## CANADA

## DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

## CENSUS OF MERCHANDISING AND SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

# RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE 

IN<br>\section*{BRITISH COLUMBIA}

1933

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CENSUS.OF MERCHANDISING AND SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS.
Retail Merchandise Trade in British Columbia, 1930-1933

The total retail merchandise trade in British Columbis during 1933 amounted to $\$ 153,719,000$ according to the results of the Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments, 1933. This represents a decline in dollar volume of 38.2 per cent when compered with the 1930 retail sales figure of $\$ 248,597,500$. Or, representing the total retail merchandise trade in 1930 by 100 , indexes of the dollar volume of business for the following three years are 83.2 for 1931, 65.2 for 1932, and 61.8 for 1933.

The data for the basic year 1930 were secured from the results of the Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments, 193l. The figures for the following years have been derived from indexes of retail sales based upon reports secured in 1934 from all chain stores and the larger independent stores and covering the period from 1931 to 1933. In 1930 there were 9,501 stores operating in British Columbia. Since all stores were not covered in the current census, it is not possible to give the number of trading establishments in 1933. Further explanations regarding the methods used in preparing the tables presented in this bulletin will be found in the last section of this introduction.

Upon comparing the business in each year with that of the year immediately preceding, it is found that the year-to-year decreases in the retail merchandise trade of the province were as follows: 1931, -16.8 per cent; 1932, -21.6 per cent; and 1933 compared with 1932 showed a decrease of 5.2 per cent. Retail merchandise trade in British Columbia during the period 1930 to 1933 thus showed the largest yearly decrease in 1932 and the smallest in 1933. When all stores are classified into the nine broad kind-of-business groups used in the Census of Merchandising, the year-to-year changes for each group are as follows:


It will thus be seen that for the province as a whole and for ach of these broad groupings according to kinds of business, the greatest percentage decrease below the preceding year occurred in 1932 and the smallest in 1933.

## Comparison of Dollar Volune of Sales and Price Changes

The dollar volume of sales in British Columbia for each year from 1930 to 1933 and indexes of sales $(1930=100)$ are given below:

| Year |  | $\frac{\text { Total Sales }}{}$ | Index of Sales <br> $(1930-100)$ |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1930 | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots$ | $248,597,500$ | 100.0 |
| 1931 | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots$ | $206,807,000$ | 83.2 |
| 1932 | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots$ | $162,179,000$ | 65.2 |
| 1933 | $\ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots \ldots$ | $153,719,000$ | 61.8 |

How much of the decrease in dollar volume of sales is due to the decline in price levels and how much to a decrease in the quantity of goods consumed cannot be definftely stated due to the absence of price indexes so constructed as to be strictly comparable. Nevertheless, it is welk established that a considerable portion of the drop in dollar volume is due to price declines. While cost of living index numbers are not constructed in such a way as to warrant their use as a correction for price changes in these index numbers of retail sales, they do give some indication of the order of magnitude of the price trends. The Bureau's Cost of Living Indexes for the period under review are given below and, for comparison purposes, have been adjusted to make the 1930 figure equal 100:

Index Numbers of Retail Prices, Rents and Costs of Services, Canada
$(1930=100)$

| Year | Total <br> Index | Food <br> Index | Fuel <br> Index | Rent <br> Index | Clothing <br> Index | Sundries <br> Index | Retail Price Index <br> (Foods, fuel, <br> clothing, household <br> requirements) |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| 1930. | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1931. | 90.3 | 78.4 | 98.4 | 97.3 | 87.5 | 98.0 | 85.3 |
| 1932. | 82.1 | 65.2 | 95.5 | 89.4 | 77.5 | 95.2 | 75.2 |
| 1933 | 78.3 | 64.6 | 91.6 | 80.4 | 72.3 | 93.3 | 72.8 |

