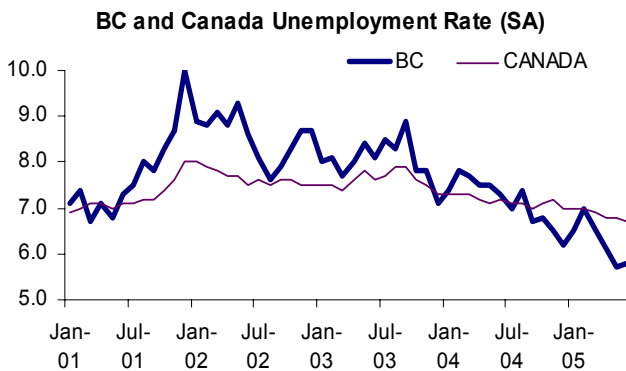


Current Statistics ♦ July 2005

- **British Columbia's unemployment rate in June edged up 0.1 percentage points to 5.8% (seasonally adjusted), after three consecutive declines since February.** It is, however, still the second lowest rate since 1981. A drop in the number of jobs (-0.3%, or a net loss of 5,800 jobs), for the first time in seven months was the reason for the upturn in the jobless rate. The labour force shrank (-0.2%) between May and June. Jobless rates in the rest of the country ranged from 3.8% in Alberta to 13.9% in Newfoundland. The Canadian unemployment rate edged down (-0.1 percentage point) to 6.7%. Job growth (+0.1%) was the main reason for the improvement, while the size of the labour force was unchanged.

Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **The province's goods (-0.5%, seasonally adjusted) and service (-0.2%) sectors both took on less workers in June.** Construction (-1.2%) and manufacturing (-1.7%) industries employed fewer people, but this was offset by employment increases in agriculture (+4.9%), forestry, fishing and mining (+1.0%), and utilities (+3.9%). Employment losses in the service industries were largely in public administration (-7.0%), management, administration and support services (-3.1%), and accommodation and food services (-3.0%). Wholesale and retail trade (-2.0%) and transportation and warehousing (-1.4%) also employed fewer workers. On the other hand,

there were more jobs in information, culture and recreational services (+11.2%), finance, insurance and real estate (+2.6%), and professional, scientific and technology services (+2.5%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities continued to fall (-6.7%, seasonally adjusted) in May.** Permits for residential projects (-10.5%) were down while permits for non-residential projects rose modestly (+1.6%). The increase was supported by an upturn in planned spending on institutional and government projects (+171.3%). Building intentions for both industrial (-25.7%) and commercial (-28.3%) projects declined for the second consecutive month. Permits in Vancouver (-14.7%) and Abbotsford (-7.7%) plunged in May. However, permits were sharply higher in Victoria (+35.2%).

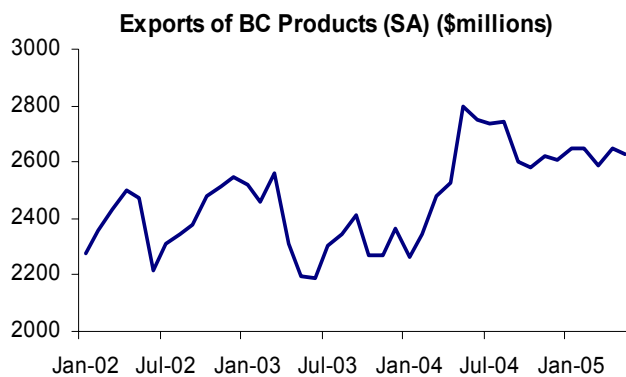
Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Total Canadian exports slipped (-0.5%, seasonally adjusted) in May.** Energy was the main contributor to the fall (-4.9%), but agricultural and fishing product exports also experienced a significant drop (-2.4%). Strong growth in automotive product shipments (+4.9%) and other consumer goods (+2.7%) helped partially offset declines in other areas.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

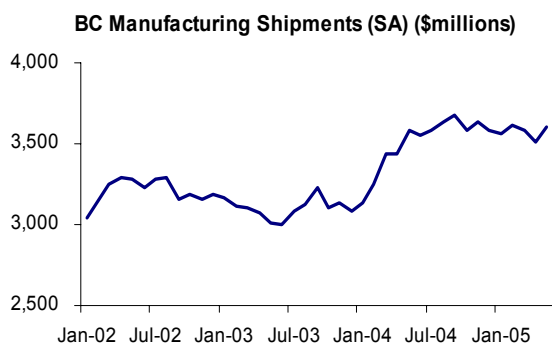
- **The value of BC origin exports dipped 0.8% in May (seasonally adjusted) as shipments of energy (-6.4%) and forest products (-1.1%) fell.** Industrial and consumer product exports climbed 2.6%, helping partially offset the decline in energy and forest products. Exports to the United States slumped 4.0% from April to May. Energy (-17.5%) and forest products (-5.0%) were again responsible for the decline.

Data Source: BC Stats



- **Shipments by BC manufacturers rebounded 2.5% (seasonally adjusted) in May after two consecutive monthly losses.** Wood (+3.2%), paper (+3.9%), and food (+1.5%) manufacturers—the largest segments of BC’s manufacturing industry—all saw shipments bounce back from a weak April. There were also significant increases in shipments by producers of machinery (+9.3%), non-metallic minerals (+7.1%), and beverages and tobacco (+8.4%). Restraining the manufacturing sector were the plastics and rubber (-7.0%), primary metals (-2.7%) and computer and electronic products (-0.5%) producers. Overall, shipments of durables (+2.7%) increased more than non-durable shipments (+2.2%) in May.

Data Source: Statistics Canada



- **British Columbia’s year-over-year inflation rate remained unchanged at 1.5% in June, as price increases for energy products continued to moderate.** Although energy prices were 1.3% higher than in June 2004, the year-over-year increase was significantly lower than it has been during most of the last year.

Fuel oil for homeowners continued to take a bigger bite out of the consumer budget, with prices up 18.7% from June 2004. Homeowner’s insurance premiums (+4.9%) were also an inflationary factor, as were property taxes (+3.7%) and maintenance costs (+3.5%). However, consumers paid less for electricity and rental accommodation, and overall shelter costs were up 1.9% in June.

The cost of transportation rose 1.6%. Prices at the pump climbed a modest 1.8%, and this helped moderate the cost of operating a motor vehicle (+3.6%), which increased less than half as much as in April (+9.2%).

Prices for health and personal care (+2.2%) and education and reading materials (+8.4%) were significantly higher than in June 2004. Consumers paid 0.1% less at the grocery store but forked over 3.7% more for food purchased from restaurants.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Sales by BC retailers edged down in May, slipping 0.3% (seasonally adjusted), after posting a similarly small increase (+0.2%) in the previous month.** However, BC retailers fared better than those in most other provinces. Nationally, sales dropped 1.3%, with all provinces except Saskatchewan (+2.8%) and Alberta (+1.0%) registering declines. Sales were off significantly in Prince Edward Island (-4.2%), New Brunswick (-3.0%) and Ontario (-2.6%).

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Wholesale sales rebounded, rising 1.5% (seasonally adjusted) in May, following a downturn (-1.7%) in the previous month.** Total Canadian sales were virtually unchanged (+0.2%) from the April level. Although sales were weak in Ontario (-0.3%), they rose in most other provinces, led by Saskatchewan (+3.2%) and Newfoundland (+2.1%)—the only provinces where wholesale sales grew faster than in BC.

Data Source: Statistics Canada