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DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS - CANADA
Dominion Statistician: R. H. Coats, LL.D., F.R.S.C., F.S.S.(Hon.)
Internal Trade Branch
Chief: H. Marshall, B.A., F.S.S.

CENSUS OF MERCHANDISING AND SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS.

## Customers' Accounts outstanding on Books of Retail Stores, December 31, 1935

Customers' accounts outstanding on retail merchants ' books totalled almost a quarter of a billion dollars on December 31, 1935, according to data secured for the annual Census of Merchandising Establishments. The total amount, $\$ 222,936,000$, includes the amount outstanding at the end of the year on charge accounts and on open and instalment accounts, but it does not include accounts carried by other than merchandising firms such as amounts due financing corporations as part payment in the sale of motor vehicles. Accounts written of $f$ are also excluded. The figure for outstanding accounts is not, of course, synonymous with the total amount of credit business transacted by retail firms during the year; it represents the amount outstanding on December 31 on credit or instalment purchases made prior to or during 1935, but it does not include cash payments made during the year on obligations contracted within the same period. The figure is indicative of the extent to which Canadian consumers were debtors of retail merchants on December 31, 1935.

Provincial distribution of the total year-end indebtedness to retail merchants is as follows: Ontario, \$78, 846, 800 ; Quebec, $\$ 47,687,500$; Saskatchewan, \$25,643,900; British Columbia, \$18,221,900; Alberta, $\$ 17,667,300 ;$ Manitoba, $\$ 14,636,200$; Nova Scotia, $\$ 9,202,400$; New Brunswick, $\$ 8,417,100$, and Prince Edward Island, \$2,349,400.

The extent to which the value of accounts outstanding at the year end is representative of the average amount carried throughout the year is influenced by several factors: The endeavours of both retail merchants and purchasers to clear off small accounts before the end of the year would tend to reduce the figure on December 31 below the average for the twelve-month period. The fact of the amount reported to the census of Merchandising being a month-end figure would also act in the same direction. Offsetting the effects of these two factors is the abnormally high level of retail buying in December on account of the Christmas trade and the consequent proportional increase in instalment and credit sales. Seasonal variations in the available cash resources of the farm population also have an important bearing on the relative amounts outstanding on the books of retail firms at different periods of the year.

A comparison of outstanding accounts at the end of the year with total annual sales, although largely influenced by the factors enumerated in the preceding paragraph, may be of some significance in presenting relative indebtedness to retail merchants in different localities and in different lines of business. Retail sales in Canada for 1935 totalled $\$ 2,035,817,000$ and outstanding accounts of $\$ 222,936,000$ at the end of that year formed 11.0 per cent of the annual sales figure. Ratios of year-end outstanding accounts to annual sales were greatest in Prince Edward Island (23.8 per cent) and in Saskatchewan ( 21.5 per cent) and were fairly uniform at from 10 per cent to 14 per cent in the remainder of the provinces. The large ratio for Prince Edward Island may be attributed partly to the large proportion of the total business in that province which is transacted by country general stores, a type of retail outlet in which credit sales are of considerable importance, and partly by the relatively unimportant position held by chain stores with their smaller credit business. The ratio of
21.5 per cent for Saskatchewan may be attributed to the large amounts outstanding on the books of lumber and building material dealers, a kind of business which accounts for a considerabie portion of the total provincial retail trade.

