

63-D-24

C-3

DOMINION BUREAU  
OF STATISTICS

OCT 14 1938

PROPERTY OF THE  
LIBRARY.

CANADA

DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS

CENSUS OF MERCHANDISING AND SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

Vol. 5

No. 10

RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE

IN

BRITISH COLUMBIA

CALENDAR YEAR

1937

— ♦ ♦ —

Published by Authority of the HON. W.D. EULER, M.P.  
Minister of Trade and Commerce.

+ + +

OTTAWA

1938

Price 10 cents

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE  
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS  
INTERNAL TRADE BRANCH  
OTTAWA, CANADA

---

Dominion Statistician:	R. H. Coats, LL.D., F.R.S.C., F.S.S. (Hon.)
Chief, Internal Trade Branch:	Herbert Marshall, B.A., F.S.S.
Statistician:	A. C. Steedman, B.A.

---

CENSUS OF MERCHANDISING AND SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS

Retail Merchandise Trade in British Columbia, 1937.

Retail sales in British Columbia in 1937 totalled \$232,740,000, exceeding by 11.4 per cent the \$208,913,000 reported for 1936, which in turn was 10.9 per cent greater than the 1935 figure. A direct comparison between 1937 and the low point reached in 1933 reveals almost a 50 per cent improvement although the dollar value of trade was still about 6 per cent below the 1930 level. It is encouraging to note, however, that since 1933 the gains have not only been steady but have accelerated, each year's advance being greater than that of the preceding year.

With one exception all lines shared in the general improvement, dealers in the automotive and building materials group recording the most substantial advances. The one exception is hardly worthy of note. It is to be found in the furniture and household group, the sales of which group, as a whole, were 8.9 per cent greater than those of 1936. Within this group are to be found furniture stores with sales 11.9 per cent above 1936; household appliance stores, 12.5 per cent above 1936; radio and music stores, 7.0 per cent above 1936; and "other house furnishing stores" with sales 0.7 per cent below 1936. The decrease is small and, in addition, it may be remarked that the stores falling within the limits of this classification recorded, in the previous year, the substantial advance of 19.7 per cent over their 1935 sales.

Sales in the automotive group in 1937 were 19.7 per cent greater than in 1936. This group includes all firms specializing in the sale of motor vehicles and, in addition, all establishments such as filling stations, garages, etc., engaged in providing services and supplies. The index of sales of this group for 1937 stood at 127.8 (on the base 1930=100) as compared with 106.8 for 1936, 87.1 for 1935, and 57.4 for the low year of 1933. Within this group the 1937 sales of those firms classified as motor vehicle dealers showed an increase of 25.1 per cent over 1936; dealers in accessories, tires and batteries were up 20.7 per cent; filling stations, 6.9 per cent; and garages, 5.0 per cent. In terms of dollar value, the 1937 sales of motor vehicle dealers amounted to \$31,562,000 as compared with \$25,237,000 in 1936; accessories and tire dealers, \$1,080,000 in 1937 as compared with \$895,000 in 1936; filling stations, \$6,266,000 in 1937 as compared with \$5,864,000 in 1936; and garages, \$3,921,000 in 1937 as compared with \$3,734,000 in 1936. Sales for the group as a whole totalled \$43,621,000 in 1937 as compared with \$36,444,000 in 1936.

Sales of the building materials group continued to advance steadily. Within this group sales of hardware stores were up 16.2 per cent over those of 1936; lumber and building material dealers, 15.5 per cent; while the increase of the 1937 sales over those of 1936 in the electrical, heating and plumbing, paint and glass shops amounted to 24.0 per cent. Sales for the group as a whole were 16.8 per cent above sales in 1936.

It is probably to be expected that in keeping with the advancing sales of building materials, the sales of furniture and household equipment should also increase. In 1936, the increase over 1935 in the sales of this group were second only to those of the automotive industry. While they fell off relatively in 1937, they were nevertheless well maintained, being 8.9 per cent above sales in 1936. Within this group household appliance stores reported an increase of 12.5 per cent; furniture store sales were up 11.9 per cent and radio and music store sales advanced 7.0 per cent.

