

Wages Up More Than Prices Here

Despite inflation, Detroit metropolitan area workers are realizing a real gain in income this year and local automobile sales could be the highest ever.

Total dollar volume of construction contracts in the three-county area during 1971 have already reached a record high, reports John R. Steiner, manager, Research and Information Department, Greater Detroit Chamber of Commerce.

Based on early October returns and fragmentary statistical data for November, the new car production total exceeding \$5 billion for the year is certain to be one of the three highest

in the industry's history. In truck production, the two million units will be the highest total ever produced in the United States, Steiner said.

Automobile sales are running at the rate of 310,000 plus for the metropolitan area, a rate already second highest in history and almost certain to be a record high when the year closes.

Non-manufacturing employment will show an increase of one per cent for the year, Steiner said, but manufacturing employment will show a decrease of six per cent. Unemployment is likely to round out at about

140,000 in the metropolitan area this year for an eight per cent unemployment rate.

With average hourly earnings running a full nine per cent ahead of last year and inflation slowed locally to a four per cent rate, the real gain this year will be approximately five per cent.

Total construction contracts let in the three-county, metropolitan area in 1971 will exceed \$1.2 billion -- the highest total dollar volume ever recorded for the area.

New housing units in the metropolitan area in 1971 will be in excess of 30,000, making the second highest total reached in the

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