As a general jule, the ratio of outstanding accounts at the year end to total annual sales was greater for incependent than for chain stores. The total amount of $\$ 222,936,000$ which was outstanding on December 31, 1935, may be divided $\leq n$ the proportion $\$ 192,464,900$ for independent stores and $\$ 30,471,100$ for chains, the ratios of accounts to annual sales being 11.5 per cent for incependents and 8.4 per cent for chains. The difference in ratios as between chains and independents is much more marked for certain kinds of business. Accounts outstanding on the books of all grocery and combination stores at the end of 1935 totalled $\$ 13,432,800$, this amount forming 5.9 per cent of the annual sales of all such stores. The amount owing to indeperdent stores in this fleld was $\$ 17,391,600$ or 8.3 per cent of annuil sales, while the amount owing to retail chains was \$1,041,200 or 1.0 per cent of sales. In the drug store field the ratios of outstanding accounts to sales were 4.2 per cent for independeats, 1.0 per cent for chains and 3.6 por cent for all stores. In the lumber and building materials field the situation was reversed, the ratio of outstanding accounts to sales being much larger for nultiple organizations (operating chiefly in the Prairie Provinces) than for single yards. Including both chains and independents, outstanding accounts totalled $\$ 17,648,700$ or 47.8 per cent of sales. The total amount may be divided in the proportion $\$ 8,169,700$ for independent yards and $\$ 9,479,000$ for multiple firms, these figures forming 31.8 per cent and 84.7 per cent of the corresponding annual sales.

Accounts outstanding at the end of the year on the books of country general stores (stores selling a general line of merchandise and located in places of less than 10,000 population) totalled $\$ 33,098,500$ or 19.2 per cent of the annual sales for this kind of business. Motor vehicle dealers carried $\$ 19,214,800$ on thejr own books at the year end. As previously stated, this amount does not include obligations due financing corporations which assisted in the financing of motor vehicle sales. Outstanding accounts for other important lines of business, together with the proportions that such amounts formed of annual sales, are as follows: $\$ 16,985,300$ or 6.6 per cent of sales for department stores, $\$ 14,044,800$ or 48.1 per cent of sales for furniture stores, $\$ 11,470,500$ or 22.9 per cent of sales for hardware stores, and $\$ 10,598,400$ or 60.5 per cent of sales for radio and music stores. The large ratios shown for furniture stores and radio and music stores are obviously indicative of the policy of extensive instalment buying so prevalent in the purchase of those commodities handled by these lines of trade.

Table 1. - Annual Retail Sales and Accounts Outstanding on Books of Retail Firms on December 31, 1935, by Provinces

(1) Includes Yukon and Northwest Territories.

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\frac{\text { Table 2.--Accounts Outstanding on Books of Retail Firms }}{\text { on December 31, } 1935}
$$

(Firms classified according to type of operation, by provinces)

| Province | $\begin{aligned} & \text { ALL STORES } \\ & \text { Accounts } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |  | Independent Stores Accounts outstanding |  | $\begin{aligned} & \text { Chain Stores } \\ & \text { Accounts } \\ & \text { outstanding } \end{aligned}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Amount | $\begin{array}{ll} \% & \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \end{array}$ | Amount | $\begin{array}{ll} \% & \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \end{array}$ | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & 10 \text { sales } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |
|  | \$ |  | \$ |  | \$ |  |
| CANADA(1) | 222,936,000 | 11.0 | 192,464,900 | 11.5 | 30,471,100 | 8.4 |
| Prince Edward Island | 2,349,400 | 23.8 | 2,337,000 | 24.8 | 12,400 | 2.7 |
| Nova Scotia | 9,202,400 | 11.4 | 8,684,900 | 13.0 | 517,500 | 3.8 |
| New Brunswick | 8,417,100 | 13.7 | 7,360,700 | 14.1 | 1,056,400 | 11.7 |
| Quebec | 47,687,500 | 10.3 | 42,629,000 | 11.0 | 5,058,500 | 6.9 |
| Ontario | 78,84 6,800 | 9.3 | 69,029,000 | 10.2 | 9,817,800 | 5.7 |
| Manitoba | 14,636,200 | 10.6 | 12,911,200 | 10.6 | 1,725,000 | 11.0 |
| Saskatchewan | 25,643,900 | 21.5 | 18,447,200 | 19.1 | 7,196,700 | 31.6 |
| Alberta | 17,667,300 | 13.8 | 14,738,300 | 13.6 | 2,929,000 | 14.9 |
| British Columbia | 18,221,900 | 9.7 | 16,203,800 | 10.8 | 2,018,100 | 5.4 |

(1) Includes Yukon and Northwest Territories.