In the food group, the 1937 increases in sales over those of the previous year were well maintained although they were not as large as the advances of the automotive, building materials or home furnishings groups. Grocery and combination store sales at \$23,604,000 were 9.2 per cent above the 1936 figure, which, in turn, was 4.4 per cent above sales for 1935. Candy and confectionery stores increased from \$3,370,000 in 1936 to \$3,758,000 in 1937, an advance of 11.5 per cent as compared with an advance of 9.7 per cent in 1936. Sales of meat markets in 1937 totalled \$7,704,000 as compared with \$7,275,000 in 1936, an increase of 5.9 per cent as compared with an increase of 2.7 per cent the previous year. Sales of the group as a whole advanced 8.5 per cent.



Sales of the apparel group increased 6.3 per cent, figures for individual classifications within the group showing the following gains: family clothing stores, 9.0 per cent as compared with 9.3 per cent in 1936; women's apparel and accessories stores, 6.5 per cent as compared with 5.9 per cent in 1936; men's and boys' clothing and furnishings, 6.4 per cent as compared with 9.5 per cent in 1936; shoe stores, 3.7 per cent as compared with 4.6 per cent in 1936.

In comparing the yearly percentage gain in the sales of one group with those of another group, the limits of such a comparison should be borne in mind. The fact that stores of one classification show a smaller percentage advance in sales over the previous year than stores of another classification does not necessarily indicate that conditions in that particular line of business are sluggish. The comparison is from year to year only and a group which makes an outstanding advance in one year might quite naturally be expected to show a smaller advance in the year following. It might even show a loss and still be recording a substantial percentage gain over a period of several years. So that any estimate of the relative importance of sales increases of a group should take into consideration the percentage sales increases or decreases of that group in preceding years. This long-term view is reflected in the indexes of sales rather than in the yearly comparisons.

Establishments specializing in the sale of office, school and store supplies and equipment reported an increase of 21.9 per cent in their 1937 sales. This is particularly remarkable in view of the fact that their sales in 1936 showed an increase of 27.6 per cent over 1935. Sales of farmers' supplies stores increased 13.9 per cent as compared with 7.8 per cent in 1936; florists, 12.4 per cent as compared with 3.5 per cent; book stores, 10.7 per cent as compared with 7.2 per cent; government liquor stores, 10.7 per cent as compared with 14.1 per cent the previous year; tobacco stores and stands, 9.2 per cent as compared with 8.6 per cent; drug stores, 8.4 per cent as compared with 6.6 per cent; and coal and wood yards, 2.6 per cent as compared with 6.5 per cent in 1936.

#### Chain Stores

Chains and independents alike shared in the general trade expansion, the proportion of the total trade secured by chain companies in 1937 amounting to 20.0 per cent as compared with 19.7 per cent the previous year and 19.8 per cent in 1935. There were 77 chain companies operating in British Columbia in 1937 as compared with 76 in 1936 and 1935. These operated a total of 696 unit stores within the province with sales totalling \$46,497,900 as compared with 717 stores with sales of \$41,068,500 in 1936. It will be seen that despite the drop in the number of unit stores, there was a substantial increase in volume, or an increase in average sales per store. Included in the totals for 1936 were 15 grocery, combination store and meat market chains with 292 unit stores and \$11,888,200 sales, an amount which formed 38.0 per cent of the total annual business of all grocery, combination stores and meat markets. Three drug store chains transacted 30.6 per cent of the total drug store business. Four shoe store chains accounted for 21.6 per cent of the total shoe store sales while three variety store chains obtained 73.9 per cent of the sales in their field.

