

This PDF is a selection from an out-of-print volume from the National Bureau of Economic Research

Volume Title: Textile Markets: Their Structure in Relation to Price Research

Volume Author/Editor: Committee on Price Research

Volume Publisher: UMI

Volume ISBN: 0-87014-188-0

Volume URL: <http://www.nber.org/books/unkn39-2>

Publication Date: 1939

Chapter Title: APPENDICES: II Textile Price Series compiled by the Retail Price Division, Bureau of Labor Statistic

Chapter Author: Committee on Textile Price Research, Stephen J. Kennedy, chairman

Chapter URL: <http://www.nber.org/chapters/c5767>

Chapter pages in book: (p. 227 - 236)

APPENDIX II

Textile Price Series
Compiled by the
Retail Price Division
Bureau of Labor Statistics

RETAIL prices for a selected list of textile products are collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics quarterly for use in computing changes in the cost of living. All together retail prices collected by the Bureau on textiles include 100 articles of clothing and footwear for men and women and boys and girls; 14 articles of yard goods and textile furnishings; 18 furniture and floor covering items; and 112 other items including household equipment, rugs, toilet articles, and special services such as laundry, medical and dental services.

In the past it has been the practice of the Bureau, after tabulating and arranging reported prices, to file the schedules and tabulations in the Archives. In the autumn of 1934 all the retail price schedules and tabulations then in the Bureau were assembled and it was found that *all data* for prices collected by field representatives had been destroyed for years prior to 1926. Retail price data in the files of the Bureau accordingly cover only the years since 1926.

Since 1933 certain important changes and improvements have been made by the Bureau in its method of collecting retail prices. Whereas previously prices had been collected semi-annually, in June and December, this practice was changed so that prices are now obtained quarterly. Consultation with retail executives indicated that January, April, July, and October

would be satisfactory for this purpose and reports for July and October 1935 and January, April, and July 1936 were made on that cycle. The results obtained during these months proved to be in some ways unsatisfactory, and beginning with September 1936, a change was made to the cycle of December, March, June, and September with special arrangements for completing the December work in the stores well before December 15.

In March 1935 written specifications were introduced covering details of material and construction of items priced. This was part of a general improvement on the part of the Bureau toward more precise statistical procedure. As now drawn up, these written specifications represent distinct qualities of goods and serve to limit the range of quality upon which prices are quoted. They are not intended to establish quality standards.

The foundation of the specifications now in use by the Bureau was laid in the summer of 1933, when the Federal Inter-departmental Retail Price Committee, organized by the Central Statistical Board and consisting of representatives of several government agencies, developed a set of preliminary specifications for use as a basis of price collection. These specifications were first used when some members of the Committee and its staff collected prices for experimental purposes in the District of Columbia and the immediate vicinity. In November 1933 the specifications were first used officially to serve as a basis for prices collected for computing changes in the cost of living of federal employees in the District of Columbia. They were then revised on the basis of the knowledge gained through this use and were next used in a price project, financed by CWA funds, in the early part of 1934. This project covered four cities. The results were used to revise the specifications further.

In June 1934 the specifications developed up to that time were used in 15 cities scattered throughout the United States to make a test collection of prices from one or two selected retailers in each city. The work was done by the field representatives of the Bureau.

During January and February 1935 all the available data were correlated and additional specifications developed for commodities and services priced by the Bureau. The specifications written at this time were first used in the March 1935 price

collection. Since that time, pricing by specifications has been the policy of the Bureau in the collection of retail prices.

It should be noted that the retail price data collected by the Bureau are not published by commodities. Unlike the price records of the Wholesale Price Division, the published retail price records of the Bureau do not furnish basic data on individual commodities. Recently the Bureau has developed a retail commodity price series on a few men's and women's clothing items which were published in Bulletins 449 (August 1936), and 551 (March 1937). Owing to lack of funds, publication of retail price data in this form has not been extended over the entire textile list.

The cities in which retail prices are regularly collected by field representatives of the Retail Price Division are listed in Section A together with certain additional cities in which prices were collected in March 1935. It is the practice of the Bureau to take four price quotations for each item in each city. In New York City five quotations are obtained for each textile item.