| Kind of Business | CANADA |  |  | Prince Edward Island |  |  | Nova Scotia |  |  | New Brunswick |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Rotail <br> Sales, $1935$ | Accounts Outstanding |  | Retail <br> Sales, $1935$ | Accounts 0utstanding |  | Retail <br> Sales, $1935$ | Accounts Outstanding |  | Retail Sales, 1935 | Accounts Outstanding |  |
|  |  | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sales } \end{aligned}$ |  | Amount | $\left[\begin{array}{l} 1 \% \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \end{array}\right.$ |  | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sales } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |  | Amount | $\begin{array}{ll} 1 \% & \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \\ \hline \end{array}$ |
| TOTAL | $2,035,817,000$ | $222,936,000$ | 11.0 | $\begin{gathered} 8 \\ 9,886,000 \end{gathered}$ | 2, 349,400 | 23.8 | 80,409, 000 | $9,202,400$ | 11.4 | $61,318,000$ | $8,417,100$ | 13.7 |
| Food group | 464,961,000 | 25,435,700 | 5.5 | 1,840,000 | 204,100 | 11.1 | 20,733,000 | 1,571,500 | 7.6 | 11,730,000 | 944,500 | 8.1 |
| Country general stores | 172,456,000 | 33,098,500 | 19.2 | 2,300,000 | 784,300 | 34.1 | 11,852,000 | 1,831,800 | 15.5 | 9,943,000 | 2,746,100 | 27.6 |
| General merchandise group. | 33:,860,000 | 20,977,900 | 6.2 | 1,665,000 | 314,000 | 18.9 | 10,096,000 | 908,300 | 9.0 | 13,028,000 | 648,900 | 5.0 |
| Automotive group .......... | 306,437,000 | 27,300,600 | 8.9 | 1,154,000 | 212,400 | 18.4 | 12,565,000 | 1,291,500 | 10.3 | 8,591,000 | 1,247,600 | 14.5 |
| Apparel group | 165,864,000 | 14,073,900 | 8.5 | 1,002,000 | 129,200 | 12.9 | 6,793,000 | 792,000 | 11.7 | 4,533,000 | 615,700 | 13.6 |
| Bujlding materials group | 100,567,000 | 32,532,100 | 32.3 | 263,000 | 77.300 | 29.4 | 2,979,000 | 667,000 | 22.4 | 2,273,000 | 602,400 | 26.5 |
| Furniture and household group $\qquad$ | 65,071,000 | 33,862,500 | 52.0 | 324,000 | 254,500 | 47.8 | 2,100,000 | 855,700 | 40.7 | 1,655,000 | 795,300 | 48.1 |
| Restaurants, cafeterias and eating p?aces | 45,825,000 | 274,200 | 0.6 | 97,000 | 4700 | $38^{\circ} 7$ | 1,112,000 | 7,600 | . 7 | $911,000$ | 6,100 | 9.7 |
| Other retail stores ........ | 374,776,000 | 35,380,600 | 9.4 | 1,241,000 | 472,500 | 38.1 | 12,179,000 | 1,277,000 | 10.5 | 8,654,000 | 810,500 | 9.4 |
| Selected Kinds of Business |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grocery and combination stores ............... | 312,197,000 | 18,432,800 | 5.9 | 1,539,000 | 188,700 | 12.3 | 17,077,000 | 1,409,400 | 8.3 | 9,710,000 | 857,400 | 8.8 |
| Meat markets ...... | 58,712,000 | 3,628,600 | 6.2 | 174,000 | 13,400 | 7.7 | 998,000 | 82,800 | 8.3 | 591,000 | 42,600 | 7.2 |
| Department stores ......... | 258,653,000 | 16,985,300 | 6.6 | 1,227,000 | 238,000 | 19.4 | 6,014,000 | 577,300 | 9.6 | 10,326,000 | 485,300 | 4.7 |
| Motor vehicle dealers ..... | 216,309,000 | 19,214,800 | 8.9 | 897,000 | 197,300 | 22.0 | 9,273,000 | 945,800 | 10.2 | 6,743,000 | 1,087,000 | 16.1 |
| Hardware stores ............ | 50,043,000 | 11,470,500 | 22.9 | 38,000 | 8,900 | 23.4 (1) | 1,785,000 | 397,100 | 22.2 | 1,147,000 | 343,000 | 29.9 |
| Lumber and building material dealers ........ | 36,904,000 | 17,648,700 | 47.8 | 149,000 | 47,100 | 31.6(1) | 814,000 | 165,200 | 20.3 | 401,000 | 74,200 | 18.5 |
| Furniture stores .......... | 29,229,000 | 14,044,800 | 48.1 | 248,000 | 115,100 | 46.4 $4^{(1)}$ | 1,046,000 | 314,800 | 30.1 | 1,110,000 | 503,100 | 45.3 |
| Coal and wood yards | 72,486,000 | 11,172,700 | 15.4 | 351,000 | 91,600 | 26.1 | 2,883,000 | 622,700 | 21.6 | 1,837,000 | 350,900 | 19.1 |
| Drug stores | 61,353,000 | 2,208,100 | 3.6 | 260,000 | 22,500 | 8.7 | 2,266,000 | 167,800 | 7.4 | 1,996,000 | 124,500 | 6.2 |

