

Merchandise Trade, 1930 and 1932-39, by Provinces and Kinds of Business—concluded

P.C. Change, 1938-39	Indexes of Retail Sales (1930=100)									No.
	1930	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	
+2.9	100.0	63.2	56.3	65.3	71.3	78.6	92.2	86.9	89.5	36
-2.5	100.0	61.1	51.7	60.4	70.0	75.4	83.5	85.2	83.1	37
+1.7	100.0	57.6	55.9	64.7	65.6	75.7	85.4	78.9	80.2	38
+1.6	100.0	49.9	39.7	45.8	51.7	57.8	64.8	60.0	60.9	39
+1.4	100.0	57.9	49.9	57.9	64.0	70.8	81.8	76.9	78.0	40
-0.4	100.0	62.7	54.8	58.0	60.3	64.2	68.4	66.0	65.8	41
-6.9	100.0	66.5	63.7	74.8	77.2	83.7	99.0	94.0	87.5	42
+1.3	100.0	68.7	61.2	63.6	66.7	71.1	79.6	79.6	80.6	43
+7.9	100.0	82.1	81.8	83.3	84.2	88.3	91.6	89.6	96.6	44
+2.2	100.0	83.3	74.5	77.4	79.8	83.4	89.4	88.7	90.6	45
-2.6	100.0	69.1	60.1	63.7	65.8	69.6	76.8	75.0	73.1	46
+7.8	100.0	61.5	56.4	63.1	68.4	74.5	82.3	80.2	86.4	47
+3.3	100.0	57.8	50.4	61.9	69.3	79.0	93.8	90.5	93.6	48
+2.6	100.0	77.8	70.3	73.4	75.3	79.8	86.7	86.8	89.0	49
+5.1	100.0	66.6	54.5	55.8	56.4	65.5	73.8	76.8	80.7	50
+4.4	100.0	66.1	61.7	70.3	72.1	75.8	85.9	88.0	91.8	51
+3.5	100.0	71.7	65.5	70.4	72.4	77.8	86.1	85.9	89.0	52

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 (with the exception of departmental concerns) operating four or more branches. The number of chains reported in any year thus depends not only on the appearance 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.

Figures covering the operations of retail chains are available for all years since 1930. In that year chain-store companies transacted 17.7 p.c. of the total retail trade of the country. The proportion of the total business transacted by chains has varied only slightly since that date; in 1939 the percentage was also 17.7 p.c.

The variety store of to-day is a typical chain-store development, approximately 90 p.c. of all variety store sales being made by chains. Chains also play an important part in the distribution of groceries, meats, shoes, clothing and drugs.

A significant development in chain-store operation in the food retailing field during recent years is the shift towards larger stores. The proportion of total food-chain business transacted by stores with annual sales of \$100,000 or over has more than doubled since 1934. In that year there were 152 chain units with annual sales of \$100,000 or more and these transacted 21.7 p.c. of the annual food-chain business. In 1935 there were 164 stores in this category and these transacted 23.9 p.c. of the total chain business; in 1936 there were 180 large stores with 26.3 p.c. of the sales; in 1937 there were 225 stores with 32.7 p.c. of the total business, while 1938 and 1939 witnessed a continuation of the same trend. In the last-named year there were 313 stores each with annual sales of \$100,000 or more; these accounted for 47.1 p.c. of the total food-chain business. This transition has naturally been