#### Scope of Report

The figures for 1930 shown in this report are taken from the results of the Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments which was taken in connection with the decennial Census of 1931. Indexes of sales for years 1931 to 1937 have been computed from annual surveys of retail trade, for which returns are received from all chain store companies and from a representative number of independent stores. These indexes have been then applied to the total sales figures for 1930 in order to give the most accurate estimate available of the total retail trade in later years. It is, therefore, apparent that figures shown herein must be considered as relating to the total trade and not to the business of only those stores included in the sample covered each year.

It should also be clearly understood that all retail sales figures given in this report relate to stores grouped according to kind of business and not to commodity sales. Grocery stores sell a number of lines of goods in addition to strictly grocery items. Drug stores are not restricted to the sale of drugs and medicines. On the other hand, groceries are sold in many kinds of stores in addition to those units classified as grocery stores. Country general stores and department stores are active competitors in the sale of grocery products.



## BRITISH COLUMBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, 1937

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

Kind of Business	1 9 3 0		Total Net Sales, Estimated(2)			Indexes of Retail Sales (193C = 100)								% of Change, 1937/36
	Number(1) of Stores	Total Net Sales				1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	
			1933	1936	1937									
		\$	\$	\$	\$									
Total, All Stores .....	9,501	248,597,500	155,747,000	208,913,000	232,740,000	100.0	83.7	65.9	62.6	69.6	75.8	84.0	93.6	+ 11.4
Food Group .....	3,476	48,692,000	32,239,000	38,208,000	41,451,000	100.0	84.5	70.0	66.2	69.7	74.7	78.5	85.1	+ 8.5
Candy and confectionery stores ....	747	4,699,300	2,890,000	3,370,000	3,758,000	100.0	83.3	66.7	61.5	63.6	65.4	71.7	80.0	+ 11.5
Fruit and vegetable stores .....	192	1,648,000	1,332,000	1,709,000	1,808,000	100.0	92.4	82.1	80.8	83.9	91.4	103.7	109.7	+ 5.8
Grocery and combination stores ....	1,461	26,287,700	18,270,000	21,615,000	23,604,000	100.0	86.3	73.3	69.5	72.8	78.8	82.2	89.8	+ 9.2
Meat markets (including sea foods).	506	10,908,200	6,185,000	7,275,000	7,704,000	100.0	77.7	60.9	56.7	60.6	64.9	66.7	70.6	+ 5.9
Country General Stores ....	814	17,653,500	11,563,000	15,092,000	16,797,000	100.0	84.4	69.5	65.5	73.0	80.0	85.5	95.1	+ 11.3
General Merchandise Group ..	202	45,862,100	33,902,000	39,995,000	43,218,000	100.0	91.4	75.8	73.9	78.0	81.3	87.2	94.2	+ 8.1
Department stores .....	25	38,831,900	28,756,000	32,927,000	35,495,000	100.0	91.4	75.5	74.1	77.3	79.8	84.8	91.4	+ 7.8
Dry goods stores .....	112	2,146,600	1,367,000	1,997,000	2,197,000	100.0	83.6	67.4	63.7	74.2	81.1	93.0	102.3	+ 10.0
General merchandise stores .....	35	1,243,600	754,000	1,106,000	1,229,000	100.0	77.2	67.3	60.6	73.6	85.3	88.9	98.8	+ 11.1
Variety stores .....	30	3,640,000	3,025,000	3,965,000	4,297,000	100.0	100.3	87.2	83.1	89.1	95.4	108.9	118.0	+ 8.4
Automotive Group .....	1,122	34,122,100	19,583,000	36,444,000	43,621,000	100.0	77.9	57.5	57.4	74.4	87.1	106.8	127.8	+ 19.7
Motor vehicle dealers .....	196	21,296,000	10,226,000	25,237,000	31,562,000	100.0	70.2	44.5	48.0	70.1	89.9	118.5	148.2	+ 25.1
Accessories, tires and batteries ..	48	1,116,800	727,000	895,000	1,080,000	100.0	82.7	70.2	65.1	74.5	76.6	80.1	96.7	+ 20.7
Filling stations(3) .....	463	5,360,100	4,904,000	5,864,000	6,266,000	100.0	106.0	97.5	91.5	103.4	103.1	109.4	116.9	+ 6.9
Garages .....	368	5,607,200	3,325,000	3,734,000	3,921,000	100.0	80.0	66.8	59.3	63.3	62.9	66.6	69.9	+ 5.0
Apparel Group .....	772	17,409,400	10,874,000	13,444,000	14,285,000	100.0	83.9	65.6	62.5	68.3	72.0	77.2	82.1	+ 6.3
Men's and boys' clothing and fur- nishings (includes custom tailors)	342	6,366,200	3,457,000	4,713,000	5,015,000	100.0	78.1	58.2	54.3	61.5	67.6	74.0	78.8	+ 6.4
Family clothing stores .....	51	1,828,000	1,188,000	1,559,000	1,699,000	100.0	80.0	65.9	65.0	74.7	78.0	85.3	92.9	+ 9.0
Women's apparel and accessories stores .....	257	6,137,000	4,167,000	4,766,000	5,076,000	100.0	88.8	70.6	67.9	71.8	73.3	77.7	82.7	+ 6.5
Shoe stores .....	122	3,078,200	2,062,000	2,406,000	2,495,000	100.0	88.7	70.7	67.0	71.8	74.7	78.2	81.1	+ 3.7

