

Chain Stores.—During the past decade the chain store has come to occupy an important place in the field of distribution. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics classifies as chains all retail organizations operating four or more branches, excepting departmental concerns. The number of chains reported in any year thus depends not only on the rise or disappearance of firms but also on the number of units operated. As a minimum of four stores is required before a firm is classified as a chain, the reduction in branches below this number automatically removes a firm from the chain store group. In an effort to obtain some comparative information for chain stores, a careful check was made of census and other records for the year 1923. The data secured do not provide complete figures for chain stores in the early year but the figures in Table 36 give some indication of the growth in chain stores between 1923 and 1930 for the trades in which chains hold important positions.

36.—Numbers of Chains and Chain Stores in Selected Kinds of Business, 1923, 1930 and 1934.

Kind of Business.	1923.		1930.		1934.	
	Chains.	Chain Stores.	Chains.	Chain Stores.	Chains.	Chain Stores.
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.
Candy and confectionery.....	6	65	14	163	10	166
Grocery and combination.....	32	640	66	2,004	74	2,159
Meat market.....	13	154	21	214	12	151
Dry goods.....	4	18	10	94	7	64
Variety, 5-and-10, and to-a-dollar.....	3	122	15	313	14	360
Automobile dealers.....	4	36	10	76	5	41
Filling stations.....	5	177	28	646	27	732
Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings (including tailors).....	8	68	22	176	13	138
Family clothing.....	1	4	13	55	12	66
Women's apparel and accessories (in- cluding millinery).....	5	37	28	183	15	153
Shoes.....	5	35	17	193	22	278
Hardware.....	8	37	13	70	14	72
Furniture.....	2	51	8	90	8	76
Radio and music.....	5	51	7	73	2	19
Drugs.....	22	193	31	284	29	298
Jewellery.....	1	6	3	23	2	24
Office equipment.....	10	75	16	171	12	138
Tobacco.....	9	159	9	210	11	237
Sub-Totals.....	143	1,928	331	5,038	289	5,172
Lumber and building materials.....	49	1,012	46	1,018	42	850
Totals.....	192	2,940	377	6,056	331	6,022

The sales of chain stores formed 17.7 p.c. of the total retail merchandise trade in 1930 and 17.9 p.c. in 1934. Grocery and combination store chains had 29.5 p.c. of the total sales for these businesses in 1930 and 32.8 p.c. in 1934. The proportion of chain sales to total sales in some other important lines of trade for the year 1934 were: Filling stations, 30.5 p.c.; shoe stores, 29.8 p.c.; drug stores, 19.5 p.c.; and furniture stores, 19.2 p.c. Summary figures for all chain stores in Canada are given in Table 37.

37.—Principal Statistics for Chain Stores, 1930-34.

Year.	Chains.	Chain Stores (average).	Value of Sales.
	No.	No.	\$
1930.....	518	8,097	487,336,000
1931.....	506	8,188	434,199,700
1932.....	486	8,066	360,806,200
1933.....	461	7,900	328,902,600
1934.....	445	7,804	348,334,200