In Section B are given the textile items for which retail prices are currently collected by the Bureau, together with those series for which prices have been obtained since 1926.

SECTION A

CITIES IN WHICH RETAIL PRICES ARE COLLECTED REGULARLY BY FIELD REPRESENTATIVES	ADDITIONAL CITIES INCLUDED IN THE BLS-FERA COLLEC- TION IN MARCH 1935
--	---

New England

Boston	Bridgeport
Manchester ¹	Fall River
Portland, Maine	Providence

Middle Atlantic

Buffalo	Scranton
New York	Binghamton
Philadelphia	Newark
Pittsburgh	Rochester

East North Central

Chicago	Indianapolis
Cincinnati	Columbus
Cleveland	Milwaukee
Detroit	Peoria

¹ Regular collections begun in March 1935

West North Central

Kansas City	Omaha
Minneapolis	Sioux Falls
St. Louis	Wichita
Cedar Rapids	

South Atlantic

Atlanta	Savannah
Baltimore	Washington
Jacksonville	Clarksburg, W. Va.
Norfolk	Columbia, S. C.
Richmond	Winston-Salem, N. C.

East South Central

Birmingham	Louisville
Memphis	Knoxville
Mobile	

West South Central

Houston	El Paso
New Orleans	Little Rock
Dallas	Oklahoma City

Mountain

Denver	Salt Lake City
Albuquerque	Tucson
Butte	

Pacific

Los Angeles	San Francisco
Portland, Oregon	Seattle
Spokane	

SECTION B

Goods and Services for which the Bureau of Labor Statistics
obtains Quarterly Retail Prices

MEN'S AND BOYS' CLOTHING

Men's

YEAR-ROUND	
Hat, felt, medium quality	Undershirt, knit cotton, medium quality
Shirt, business, collar attached, cotton, medium quality	Shorts, woven cotton, medium quality
Shirt, business, collar attached, cotton, inexpensive quality	Socks, dress, cotton, medium quality
Pajamas, cotton, medium quality	Necktie, medium quality

- *Handkerchief, cotton, medium quality
- *Shirt, work, cotton, medium weight
- Overalls
- Trousers, work, cotton
- *Socks, work, cotton, medium quality
- *Gloves, work, cotton

SPRING

- *Topcoat, medium quality, light weight
- *Topcoat, inexpensive quality, light weight
- *Suit, medium quality, light weight
- *Suit, inexpensive quality, light weight

SUMMER

- Hat, straw
- *Suit, medium quality, light weight
- *Suit, inexpensive quality, light weight
- Suit, good quality, Palm Beach
- *Suit, inexpensive quality, cotton wash material

FALL

- *Topcoat, medium quality, light weight

YEAR-ROUND

- Suit, wool, medium quality, size 14 years
- Shirt, medium quality, size 14 years or 12½" neck
- Pajamas, medium quality, size 14 years
- Shorts, woven cotton, size 14 years
- Undershirt, knit cotton, size 14 years or 32" chest
- Neckties, rayon, medium quality

SUMMER

- Trousers, wash material, medium quality, size 14 years

FALL

- Trousers, wash material, medium quality, size 14 years

- *Topcoat, inexpensive quality, light weight
- Suit, medium quality, heavy weight
- Suit, inexpensive quality, heavy weight
- *Sweater, wool, pull-over style, medium quality
- *Sweater, wool, coat style, inexpensive quality

WINTER

- Overcoat, medium quality, heavy weight
- Overcoat, inexpensive quality, heavy weight
- *Topcoat, medium quality, light weight
- *Topcoat, inexpensive quality, light weight
- Suit, medium quality, heavy weight
- Suit, inexpensive quality, heavy weight
- *Jacket, wool
- *Sweater, wool, pull-over style, medium quality
- *Sweater, wool, coat style, inexpensive quality
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, heavy weight, medium quality

Boys'

- Trousers, wool, medium quality, size 14 years
- *Sweater, wool, pull-over style, medium quality, size 14 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, heavy, size 14 years or 32" chest