[^0]| Kind of Bus | Quebec |  |  | Ontario |  |  | Manitoba |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Reteil | Accounts <br> Outstanding |  | Retail Sales, 1935 | $\begin{gathered} \text { Accounts } \\ \text { Outstanding } \end{gathered}$ |  | Retail <br> Sales, $1235$ | siccounts Outstanding |  |
|  | $\begin{gathered} \text { Sales } \\ 2 \geqslant 35 \end{gathered}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 1 \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sajes } \\ & \hline \end{aligned}$ |  | Amount | $\left[\begin{array}{l} 10 \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \end{array}\right.$ |  | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sales } \end{aligned}$ |
| TOTAL | $462,864,000$ | 47.687 .500 | 10,3 | 848,014,000 | $78,846,800$ | 9.3 | $137.533,000$ | 14.636,200 | 10.6 |
| Food group ...............0. | 139,190,000 | 6,900,900 | 5.0 | -26,444,000 | 9,610,100 | 4.9 | 20,315,000 | 1,065,800 | 5.2 |
| Country general stores ..... | 37,824,000 | $6,734,300$ | 17.8 | 37,359,000 | 5,483,100 | 14.7 | 10,993,000 | 2,302,100 | 20.9 |
| General merchandise group . | 60,810,000 | 4,824,400 | 7.9 | 134,876,000 | 8,625,900 | 6.4 | 49,134,000 | 1,704,600 | 3.5 |
| Automotive group............ | 54,033,000 | 4,031,900 | ?. 3 | 143,949,000 | 9,990,000 | 6.9 | 16,920,000 | 1,908,500 | 11.3 |
| Apparel group : ... | 44,608,000 | 3,844,000 | 8.6 | 74,291,000 | 6,198,700 | 8.3 | 7,215,000 | 773,000 | 10.7 |
| Building materials group ... Furniture and household | 16,085,000 | 3,460,200 | 21.5 | 40,677,000 | 9,043,600 | 22.2 | 7,693,000 | 3,258,400 | 42.4 |
| group | 17,301,000 | 9,811,200 | 56.7 | 29,471,000 | 14,983,300 | 50.8 | 2,564,000 | 1,407,200 | 54.9 |
| Restaurants, cafeterias and oating places <br> Other retail stores | $9,021,000$ $82,092,000$ | 44,800 $8,035,800$ | .5 9.8 | $18,701,000$ $172,246,000$ | 112,200 $14,799,900$ | 8.6 | $2,747,000$ $19,952,000$ | 18,000 $2,198,600$ | .7 11.0 |
| Other retail stores ....... | 82,092,000 | 8,035,800 | 9.8 | 172,246,000 | 14,799,900 | 8.6 | 19,952,000 | 2,198,600 | 11.0 |
| Selected Kinds of Business |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grocery and combination stores $\qquad$ | 91,332,000 | 5,149,600 | 5.6 | 131,893,000 | 6,617,600 | 5.0 | 14,404,000 | 854,100 | 5.9 |
| Meat markets | 16,302,000 | -749,900 | 4.6 | 24,837,000 | 1,374,000 | 5.5 | 2,151,000 | 122,600 | 5.7 |
| Department stores | 36,730,000 | 3,562,800 | 9.7 | 100,915,000 | 7,165,000 | 7.1 | 46,628,000 | 2,632,000 | 3.5 |
| Motor vehicle dealers | 36,456,000 | 2,253,200 | 6.2 | 102,571,000 | 6,937,000 | 6.8 | 11,594,000 | 1,426,800 | 12.3 |
| Hardware stores ............. | 8,849,000 | 1,595,400 | 18.0 | 20,684,000 | 3,883,500 | 18.8 | 2,952,000 | 767,500 | 26.0 |
| Lumber and building material dealers | 4,692,000 | 1,224,700 | 26.1 | 13,237,000 | 3,463,200 | 26.2 | 3,677,000 | 2,254,100 | 61.3 |
| Furniture stores ........... | 8,234,000 | 4,999,700 | 60.7 | 13,174,000 | 5,776,100 | 43.8 | 489,000 | 252,800 | 51.7 |
| Coal and wood yards ........ | 15,847,000 | 2,709,800 | 17.1 | 40,380,000 | 5,633,500 | 14.0 | 4,866,000 | 871,000 | 17.9 |
| Drug stores ............... | 11,799,000 | 269,800 | 2.3 | 29,497,000 | 802,700 | 2.7 | 3,305,000 | 126,300 | 3.8 |