(1), (2) and (3): See footnotes on Page 4.



BRITISH COLUMBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, 1937.

Table I.--Total Net Sales and Sales Indexes, by Kinds of Business--(Cont'd.) --

Kind of Business	1 9 3 0		Total Net Sales, Estimated(2)			Indexes of Retail Sales (1930 = 100)								% of Change, 1937/36
	Number(1) of Stores	Total Net Sales												
			1933	1936	1937	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	
		\$	\$	\$	\$									
Building Materials Group ...	379	12,348,900	5,710,000	7,872,000	9,197,000	100.0	81.3	53.1	46.2	50.4	56.9	63.7	74.5	+16.8
Hardware stores .....	184	4,425,400	2,899,000	3,861,000	4,487,000	100.0	87.5	66.6	65.5	72.4	82.2	87.2	101.4	+16.2
Lumber and building material dealers	83	3,945,800	1,579,000	2,299,000	2,655,000	100.0	76.1	45.0	40.0	44.4	49.2	58.3	67.3	+15.5
Electrical, heating and plumbing, paint and glass shops .....	98	2,130,600	656,000	878,000	1,089,000	100.0	72.3	42.2	30.8	32.3	36.0	41.2	51.1	+24.0
Furniture & Household Group.	301	8,207,100	4,187,000	6,551,000	7,135,000	100.0	75.1	55.8	51.0	60.3	68.2	79.8	86.9	+ 8.9
Furniture stores .....	86	2,456,800	1,516,000	2,327,000	2,604,000	100.0	86.1	68.2	61.7	74.5	82.6	94.7	106.0	+11.9
Household appliance stores .....	45	1,942,700	940,000	1,277,000	1,437,000	100.0	62.5	53.8	48.4	50.9	60.6	65.7	74.0	+12.5
Other home furnishings stores .....	69	818,000	460,000	773,000	768,000	100.0	65.8	47.0	56.2	74.3	79.0	94.5	93.9	- 0.7
Radio and music stores .....	101	2,989,600	1,271,000	2,174,000	2,326,000	100.0	76.7	49.3	42.5	50.9	58.4	72.7	77.8	+ 7.0
Restaurants, Cafeterias and Eating Places .....	634	10,135,000	5,220,000	7,249,000	7,677,000	100.0	78.2	55.8	51.5	57.9	63.9	71.5	75.7	+ 5.9
Other Retail Stores .....	1,801	54,167,400	32,469,000	44,058,000	49,359,000	100.0	82.7	64.3	59.9	66.6	72.6	81.3	91.1	+12.0
Farmers' supply stores .....	115	11,341,200	7,010,000	10,188,000	11,604,000	100.0	83.6	67.1	61.8	75.1	83.3	89.8	102.3	+13.9
Book stores .....	36	793,900	488,000	582,000	644,000	100.0	89.9	62.4	61.5	64.6	68.4	73.3	81.1	+10.7
Coal and wood yards .....	181	5,699,200	3,317,000	3,176,000	3,259,000	100.0	85.7	72.1	58.2	47.6	52.3	55.7	57.2	+ 2.6
Drug stores .....	268	6,530,400	4,434,000	5,217,000	5,655,000	100.0	88.8	75.6	67.9	72.4	74.9	79.9	86.6	+ 8.4
Florists .....	70	761,600	438,000	474,000	533,000	100.0	76.8	63.6	57.5	57.4	60.1	62.2	70.0	+12.4
Jewellery stores .....	137	2,668,200	1,430,000	2,264,000	2,377,000	100.0	76.8	54.6	53.6	66.8	76.3	84.9	89.1	+ 5.0
Office, school and store supplies and equipment dealers .....	38	1,210,600	490,000	928,000	1,131,000	100.0	66.2	45.4	40.5	50.5	60.1	76.7	93.4	+21.9
Tobacco stores and stands .....	198	2,900,800	1,981,000	2,411,000	2,630,000	100.0	83.7	72.6	68.3	72.3	76.5	83.1	90.8	+ 9.2
Government liquor stores .....	73	14,735,400	8,796,000	12,747,000	14,110,000	100.0	84.3	61.7	59.7	68.8	75.8	86.5	95.8	+10.7
Miscellaneous kinds of business (includes secondhand stores) .....	685	7,526,100	4,085,000	6,071,000	7,413,000	100.0	74.7	53.0	54.3	60.2	64.5	80.7	98.5	+22.1

