

Bank clearings, though generally regarded as a leading barometer of business conditions, are defective in that they record only inter-bank transactions—transactions through which one bank becomes either the debtor or the creditor of another. They do not record the numerous transactions in which the transfer of value is made within a single bank, as, for example, where the purchaser and the seller of values that are paid for by cheque carry their accounts in the same bank. As the number of separate banks has in recent years been steadily diminishing through amalgamations, there being only 11 in December, 1927 as compared with 18 in 1923, inter-bank transactions are bearing a steadily decreasing proportion to the total of business transacted, a fact which goes far to explain the smallness of the increase in bank clearings from 1923 to 1927, as shown in Table 22.

Bank Debits.—Since bank clearings have ceased to be a satisfactory measure of general business, the Bureau of Statistics in 1923 took up with the Canadian Bankers' Association the advisability of securing a record of bank debits, *i.e.*, of all cheques charged against accounts at any bank. The Bankers' Association agreed to secure from January, 1924, the monthly aggregate figures of the amount of cheques charged to accounts at all banking offices situated in the clearing house cities of Canada, and the figures of cheques charged to accounts (bank debits) are given for the first four years for which the record was compiled in Table 23. The Weyburn Security Bank, operating in southern Saskatchewan, has voluntarily added a record of all cheques charged to accounts at any of its branches.

It will be noted, as establishing the need of the newer record, that bank debits for 1927 show an increase of 33 p.c. over those of 1924, while bank clearings in the later year show an increase of only 21 p.c. The bank debits are a comparable record for the four years; the bank clearings, owing to the reduction in the number of banks, are not a comparable record.

23.—Bank Debits at the Clearing House Cities of Canada, by Individual Cities, calendar years 1924-1927.

Clearing House Centres.	1924.	1925.	1926.	1927.
	\$	\$	\$	\$
Maritime Provinces—				
Halifax.....	249,104,107	291,519,137	310,156,211	324,547,787
Moncton.....	73,359,527	72,670,817	80,079,852	84,077,248
Saint John.....	262,397,740	208,309,576	214,503,609	219,119,014
Total.....	584,861,374	572,499,530	604,739,672	627,744,049
Quebec—				
Montreal.....	7,502,004,244	7,765,597,874	9,133,357,705	11,779,879,473
Quebec.....	533,783,980	606,288,225	653,974,690	745,180,824
Sherbrooke.....	97,202,878	103,338,392	122,139,414	119,046,018
Total.....	8,132,991,102	8,475,224,491	9,909,471,809	12,643,906,315
Ontario—				
Brantford.....	85,522,249	97,420,194	104,344,131	120,130,422
Chatham.....	83,843,306	72,552,158	78,113,391	92,536,934
Fort William.....	94,542,523	80,641,924	93,312,892	98,598,600
Hamilton.....	551,817,813	561,986,629	625,859,573	677,172,777
Kingston.....	63,623,168	60,684,605	64,839,958	74,495,420
Kitchener.....	95,723,382	101,458,597	107,791,171	123,259,396
London.....	265,782,161	258,399,664	294,440,263	355,621,944
Ottawa.....	1,957,362,315	2,019,304,868	1,868,014,198	1,922,946,801
Peterborough.....	69,005,106	74,622,879	76,225,782	84,632,905
Sarnia.....	-	-	96,815,933	103,209,342
Toronto.....	7,659,055,119	7,587,940,228	8,209,525,043	10,536,876,258
Windsor.....	283,117,899	321,031,895	379,061,316	462,282,232
Total.....	11,209,395,041	11,236,043,641	11,908,343,651	14,641,811,031