Separate price indexes are shom for food, fuel, rent and clothing. The sundries index indicates the price changes in a miscellaneous group of commodities, together with the variations in costs of certain services, such as theatre costs, insurance, doctors' and dentists' fees, hospital charges and laundry. The total index given in the second column of the table is an average of the figures in the following five columns, each weighted in proportion to the consumption of the items involved. The last column, "Retail Price Index", is also a weighted average but omits the rental figures and includes only the merchandising items in the sundries index. From this column, it is seen that the retail price level for the Dominion as a whole in 1933 was 72.8 per cent of that in 1930, or that there was a decrease during the period of 27.2 per cent. The indexes of retail sales already given show that the decrease in dollar volume of sales in British Columbia over the same period
was 38.2 per cent or 11 per cent greater than the Dominion drop in price levels.

## Sales by Kinds of Business

In 1930 sales of all retail establishments classified as food stores amounted to $\$ 48,692,000$ or 19.59 per cent of the total retall trade of the province. The business transacted in the same year by the general merchandise group of stores amounted to $\$ 45,862,100$ or 18,45 per cent of the total. In 1935 these two groups were interchanged in the order of their sales importance. In that year the general merchandise group had sales of $\$ 34,010,000$ or 22.12 per cent of the total retail trade, while the food group of stores with sales of $\$ 31,262,000$ transacted 20.34 per cent of the total business of the province. The most important classification In the food group is composed of stores of the grocery and combination type. Combination stores are deflned as those selling both grocerles and meats, and for the Census of Merchandising, 1931, separate data were published for this type of store. For the current census, it has been necessary to combine the figures for grocery and combination stores, and it is found that in 1933 the business transacted by these stores formed 69.5 per cent of the 1930 figure. Indexes of sales for the years 1931 and 1932 are 86.3 and 73.3. Sales of meat markets in 1933 amounted to $\$ 6,185,000$ or 56.7 per cent of the 1930 figure. The lower index for meat markets is at least partly due to the greater drop in the price levels of meat products as compared with grocery items.

Country General Stores.--Country general stores in British Columbia sold goods in 1933 amounting in value to $\$ 11,563,000$ or 65.5 per cent of the 1930 sales figure. Indexes of sales for the two preceding years are 84.4 for 1931 and 69.5 for 1932.

General Merchandise Group. - Department stores, unchanged in number since 1930, declined in sales volume from $\$ 38,331,900$ in 1930 to 74.1 per cent of that amount, or $\$ 28,756,000$, in 1933. Variety stores show a sales volume of $\$ 3,025,000$ in 1933 as compared with $\$ 3,640,000$ in 1930, a decine of 16.9 per cent.

Automotive Group.--The sales volume of automobile dealer establishments decreased from $\$ 21,296,000$ in 1930 to 48.0 per cent of that amount, or $\$ 10,226,000$, in 1933. Indexes of retail sales for the intervening years are 70.2 in 1931 and 44.5 in 1932. The 1933 business of filling stations is estimated at $\$ 3,908,000$ or 72.9 per cent of the dollar volume in 1930 .

Apparel Group.-For the apparel group as a whole, the indexes of retail sales $(1930=100)$ are as follows: 1931, 83.9; 1932, 65.6; and 1933, 62.5. The kind-of-business classifications included in this group, together with the sales indexes for each of the years 1931, 1952 and 1933, are as follows: Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings stores, 78.1, 58.2, 54.3; Family clothing stores, 80.0, 65.9, 65.0; Fiomen's apparel and accessor1es stores, 88.8, 70.6, 67.9; and Shoe stores, 88.7. 70.7, 67.0.

Building Materials Groun.--Sales made by retall hardware stores in British Columbia during 1933 amounted to $\$ 2,899,000$ or 65.5 per cent of the $\$ 4,425,-$ 400 reported for 1930. Lumber and building material dealers declined in sales from $\$ 3,945,800$ in 1930 to 40.0 per cent of that amount, or $\$ 1,573,000$, in 1933.