for Business Groups and Selected Kinds of Business, by Provinces (Cont'd.) -

| nd of B | Saskatchewan |  |  | Alberta |  |  | British Columbia |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Retail | Accounts Outstanding |  | Retail <br> Sales, $1935$ | Accounts Outstanding |  | Retail Sales,$1935$$\qquad$ | Accounts Outstauding |  |
|  | Sales, 1935 |  | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sal es } \end{aligned}$ |  | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sales } \end{aligned}$ |  | Amount | $\begin{array}{ll} \% & \text { of } \\ \text { sales } \end{array}$ |
| TOTAL | $119,137,000$ | 25,643,900 | 21.5 | 128,202,000 | $17,667,300$ | 13.8 | $187,257,000$ | ¢ $18,221,900$ | 2.7 |
| Food group | 16,298,000 | 1,132,700 | 6.9 | 21,821,000 | 1,527,400 | 7.0 | 36,359,000 | 2,462,200 | 6.8 |
| Country general stoies | 26,430,000 | 6,040,800 | 22.9 | 21,141,000 | 4,609,800 | 21.8 | 14,118,000 | 2,469,000 | 17.5 |
| General merchandise group | 14,723,000 | 1,005,600 | 6.8 | 18,249,000 | 745,200 | 4.1 | 37,279,000 | 2,201,000 | 5.9 |
| Automotive group. | 16,786,000 | 3,479,000 | 20.7 | 22:995,000 | 2,300,600 | 10.0 | 28,544,000 | 2,839,100 | 9.9 |
| Apparel group | 6,957,000 | 380,300 | 5.5 | 7,928,000 | 498,400 | 6.3 | 12,530,000 | 842,600 | 6.7 |
| Building materials group ... | 13,037,000 | 9,607,700 | 73.7 | 10,450,000 | 4,242,500 | 40.6 | 7,025,000 | 1,573,000 | 22.4 |
| Purniture and household. group | 2,386,000 | 1,364,900 | 57.2 | 3,669,000 | 2,041,400 | 55.6 | 5,599,000 | 2,448,600 | 43.7 |
| Restaurants, cafeterias and eating places............. | 3,065,000 | 2.2,100 | . 7 | 3,636,000 | 22,900 | . 6 | 6,472,000 | 40,800 | . 6 |
| Other retail stores ........ | 19,455,000 | 2,611,800 | 13.4 | 18,313,000 | 1,679,100 | 9.2 | 39,331,000 | 3,345,600 | 8.5 |
| Selected Kinds of Business |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grocery and combination stores ............... | 11,107,000 | 877,700 | 7.9 | 14,276,000 | 1,005,300 | 7.0 | 20,704,000 | 1,460,100 | 7.1 |
| lieat markets | 2,701,000 | 197,200 | 7.3 | 3,820,000 | 397,800 | 10.4 | 7,084,000 | 644,700 | 9.1 |
| Department stores ......... | 11,660,000 | 827,900 | 7.1 | 14,148,000 | 636,700 | 4.5 | 31,005,000 | 1,860,300 | 6.0 |
| Motor vehicle dealers ...... | 11,814,000 | 2,767,000 | 23.4 | 17,825,000 | 1,836,000 | 10.3 | 19,136,000 | 1,764,700 | 9.2 |
| Hardware stores ............ | 5,793,000 | 2,082,500 | 35.9 | 5,072,000 | 1,577,500 | 31.1 | 3,639,000 | 815,100 | 22.4 |
| Lumber and building material dealers | 7,066,000 | 7,477,400 | 105.8 | 4,925,000 | 2,547,900 | 51.7 | 1,942,000 | $394,900$ | 20.3 |
| Furniture stores | 906,000 | 425,000 | 46.9 | 1,991,000 | 969,600 | 48.7 | 2,029,000 | 688,600 | 33.9 |
| Coal and wood yards ........ | 2,528,000 | 419,600 | 16.6 | 803,000 | 106,800 | 13.3 | 2,982,000 | 366,800 | 12.3 |
| Drug stores ................. | 3,415,000 | 253,300 | 7.4 | 3,896,000 | 204,200 | 5.2 | 4,894,000 | 237,000 | 4.8 |

