefits, a 1.3% rise from December 1995. This continued the rising trend that began in June 1995. The increased number of beneficiaries is in line with the negligible growth in the economy and the slightly higher unemployment rate in January. (Even though employment rose in January, the unemployment rate increased because of growth in the labour force.)

The largest monthly gains in the number of beneficiaries were in Quebec and Ontario. Compared with January 1995, the number of beneficiaries nationwide declined 2.6%.

Number receiving regular UI benefits

| | Jan. 1996 | Dec. 1995 to Jan. 1996 |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| seasonally adjusted | | |
| | | % change |
| Canada | 751,610 | 1.3 |
| Newfoundland | 39,910 | 0.7 |
| Prince Edward Island | 10,090 | 1.2 |
| Nova Scotia | 37,630 | 0.2 |
| New Brunswick | 45,230 | 3.1 |
| Quebec | 258,850 | 1.3 |
| Ontario | 184,680 | 2.8 |
| Manitoba | 18,800 | -1.8 |
| Saskatchewan | 14,820 | -1.4 |
| Alberta | 51,790 | -1.6 |
| British Columbia | 87,780 | 2.0 |
| Yukon | 1,290 | -3.1 |
| Northwest Territories | 1,340 | 0.2 |

Canadians were paid \$870 million in regular UI benefits in January, a 5.1% increase from December 1995. The amount of benefits paid has been increasing since September 1995 (after decreasing from September 1992 to August 1995). Compared with January 1995, however, benefit payments were down 3.0% (seasonally adjusted).

In January, 263,000 individuals claimed (applied for) UI benefits, up 2.5% from December. The number of claims increased more than the number of beneficiaries because some who claim benefits do not qualify. Compared with December, the number of claims rose in all the provinces and territories except

Alberta, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Compared with January 1995, the number of claims increased 5% (seasonally adjusted).

Unemployment insurance statistics

| | Dec. 1995 | Jan. 1996 | Dec. 1995 to Jan. 1996 |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|
| seasonally adjusted | | | |
| | | | % change |
| Reg. beneficiaries ('000) | 742 ^P | 752 ^P | 1.3 |
| Reg. payments (\$ millions) | 828.5 | 870.5 | 5.1 |
| Claims ('000) | 257 | 263 | 2.5 |
| unadjusted | | | |
| | | | % change |
| All beneficiaries ('000) | 1,193 | 1,157 ^P | -3.2 |
| Reg. beneficiaries ('000) | 954 | 926 ^P | -3.0 |
| Claims ('000) | 342 | 374 | 9.3 |
| Payments (\$ millions) | 1,534.8 | 1,547.3 | 0.8 |

^P Preliminary figures.

Note: "All beneficiaries" includes all claimants paid regular benefits (e.g., due to layoff) or special benefits (e.g., due to illness).

Available on CANSIM: matrices 26 (series 1.6), 5700-5717 and 5735-5736.

Some data series (weeks, benefits paid, claims) for November and December 1995 have been revised.

The January 1996 issue of *Unemployment insurance statistics* (73-001-XPB, \$16/\$160) was released in March. It was the final issue of the publication. See "How to order publications". Custom tabulations of the data are now available upon request on a cost-recovery basis.

For further information on this release, or to order, contact Michael Scrim (613-951-4090, fax: 613-951-4087, the Internet: labour@statcan.ca), Labour Division. ■

Crude oil and natural gas

January 1996

In January, further growth in demand from the United States caused a 4.6% increase in natural gas production compared with January 1995. Natural gas production reached a new record at 13 912.1 million cubic metres. Crude oil production weakened in January 1996, down 2.3% from January 1995.

Much of the growth in natural gas production can be attributed to increased foreign demand; more than 53% of production is now exported to the United States. However, natural gas exporters are fast approaching the capacity of the pipelines that carry gas into the United States.

Exports of crude oil rose 12.5% to a record 5 810 400 cubic metres, the strongest year-over-year increase since June 1995. Exports of crude continue to rise, helped by pipeline expansion that has made possible increased exports to the United States. Canadian crude oil has found a ready market in the United States, where less reliance on shipments from the Persian Gulf has boosted the demand for shipments from Canada and Mexico.

Natural gas exports rose 6.3% from January 1995, to a record 7 419.5 million cubic metres. Exports have been rising since early 1991, due in part to expanded pipeline capacity and growing demand for Canadian natural gas by electric co-generation facilities in the United States.

Available on CANSIM: matrices 530 and 539.

The January 1996 issue of *Crude petroleum and natural gas production* (26-006-XPB, \$18/\$180) will be available the last week of April. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Gerry O'Connor (613-951-3562), Energy Section, Industry Division.