Furniture and Household Group.--Furniture stores had total sales in 1933 amounting in value to $\$ 1,516,000$ or 61.7 per cent of the $\$ 2,456,800$ reported for 1930. Sales of household appliance stores decreased from \$1,942,700 in 1930 to
48.4 per cent of that amount, or $\$ 940,000$, in 1933 . Radio and music stores showed a somewhat greater percentage decrease, sales of \$2,989,600 in 1930 declining to 42.5 per cent of that figure, or $\$ 1,271,000$, in 1933.

Restaurants, Cafeterias and Eating Places,--Total sales of restaurants, cafeterias and eating places in 1930 amounted to $\$ 10,135,000$. In 1933 the corresponding amount was $\$ 5,220,000$ or 51.5 per cent of the 1930 figure. Indexes of sales for the intervening years are 78.2 in 1931 and 55.8 in 1932.

Other Retail Stores. --The principal classifications included in this group, together with the sales indexes for 1931,1932 and $1933(1930=100)$ are as follows: Coal and wood yards, 85.7, 72.1, 58.2; Drug stores, 88.8, 75.6, 67.9; Jewellery stores, 76.8, 54.6, 53.6; Tobacco stores and stands, 83.7, 72.6, 64.7; and Government liquor stores, 84.3, 61.7 and 59.7.

## Chain Stores and Sales

In 1930 chain store units numbering 692 had total sales of $47,875,300$ and this amount formed 19,3 per cent of the total sales of all stores in British Columbia during that year. In 1933 the number of chain store units had increased to 740 and these had sales of $\$ 32,150,000$ or 20,9 per cent of the total retail business. Ratios of chain store sales to total sales were 19.7 per cent in 1931 and 20.1 per cent in 1932.

The chain figures given above include only data for groups of four or more stores owned or operated by one firm. Figures for voluntary chains are not included and department store chains have also been omitted from these computations.

In 1930 grocery, combination store and meat market chains transacted 27.2 per cent of the total business of all such stores. In 1933 the percentage had increased to 35,2 per cent. Ratios of chain sales to total sales in 1933 for other lines of business, with 1930 percentages in brackets, were as follows: Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings, 8.0 (8.6); Shoe stores, 31.0 (20.1); Household appliance stores, 83.9 (85.4); Restaurants, 13.2 (12.0); and Drug stores, 30.8 (31.3).

Chain Stores and Sales Classified According to Type of Chain.--Chains have been classified as local, provincial, sectional and national, depending upon the extent of territory covered by their branches. Local chains are confined to one town or city, while provincial chains have stores located in more than one locality but confined to one province. Sectional chains are defined as those having units in two or three provinces, while national chains have stores in four provinces or more.

In Table 3 the chains in British Columbia are classified according to type, and a comparison is made as between 1930 and 1933. The table shows that the proportion of chain stores and the proportion of total chain sales attributable to each type of chain has remained comparatively constant over the three year period.

## Description of Method Used In Computing Indexes of Retail Sales

As already stated in this report, the sales figures given for the years 1931 to 1933 have been derived from indexes of retail sales based upon reports received in 1934 from all chain stores and the larger independent stores. Figures
were received covering the period 1931 to 1933. The independent stores from which reports were secured were those with an annual turnover of $\$ 30,000$ or more in 1930 ( 220,000 or more in the case of food stores and country general stores) and which continued in business throughout the period. This means that over two-thirds of the retail business of the Dominion is covered in the annual census. From the reports thus received, and using the year 1330 as the base period, indexes of retail sales for each of the years 1031 to 2933 have beon computed. Theco indexos have then been applied to the total sales of all stores in 1930 in order to arrive at estimates of the total annual business of all retail establishments in each of the following years.