Table 4.--Accounts Outstanding on Books of Retail Firms on December 31, 1935, for Business Groups and Selected Kinds of Business - Independent Stores and Chain Stores Compared

| Kind of Business | ALL STORES |  | Independent Stores |  | Chain Stores |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Accounts outstanding |  | Accounts outstanding |  | Accounts outstanding |  |
|  | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sales } \end{aligned}$ | Amount | $\begin{aligned} & \% \text { of } \\ & \text { sale } \end{aligned}$ | Amount | $\%$ of sales |
| TOTAL | $222,936,000$ | 11.0 | \$ $192,464,900$ | 11.5 | 30,471,100 | 8.4 |
| Food group | $25,435,700$ | 5.5 | 23,981,700 | 6.8 | 1,454,000 | 1.3 |
| Country general stores ....... | 33,098,500 | 19.2 | 32,092,600 | 19.4 | 1,005,900 | 13.6 |
| General merchandise group | 20,977,900 | 6.2 | 20,904,100 | 7.0 | 73,800 | 2 |
| Automotive group | 27,300,600 | 8.9 | 26,379,900 | 9.3 | 920,700 | 4.1 |
| Apparel group .. | 14,073,900 | 8.5 | 12,724,200 | 9.2 | 1,349,700 | 4.9 |
| Building materials group ........... | 32,532,100 | 32.3 | 22,349,800 | 26.3 | 10,182,300 | 64.7 |
| Furniture and household group ........ | 33,862,500 | 52.0 | 23,196,100 | 46.5 | 10,666,400 | 70.0 |
| Restaurants, cafeterias and eating places | 274,200 | 9.6 | $274,200$ |  |  | 4.2 |
| other retail stores. | 35,380,600 | 9.4 | 30,562,300 | 11.8 | 4,818,300 | 4.2 |
| $\frac{\text { Selected Kinds of }}{\text { Business }}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Grocery and combination stores ....... | 18,432,800 | 5.9 | 17,391,600 | 8.3 | 1,041,200 | 1.0 |
| Lumber and building material dealers. | 17,648,700 | 47.8 | 8,169,700 | 31.8 | 9,479,000 | 84.7 |
| Drug stores ........ | 2,208,100 | 3.6 | 2,087,200 | 4.2 | 120,900 | 1.0 |

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[^0]:    (1) Dominion average.

