

Retail Merchandise Trade by Cities.—Data similar to those given in Table 22 for provinces are published for cities of 20,000 population or over at p. 609 of the 1939 Year Book.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

Summary of Retail Merchandising.—As in the case of wholesale merchandising, annual statistics of retail sales are based on the complete census covering 1930, supplemented by an annual survey of all the more important retail establishments, such establishments having accounted for over two-thirds of the total value of sales in 1930. In Table 23, therefore, the figures for 1930 are the results of the comprehensive census, while the figures for later years are estimates calculated from the annual surveys.

It is impossible to measure accurately the effect of price movements as a factor in the trend in dollar value of retail trade. Price changes probably account for a larger portion of the fluctuation in dollar sales for the food group. On the other hand, the prices of more durable goods have varied to a much smaller degree, so that changes in dollar sales of such lines of trade as furniture stores, jewellery stores and automotive establishments represent to a large extent changes in the volume of goods purchased.

Dollar volume of retail trading in Canada averaged 1.8 p.c. higher in 1939 than in 1938, the downward trend during the first few months of the year being slightly more than offset by the increase in consumer purchasing that followed the outbreak of war. Improved purchasing power in Saskatchewan resulted in an 11.7 p.c. increase in retail trade in that Province. Minor gains were reported by all other provinces but a decline amounting to 9.4 p.c. was registered in Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

In addition to providing a measure of the volume of retail trading, the annual surveys also cover salaries and wages, inventories and accounts outstanding at the end of the year. Salaries and wages paid to employees in retail stores, but excluding proprietors' compensation, are estimated at \$245,871,000 for 1939 or 2.5 p.c. above the amount paid out in 1938. Retail inventories at \$465,540,000 at the end of 1939 were 7.5 p.c. above the amount recorded on the corresponding date in 1938, the substantial increase representing the result of heavy inventory buying by retail merchants in the latter part of 1939. Accounts outstanding on retail merchants books were valued at \$255,633,800 at the close of 1939, an amount approximately equal to 10 p.c. of the annual turnover and 2.4 p.c. above the corresponding figure for 1938. Improved conditions in Saskatchewan are reflected in a 7.3 p.c. reduction in the amount owing to retail merchants in that Province during the twelve-month period.