While a large portion of retail trade has been covered in the current census, it is clear that the figures presented in this report for the years 1931, 1932 and 1933 are estimates based on indexes computed from the returns of the establishments reporting. The chief factor which may not be reflected in the sales indexes is a decline in the number of stores in certain kinds of business. No information is available to show the extent to which firms going out of business have not been replaced by new stores of a similar character. The possibility, therefore, of the sales of the surviving stores covered by this census not reflecting completely the trend in retail trade during the period from 1930 to 1933 must be noted. However, it is believed that for the provincial retail trade as a whole the figures may be taken as approximately correct and for certain kind-of-business groups as being more accurate than for others. Among the kind-of-business classifications which are believed to be most accurate are included: Grocery and combination stores, meat markets, department stores, variety stores, automobile dealers, coal and wood yards, drug stores, and restaurants and other eating places.

Table 1.--Total Net Sales and Sales Indexes, by Kinds of Business


Table I (Cont'd.) -

| Kind of Business | Total Net Sales |  |  |  | Index of Retail Sales$(1930=100)$ |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  | (Estimated) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 |
|  | \$ | \$ | \$ | 8 |  |  |  |  |
| Building Materials Group | 12,348,900 | 10,044,000 | 6,552,000 | 5,710,000 | 100.0 | 81.3 | 53.1 | 46.2 |
| Hardware | 4,425,400 | 3,872,000 | 2,947,000 | 2,893,000 | 100.0 | 87.5 | 65.6 | 65.5 |
| Lumber and building material dealers ........... | 3,945,800 | 3,005,000 | 1,776,000 | 1,579,000 | 100.0 | 76.1 | 45.0 | 40.0 |
| Other building materials (including roofing materials) | 1,847,100 | 1,627,000 | 929,000 | 576,000 | 100.0 | 88.1 | 50.3 | 31.2 |
| Electrical shops (without radio) ...............) |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Heating and plumbing shops | 2,130,600 | 1,540,000 | 899,000 | 656,000 | 100.0 | 72.3 | 42.2 | 30.8 |
| Paint and glass stores. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Furniture and Household Group | 8,207,100 | 6,160,000 | 4,579,000 | 4,127,000 | 100.0 | 75.1 | 55.8 | 50.3 |
| Furniture stores | 2,456,800 | 2,115,000 | 1,676,000 | 1,516,000 | 100.0 | 86.1 | 68.2 | 61.7 |
| Household appliance stores | 1,942,700 | 1,214,000 | 1,045,000 | 940,000 | 100.0 | 62.5 | 53.8 | 48.4 |
| Other home furnishings (including floor coverings, curtains, etc.) | 818,000 | 538,000 | 385,000 | 400,000 | 100.0 | 65.8 | 47.0 | 48.91 |
| Radio and music stores | 2,989,600 | 2,293,000 | 1,474,000 | 1,271,000 | 100.0 | 76.7 | 43.3 | 42.5 |
| Restaurants, Cafeterias and | 10,135,000 | 7,926,000 | 5,655,000 | 5,220,000 | 100.0 | 78.2 | 55.8 | 51.5 |
| Other Retail Stores | 54,167,400 | 44,790,000 | 34,824,000 | 32,366,000 | 100.0 | 82.7 | 64.3 | 59.8 |
| Farmers' supply stores | 11,341,200 | 3,484,000 | 7,605,000 | 7,010,000 | 100.0 | 83.6 | 67.1 | 61.8 |
| Book stores | 793,900 | 714,000 | 495,000 | 488,000 | 100.0 | 89.9 | 62.4 | 61.5 |
| Coal and wood yar | 5,699,200 | 4,884,000 | 4,103,000 | 3,317,000 | 100.0 | 85.7 | 72.1 | 58.2 |
| Ice dealers | 129,900 | 110,000 | 89,000 | 54,000 | 100.0 | 84.3 | 63.2 | 41.9 |
| Drug stores | 6,530,400 | 5,799,000 | 4,937,000 | 4,434,000 | 100.0 | 88.8 | 75.6 | 67.9 |
| Florists | 761,600 | 585,000 | 484,000 | 438,000 | 100.0 | 76.3 | 63.6 | 57.5 |
| Jewellery stores | 2,668,200 | 2,049,000 | 1,457,000 | 1,430,000 | 100.0 | 76.8 | 54.6 | 53.6 |
| Office, school and store supplies and equipment dealers | 1,210,600 | 802,000 | 549,000 | 490,000 | 100.0 | 66.2 | 45.4 | 40.5 |
| Tobacco stores and stands | 2,900,800 | 2,428,000 | 2,106,000 | 1,877,000 | 100.0 | 83.7 | 72.6 | 64.7 |
| Government liquor stores | 14,735,400 | 12,426,000 | 9,094,000 | 8,796,000 | 100.0 | 84.3 | 61.7 | 59.7 |
| Unclassified kinds of business(1) | 7,396,200 | 5,510,000 | 3,398,000 | 4,031,000 | 100.0 | 74.5 | 52.7 | 54.5 |