(1) The numbers of stores are shown only for 1930. Total sales figures for later years are estimated upon the basis of returns from a sample number of firms. The total number of stores in operation in these later years is not known.

(2) In some instances, figures for years subsequent to 1930 have been revised.

(3) Sales figures for filling stations for years subsequent to 1930 have been estimated from data on gasoline consumption and retail prices.

NOTE: In a number of cases group totals include figures for classifications not separately shown.

BRITISH COLUMBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, 1937.

Table 2.--Number of Chains, Chain Stores, Total Chain Store Sales and Percentage of Chain Store Sales to Total Sales, by Years

	1930	1933	1936	1937
<b>ALL STORES, TOTAL -</b>				
Chains .....	95	81	76	77
Stores (maximum) .....	692	740	717	696
Chain sales .....	\$ 47,875,300	\$ 32,405,600	\$ 41,068,500	\$ 46,497,900
Total sales .....	\$248,597,500	\$155,747,000	\$208,913,000	\$232,740,000
%, chains to total .....	19.3	20.8	19.7	20.0
<b>Grocery and Combination Stores and Meat Markets -</b>				
Chains .....	19	17	13	15
Stores (maximum) .....	244	282	231	292
Chain sales .....	\$ 10,117,100	\$ 8,862,400	\$ 9,466,700	\$ 11,889,200
Total sales .....	\$ 37,196,100	\$ 24,455,000	\$ 28,890,000	\$ 31,308,000
%, chains to total .....	27.2	36.2	32.8	38.0
<b>Variety Stores -</b>				
Chains .....	3	3	3	3
Stores (maximum) .....	21	21	22	22
Chain sales .....	\$ 2,769,700	\$ 2,301,300	\$ 2,958,400	\$ 3,176,000
Total sales .....	\$ 3,640,000	\$ 3,025,000	\$ 3,965,000	\$ 4,297,000
%, chains to total .....	76.1	76.1	74.6	73.9
<b>Shoe Stores -</b>				
Chains .....	3	5	4	4
Stores (maximum) .....	19	27	25	26
Chain sales .....	\$ 619,400	\$ 640,000	\$ 476,600	\$ 539,000
Total sales .....	\$ 3,078,200	\$ 2,062,000	\$ 2,406,000	\$ 2,495,000
%, chains to total .....	20.1	31.0	19.9	21.6
<b>Restaurants, Cafeterias and Eating Places -</b>				
Chains .....	7	6	4	4
Stores (maximum) .....	34	25	16	17
Chain sales .....	\$ 1,213,000	\$ 691,500	\$ 698,200	\$ 263,400
Total sales .....	\$ 10,135,000	\$ 5,220,000	\$ 7,249,000	\$ 7,677,000
%, chains to total .....	12.0	13.3	9.6	3.4
<b>Drug Stores -</b>				
Chains .....	4	3	3	3
Stores (maximum) .....	41	39	42	43
Chain sales .....	\$ 2,042,500	\$ 1,367,500	\$ 1,618,100	\$ 1,729,200
Total sales .....	\$ 6,530,400	\$ 4,434,000	\$ 5,217,000	\$ 5,655,000
%, chains to total .....	31.3	30.8	31.0	30.6

