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CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF RETAIL SALES  
1929 - 1930

A periodic measurement of the value of retail trade furnishes a business barometer of great value since it is the most immediate measurement of the purchasing power and purchasing moods of the general public. Such statistical measurements are beset with numerous difficulties. In the first place there is a reluctance on the part of some individual firms to give even confidential information regarding the amount of their sales. This is an attitude which is passing away since business firms are more and more realizing the practical value of comprehensive information, combined with complete secrecy so far as the individual business is concerned.

In the second place measurement of retail sales is difficult because of the changes taking place in the methods of distribution especially in respect of chain stores. Allowance must be made for change in sales totals due to increase or decrease in the number of stores rather than in actual increase or diminution in purchasing.

In the third place one set of figures should be corrected for seasonal variations, but this can be done only after the data has been collected for a period of years.

In response to a widespread demand for such data the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has completed the calculation of a preliminary series of index numbers of retail sales by months in 1929 up to and inclusive of September 1930. This series includes sales of 5 boot and shoe chains, 17 grocery chains, 7 drug chains, 4 musical instrument and radio chains, 11 restaurant chains, 4 variety chains and 18 miscellaneous chains. The base of the calculation is January 1929=100.

In calculating the index numbers, allowance was made for the varying numbers of stores each month, but no calculation can yet be made of a second series allowing for seasonal variations. No correction has been made for falling prices.

On the basis January 1929=100 index numbers of five boot and shoe chains averaged 127.7 and 94.2, respectively, for the first nine months of 1929 and 1930. Seventeen grocery chains averaged 113.3 and 104.2; seven drug chains, 103.3 and 98.4; four musical instrument and radio chains, 90.8 and 66.1; eleven restaurant chains, 106.0 and 95.0; four variety chains, 145.0 and 121.0; and eighteen miscellaneous chains, 134.7 and 112.1 respectively.

It will be seen that sales of the drug chains included fell off in the nine months of 1930, as compared with a similar period in 1929, only 4.7%, sales of grocery chains 6.4%, sales of restaurant chains 10.4%, of variety chains 16.7%, of miscellaneous chains 16.8%, of boot and shoe chains 26% and of musical instruments and radio chains 27.3%.

Since no allowance is made for the decline which has taken place in retail prices over the period, retail business was somewhat better than the figures indicate.

These index numbers are based upon returns collected on a voluntary basis. No compulsion has been exercised and the results have been very encouraging. Some important firms still hesitate to cooperate voluntarily in this inquiry, fearing that their business may be made public. The nature of the figures issued here should be reassuring.

It is expected that the index numbers will eventually be based on a larger number of stores and that they will be issued more promptly so as to reflect conditions as recent as is practicable. Other phases of retail sales are also in course of preparations by the Bureau.



# INDEX NUMBERS OF RETAIL SALES

	Boots and Shoes, Chains		Groceries, 17 Chains		Drugs, 7 Chains		Musical Instruments and Radio 4 Chains		Restaurants, 11 Chains		Variety, (5, 10, and 15.) 4 Chains		Miscellaneous, 18 Chains	
	1929	1930	1929	1930	1929	1930	1929	1930	1929	1930	1929	1930	1929	1930
January .....	100.0	64.0	100.0	110.1	100.0	97.5	100.0	84.2	100.0	95.4	100.0	93.0	100.0	98.6
February .....	87.6	71.4	106.1	103.7	97.8	94.8	105.2	71.6	94.5	87.9	112.8	100.1	109.9	92.2
March .....	150.4	84.8	119.9	106.9	108.3	105.8	90.0	73.9	102.8	92.5	139.5	113.5	133.7	98.1
April .....	139.4	118.2	107.3	105.9	99.6	101.2	85.5	63.8	100.4	90.8	133.6	125.6	134.2	127.1
May .....	156.6	118.6	115.1	119.4	103.5	99.9	94.0	65.0	109.7	97.1	178.0	140.7	166.6	144.1
June .....	163.3	121.0	119.8	97.1	105.9	96.3	63.8	49.2	103.2	96.1	165.5	126.3	148.1	120.9
July .....	120.0	97.0	109.9	99.3	104.5	96.2	63.7	45.9	115.5	100.6	163.0	128.0	137.8	107.2
August .....	115.3	88.8	114.5	101.8	110.0	101.3	86.3	54.8	119.8	104.2	168.9	133.2	143.4	108.4
September .....	117.0	84.2	109.2	93.4	100.3	92.6	128.9	89.5	107.7	90.2	143.5	128.5	138.5	113.4
October .....	126.7	-	118.9	-	105.7	-	164.4	-	106.9	-	166.8	-	143.9	-
November .....	137.8	-	117.9	-	103.9	-	150.5	-	95.5	-	157.6	-	138.8	-
December .....	154.3	-	108.1	-	114.9	-	157.4	-	99.6	-	261.3	-	148.3	-

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