

24.—Sales of Retail Chains for Selected Kinds of Business Compared with Total Sales, 1930, 1933, 1938 and 1939—concluded

Kind of Business	1930	1933	1938	1939
Drug Stores—				
Chains.....No.	31	29	33	31
Stores ¹"	292	301	347	345
Chain sales.....\$	13,971,300	11,001,300	14,127,100	14,251,800
Total sales (all stores).....\$	76,848,900	57,253,000	68,164,000	69,643,000
P.C. of chain sales to total.....	18.2	19.2	20.7	20.5

¹ Maximum in operation during the year.

MONTHLY STATISTICS

Monthly Indexes of Retail Sales.—Monthly indexes of retail sales covering twelve lines of retail business dealing chiefly in foods, clothing and household requirements are now available covering the twelve-year period commencing with January, 1929. These indexes are based upon reports secured monthly from all department stores, from most of the larger chain-store companies and from a considerable number of independent outlets. Approximately 6,600 unit stores are covered. While these reports include only a part of the total field, they embrace a sufficiently large number of stores to provide a fairly accurate indication of the current movements in retail sales for the kinds of business sampled. Two sets of index numbers are published; one is computed from the calendar month sales reported, whereas the second set is adjusted to allow both for differences in the numbers of business days in different months and also for the usual seasonal movements.

The underlying trend in consumer purchasing, as reflected in the seasonally adjusted index, turned sharply upward during the latter part of 1940, when increased purchasing power, arising from higher employment levels, became more apparent in the retail trade statistics. The seasonally adjusted index for December, 1940, stood at the highest level recorded since the early part of 1930, while the annual totals for 1940 ranged 12 p.c. above the dollar volume of business transacted in 1939. A factor contributing to the marked increase for November, 1940, as compared with November, 1939, when sales had declined appreciably following the wave of consumer purchasing during the first two months of the War.

All twelve lines of business, for which figures are available, reported gains in 1940 over 1939. Stores specializing in radios and electrical appliances reported the largest increase with a gain of 26 p.c. over 1939. The increase for this trade was especially pronounced in December, heavy demand for electrical appliances and radios in anticipation of higher prices arising from new import restrictions and taxation schedules resulting in a 52 p.c. increase in business over December, 1939. Department store sales gained 12 p.c.; grocery stores, 10 p.c.; and hardware stores, 9 p.c. Increases for men's and women's clothing stores were similar at approximately 15 p.c., while shoe store sales were up 11 p.c.

Statistics on a regional basis are available for some lines of business and serve to give some indication of the general trends in different parts of the country. On the basis of the information available, it is estimated that sales in the Maritime Provinces gained 16 p.c. in 1940 over 1939. Gains for other regions are estimated at 12 p.c. for Ontario and British Columbia, and at 9 p.c. for Quebec and the Prairie Provinces.