

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS - CANADA

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CHANGES IN THE VALUE OF COUNTRY GENERAL STORE SALES, DECEMBER, 1936

In recent years the Dominion Bureau of Statistics has published monthly indexes of retail sales based on reports received from department and chain stores. The sales figures for these types of stores are influenced by the predominance of large urban centres. There was need of an index measuring more specifically sales in rural communities. This is now available in statistics just issued showing changes in the value of retail sales in country general stores.

Retail sales of general merchandise stores in small towns and rural areas for December, 1936, showed increases over December, 1935, in all sections of Ontario and the Prairie Provinces, according to data submitted by almost 400 independent country general stores located in these provinces. Increases over December, 1935, varied greatly for different regions and ranged from 2.8 per cent for Western Ontario to 21.1 per cent for the northern sections of Alberta. Increases for the various divisions for which figures are available are as follows: Ontario East, 7.5 p.c.; Ontario North, 6.2 p.c.; Ontario West, 2.8 p.c.; Manitoba, 15.5 p.c.; Saskatchewan North, 15.8 p.c.; Saskatchewan South, 5.8 p.c.; Alberta North, 21.1 p.c., and Alberta South, 5.0 p.c.

These increases for December are in marked contrast with the decreases shown for all regions except Ontario East in the corresponding comparison for November, 1936, with November, 1935. In this comparison, decreases below 1935 ranging from 1.6 per cent for Ontario North to 15.8 per cent for Alberta South were recorded. Percentage changes for each of the other divisions are shown in the table.

Such calendar month comparisons of retail sales are largely influenced not only by differences in numbers of business days but also by the occurrence of varying numbers of Saturdays in different months. There were 26 business days in November, 1935, and these included 5 Saturdays; there were 25 business days in November, 1936, with only 4 Saturdays. The two Decembers were alike in respect of number of business days and number of Saturdays. As no adjustments are yet available for number of business days, the varying sales importance of week days or for seasonal variations, these factors must be kept in mind when interpreting the percentage changes in sales as reported by country general stores.

Sales in Ontario East cover all that portion of the province lying east of York and Simcoe counties and south of Nipissing and Parry Sound; Ontario West includes York and Simcoe and all counties west; Ontario North includes all the northern part of the province. Saskatchewan South includes Weyburn and that section of the province lying south of a line extending from Moose Jaw north-westward to Lloydminster. Saskatchewan North includes the remainder of the province. Alberta is divided into two districts by a line passing east and west slightly to the north of Wetaskiwin.

Percentage Change in Country General Store Sales,
November and December, 1935 and 1936, by Regions

Regions	November 1936		December 1936	
	November 1935		December 1935	
	Number of stores reporting	Per cent change in sales	Number of stores reporting	Per cent change in sales
Ontario East	38	+ 2.6	41	+ 7.5
" North	38	- 1.6	41	+ 6.2
" West	31	- 4.1	34	+ 2.8
" Total	107	- .9	116	+ 5.7
Manitoba, Total	52	- 6.5	47	+15.5
Saskatchewan North ...	42	-10.1	47	+15.8
" South ...	50	-11.3	43	+ 5.8
" Total ...	92	-10.7	90	+11.4
Alberta North	47	-14.7	58	+21.1
" South	61	-15.8	64	+ 5.0
" Total	108	-15.5	122	+10.3

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