

goods sold in the more traditional major department stores but popularly described as discount operations, had sales of \$4.6 billion in 1985, up 8.5% from 1984. Major department store organizations recorded total sales of \$7.5 billion or 62.1% of total department store sales, representing an increase in sales volume of 4.1% over 1984.

Of the 17 department store organizations in operation as of December 1985, 12 were considered major department stores, operating a total of 317 separate locations. Five were considered junior department store organizations and operated in 482 locations.

At the department level, 32 of the 40 departments covered by the Statistics Canada survey recorded higher sales in 1985 compared with 1984. The largest increases were in hardware, paints and wallpaper (23.4%), furs (14.6%), jewellery (13.4%) and women's and misses' dresses, housedresses, aprons and uniforms (12.6%). Decreases ranged from 9.9% for gasoline, oil, auto accessories, repairs and supplies, to 0.6% for draperies, curtains and furniture covers.

17.1.3 New motor vehicle sales

Because of the tremendous importance of the automobile industry in Canada, retail sales of new cars constitute one of the leading economic indicators of the health of the national economy, accounting for one of the largest components of total personal spending for consumer goods and services in the gross domestic product. Lower interest rates and generally improved economic conditions contributed to a substantial 19.2% rise in number of new motor vehicles sold in 1985, to reach a record 1.5 million units sold, valued at \$19.9 billion. Passenger car sales totalled 1.1 million units in 1985, valued at \$13.7 billion, an increase of 17.1% over 1984. Truck and bus sales rose 25.9% to a level of 0.4 million units, for a value of \$6.2 billion.

North American manufacturers held 69.9% of the Canadian passenger car market in 1985 (based on unit sales), compared with a share of 74.7% in 1984. Japanese and South Korean manufacturers, at 58.2% and 23.1% respectively, held the major share of the Canadian imported passenger car market in 1985. Sales by North American manufacturers accounted

Chart 17.2

Retail sales of new motor vehicles in Canada, 1976-85

Billion dollars