WINTER

- Jacket, wool, size 14 years
- Jacket, leatherette, medium quality, size 14 years
- *Sweater, wool, pull-over style, medium quality, size 14 years
- Trousers, wool, medium quality, size 14 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, heavy, size 14 years or 32" chest

WOMEN'S AND GIRLS' CLOTHING

Women's

YEAR-ROUND

- Slip, silk, medium quality, size 36
 Slip, woven rayon, good quality, size 36
 Nightgown, cotton, medium quality, size 16
 *Stepin or Pantie, knit rayon, medium quality, size 6
 Hose, silk, chiffon
 Hose, silk, semi-service
 Girdle, medium quality, regular size
 Foundation Garment, medium quality, regular size
 Brassiere, medium quality, size 36
 *Gloves, cotton fabric

SPRING

- Dress, silk medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, inexpensive quality, size 18 or 36
 Housedress, cotton sheers, medium quality, size 36
 Unionsuit, knit cotton, light weight, size 6
 *Hat, felt, light weight, inexpensive quality

SUMMER

- Dress, silk, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, inexpensive quality, size 18 or 36
 *Dress, cotton sheers, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Housedress, cotton sheers, medium quality, size 36
 Unionsuit, knit cotton, light weight, size 6
 *Hat, felt, light weight, inexpensive quality

FALL

- Coat, heavy weight, fur trimmed, medium, size 18 or 36
 Dress, wool, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, inexpensive quality, size 18 or 36
 Housedress, cotton prints, medium quality, size 36
 Robe, flannel, medium quality, medium size
 Bloomers, knit rayon, medium quality, size 6
 Unionsuit, knit cotton, medium weight, size 6
 *Hat, felt, heavy weight, inexpensive quality
 *Gloves, leather, dress, medium quality

WINTER

- Coat, heavy weight, fur trimmed, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, wool, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, medium quality, size 18 or 36
 Dress, silk, inexpensive quality, size 18 or 36
 Housedress, cotton prints, medium quality, size 36
 Robe, flannel, medium quality, medium size
 Bloomers, knit rayon, medium quality, size 6
 Unionsuit, knit cotton, medium weight, size 6
 *Hat, felt, heavy weight, inexpensive quality
 *Gloves, leather, dress, medium quality

Girls'

YEAR-ROUND

- *Dress, cotton, medium quality, size 8 years
- Bloomer or Pantie, knit rayon, medium quality, size 8 years

SPRING

- Pajamas, cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Socks, cotton, size 7½
- Anklets, cotton, size 7½
- *Sweater, wool, medium quality, size 8 years

SUMMER

- Pajamas, cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Socks, cotton, size 7½
- Anklets, cotton, size 7½

FALL

- Pajamas, cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, light weight, size 8 years
- Socks, cotton, size 7½
- Anklets, cotton, size 7½
- *Sweater, wool, medium quality, size 8 years

WINTER

- Coat, wool, medium quality, size 8 years
- *Dress, wool, medium quality, size 8 years
- Pajamas, cotton, heavy weight, size 8 years
- Unionsuit, knit cotton, heavy weight, size 8 years
- Socks, cotton, size 7½
- Anklets, cotton, size 7½

YARD GOODS

YEAR-ROUND

- *Rayon Crepe, medium quality, per yard
- Silk Crepe, inexpensive quality, per yard
- Silk crepe, medium quality, per yard
- Percale, 80x80, per yard
- Towel, cotton, terry
- Sheet, medium weight
- Pillowcase, medium weight
- Tablecloth, linen, medium quality

- *Table Oilcloth, per yard

SUMMER

- Voile, printed cotton, medium quality, per yard
- *Dimity, cotton, medium quality, per yard

WINTER

- Wool Dress Material, medium quality, per yard
- Blanket, wool, medium quality
- Blanket, cotton, good quality

FURNITURE

YEAR-ROUND

- Rug, wool, Axminster, medium quality, 9x12
- Rug, wool, Axminster, inexpensive quality, 9x12
- *Rug, felt base, good quality, 6x9

- *Felt Base Floor Covering, good quality, 8/4 per sq. yard
- Linoleum, inlaid, straight line, standard household gauge, 8/4 per sq. yard

* Items were added in March 1935. Prices on the other items are available back to 1926.