Note: In some instances, figures for years subsequent to 1930 have been revised.



BRITISH COLUMBIA - RETAIL MERCHANDISE TRADE, 1937.

Table 3.--Comparison of Department Store Sales by Commodity Groups for 1936 and 1937

Department	Sales in 1936 \$	Sales in 1937 \$	% of Change
Total Sales, All Departments .....	32,927,000	35,495,000	+ 7.8
Women's dresses, coats and suits (including sports wear and house dresses) .....	2,475,000	2,662,500	+ 7.6
Girls' and infants' wear .....	634,100	671,000	+ 5.8
Hosiery and gloves .....	1,057,300	1,130,800	+ 7.0
Lingerie and corsets (including negligees and robes, knit underwear, nurses' and maids' uniforms) .....	849,700	875,000	+ 3.0
Millinery .....	417,600	444,200	+ 6.4
Women's, girls' and infants' apparel and accessories, total (Sum of above) .....	5,433,700	5,783,500	+ 6.4
Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings .....	3,711,500	3,859,800	+ 4.0
Drugs and toilet articles and preparations (including cameras and photographic supplies) .....	887,400	939,500	+ 5.9
Piece goods (silks, woollens, cottons, linens), patterns, linens and bedding .....	1,842,000	1,957,000	+ 6.2
Small wares - laces, handkerchiefs, neckwear, ribbons, buttons, thread, yarns .....	1,337,300	1,321,900	- 1.2
Food and kindred products (groceries, meats, provisions, candies, fruit and vegetables). Do not include restaurant receipts .....	9,350,000	10,036,100	+ 7.3
Furniture (including mattresses, springs) .....	1,393,900	1,551,700	+11.3
Home furnishings - draperies, curtains, floor coverings, china, glassware, pictures, window shades .....	2,081,300	2,397,700	+15.2
Household appliances and electrical supplies - washing machines, sewing machines, electric irons, vacuum cleaners, refrigerators, stoves, electrical fixtures, lamps .....	455,300	513,300	+12.7
Hardware and kitchen utensils (including paints, wall- paper) .....	1,171,200	1,347,900	+15.1
Radios, musical instruments and supplies .....	205,000	228,700	+11.6
Shoes and other footwear (men's, women's and children's)	1,809,600	1,969,700	+ 8.8
Stationery, books and magazines .....	681,900	735,700	+ 7.9
Jewellery and optical goods (including clocks, watches, silverware, plated ware) .....	396,200	430,700	+ 8.7
All other departments, total .....	2,170,700	2,421,800	+11.6
(Difference between sum of individual items and grand totals)			

Note: The departmental groupings shown above have been revised from those used in earlier reports.

STATISTICS CANADA LIBRARY  
BIBLIOTHÈQUE STATISTIQUE CANADA



1010713901