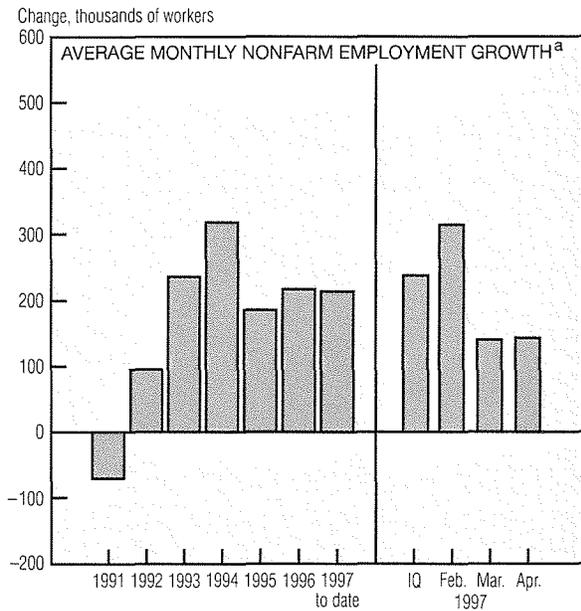
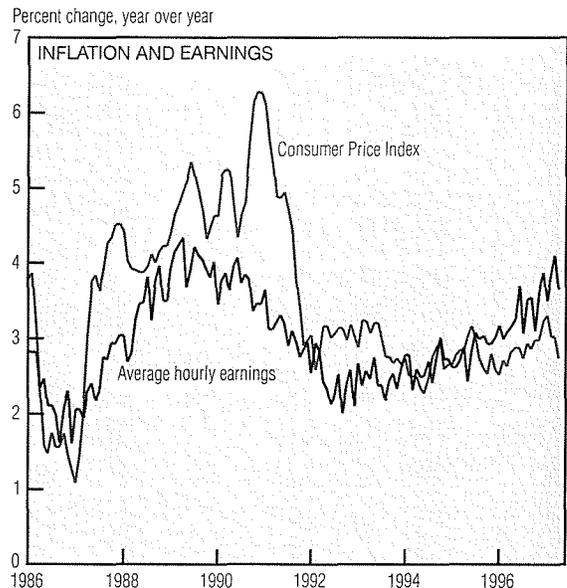
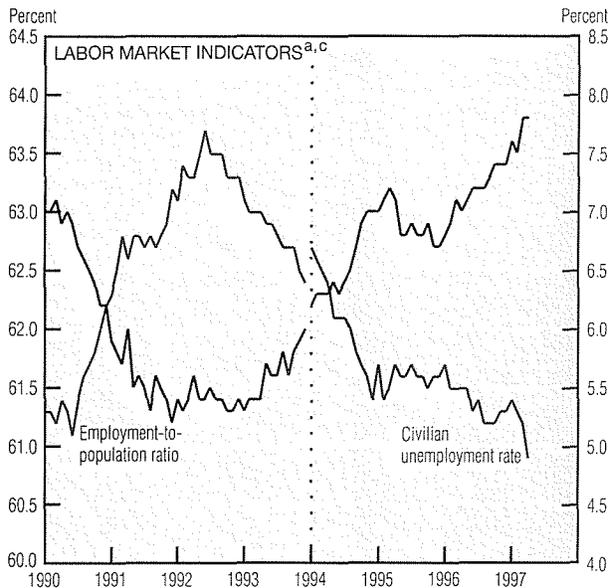


# Labor Markets



	Average monthly change (thousands of employees)				
	1996	1997			
	Year	IQ	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.
Payroll employment	216	237	314	139	142
Goods-producing	16	48	109	-9	-57
Manufacturing	-8	15	3	17	-14
Construction	25	31	104	-25	-44
Service-producing	199	190	205	148	199
Services	100	103	86	72	93
Retail trade	50	21	18	53	32
Government	15	9	33	-27	32
Household employment	232	440	-150	745	209
Average for period					
Civilian unemployment rate (%)	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.2	4.9
Manufacturing workweek (hours) <sup>b</sup>	41.5	41.9	41.9	42.1	42.2
Manufacturing overtime (hours) <sup>b</sup>	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.9	5.0



a. Seasonally adjusted.  
 b. Production and nonsupervisory workers.  
 c. Vertical line indicates break in data series due to survey redesign.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Labor market growth in April matched March's slow pace, with nonfarm payroll employment rising 142,000. Although this figure was weaker than expected, overall indicators continue to show strength. The unemployment rate fell from 5.2% to 4.9%—its lowest level in more than 23 years—while the employment-to-population ratio was unchanged from March's record high.

The large drop in the goods-producing sector (-57,000 jobs)

last month can be accounted for by declines in the construction industry (-44,000) due to bad weather and in the motor vehicles industry (-13,000) because of layoffs and strikes. Despite an overall downturn in manufacturing jobs, the length of the workweek and overtime both increased slightly (0.1 hour). Indeed, manufacturing overtime in April reached a record high of 5.0 hours.

Of the total jobs created last month, 199,000 were in the service-

producing sector. Much of this growth stemmed from employment in business and health services (up 53,000) and eating and drinking establishments (up 46,000), two usually robust industries. In addition, government rebounded from its March downtick, adding 32,000 net new jobs last month.

Average hourly pay fell slightly in April, down 1 cent to \$12.14, for an annual increase of 3.6%.