Crude oil and natural gas

| | Jan. 1995 | Jan. 1996 | Jan. 1995 to Jan. 1996 % |
|--|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| | thousands of cubic metres | | change |
| Crude oil and equivalent hydrocarbons¹ | | | |
| Production | 9 689.3 | 9 467.1 | -2.3 |
| Exports | 5 167.0 | 5 810.4 | 12.5 |
| Imports ² | 3 319.3 | 3 238.9 | -2.4 |
| Refinery receipts | 8 194.1 | 7 792.4 | -4.9 |
| | millions of cubic metres | | % change |
| Natural gas³ | | | |
| Marketable production | 13 303.9 | 13 912.1 | 4.6 |
| Exports | 6 979.6 | 7 419.5 | 6.3 |
| Canadian sales ⁴ | 7 613.8 | 8 630.2 | 13.3 |

¹ Disposition may differ from production due to inventory change, industry own-use, etc.

² Crude oil received by Canadian refineries from foreign countries for processing. Data differs from International Trade Division estimates due to timing differences and the inclusion in "trade" of crude oil landed in Canada for re-export.

³ Disposition may differ from production due to inventory change, usage as pipeline fuel, pipeline losses, line-pack fluctuations, etc.

⁴ Includes direct sales.

Residential care facilities

1993/94

Costs continue to climb in Canada's residential care facilities for the aged. Cost per resident day in residential care facilities for the aged rose to \$94 in the 1993/94 fiscal year.

Increasingly, these facilities house the very old. In the facilities for the aged that reported ages of their residents, 70% were aged 80 or older in 1993/94.

Residential care facilities includes facilities for the aged; persons with physical disabilities, developmental delays, psychiatric disabilities, and alcohol and drug addictions; children with emotional disturbances; delinquents; transients; and other groups. The cost per resident day in these residential care facilities peaked in 1992/93 at \$113, and then fell slightly to \$111 in 1993/94.

The cost of direct care at these residential care facilities also peaked in 1992/93 at \$62 per resident day, and then fell to \$61 in 1993/94. In facilities for the aged, the cost of direct care rose to \$46 per resident day in 1993/94. Direct care costs include

nursing services, therapeutic services and medications, but exclude meals and administrative expenses.

Residential care facilities for the aged represented 75% of the beds and 44% of the operating residential care facilities in Canada. Facilities for the aged reported expenditures of \$4.16 billion in 1993/94, and accounted for 64% of all spending in residential care facilities. Occupancy rates at residential care facilities for the aged remained high, at 98% of the beds in service.

These results are based on data reported by 87% of Canada's 5,253 residential care facilities, representing 87% of the 233,847 approved beds.

The publication *Residential care facilities, 1993/94* (83-237, microfiche version \$25, paper \$35) will be available shortly. (This publication combines two formerly separate publications, *Residential care facilities-aged* (83-237) and *Residential care facilities-mental* (83-238). See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Patricia Tully (613-951-8782) or the Information Requests Unit (613-951-1746), Health Statistics Division. ■

Electric lamps

February 1996

Light bulb and tube manufacturers sold 26,184,000 light bulbs and tubes in February, an 11.7% increase from 23,451,000 in February 1995.

Year-to-date sales at the end of February 1996 totalled 54,758,000 light bulbs and tubes, a 14.8% increase from 47,711,000 a year earlier.

The February 1996 issue of *Electric lamps* (43-009-XPB, \$6/\$60) will be available shortly. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Laurie Vincent (613-951-3523), Industry Division. ■

Railway operating statistics

November 1995

The seven surveyed railways reported net income of \$28.6 million in November 1995. Their operating revenues totalled \$589.2 million, a 7.0% decrease from November 1994. Revenue-freight tonne-kilometres dropped 3.6% over the same period.

On a year-to-date basis, at the end of November 1995, operating revenues declined 4.2% from the same period of 1994.

Data for 1994 and previous years have been revised.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 142.

The November 1995 issue of *Railway operating statistics* (52-003-XPB, \$12/\$120) will be released shortly. See "How to order publications".

For further information on this release, contact Angus MacLean (613-951-2528, fax: 613-951-0579), Transportation Division. ■



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PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Construction type plywood, January 1996

Catalogue number 35-001-XPB

(Canada: \$6/\$60; United States: US\$8/US\$72; other countries: US\$9/US\$84).

Energy statistics handbook, March 1996

Catalogue number 57-601-UPB

(Canada: \$330; United States: US\$400; other countries: US\$460).

Hospital morbidity and surgical procedures, 1993-94, microfiche version

Catalogue number 82-216-XMB

(Canada: \$35; United States: US\$42; other countries: US\$49).

Hospital morbidity and surgical procedures, 1993-94, paper version

Catalogue number 82-216-XPB

(Canada: \$40; United States: US\$48; other countries: US\$56).

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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