(1) Includes secondhand stores.

## BRITISH COLUKBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, 1930-1933

Table 2.--Comparison of Chain Sales and Total Sales, All Stores,
and Selected Kinds of Business

|  | 1930 | 1931 | 1932 | 1933 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | \$ | \$ | + | \$ |
| Total Sales, All Stores ......................... <br> Chain sales <br> .................. <br> Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 248,597,500 \\ 47,875,300 \\ 19.3 \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} 206,807,000 \\ 40,675,700 \\ 19.7 \\ \hline \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 162,179,000 \\ 32,660,400 \\ 20,1 \\ \hline \end{array}$ | $\begin{gathered} 153,719,000 \\ 32,150,000 \\ 20.9 \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ |
| Grocery and Combination Stores and Meat Markets, Total Chain sales ................. Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 37,196,100 \\ 10,117,100 \\ 27.2 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 31,163,000 \\ 8,989,900 \\ 28.8 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 25,912,000 \\ 8,294,100 \\ 32.0 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 24,455,000 \\ 8,606,800 \\ 35.2 \end{gathered}$ |
| Men's and Boys' Clothing and Furnishings Stores (includes custom tailors), Total. Chain sales ................. Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 6,366,200 \\ 548,100 \\ 8.6 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 4,972,000 \\ 419,600 \\ 8.4 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 3,705,000 \\ 238,800 \\ 6.4 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 3,457,000 \\ 277,100 \\ 8.0 \end{gathered}$ |
| Shoe Stores, Total Chain sales Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{aligned} & 3,078,200 \\ & 619,400 \\ & 20.1 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} 2,730,000 \\ 594,500 \\ 21.8 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 2,176,000 \\ & 524,200 \\ & 24.1 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 2,062,000 \\ & 640,000 \\ & 31.0 \end{aligned}$ |
| Household Appliance Stores, Total ......... Chain sales ................. Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 1,942,700 \\ 1,658,700 \\ 85.4 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 1,21 \_, 000 \\ 984,000 \\ 81.1 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{gathered} 1,045,000 \\ 903,000 \\ 86.4 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 940,000 \\ & 788,700 \\ & 83.9 \end{aligned}$ |
| Restaurants, Cafeterias and Eating Places, Total $\qquad$ <br> Chain sales <br> Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 10,135,000 \\ 1,213,000 \\ 12.0 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 7,926,000 \\ & 897,900 \\ & 11.3 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{gathered} 5,655,000 \\ 629,300 \\ 11.1 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 5,220,000 \\ & 691,500 \\ & 13.2 \end{aligned}$ |
| Drug Stores, Total $\qquad$ Chain sales $\qquad$ <br> Percentage, chains to total | $\begin{gathered} 6,530,400 \\ 2,042,500 \\ 31.3 \end{gathered}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 5,793,000 \\ & 1,871,600 \\ & 32.3 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 4,937,000 \\ & 1,602,000 \\ & 32.4 \end{aligned}$ | $\begin{aligned} & 4,434,000 \\ & 1,367,500 \\ & 30,8 \end{aligned}$ |

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\text { BRITISH COLUMBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, } 1930=1933
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Table 3.-Chain Stores and Sales Classified by Types of Operation


