

CHAIN STORE SALES: Average sales of Canadian chain stores climbed to a record \$251,926 last year, almost 11 per cent above the 1951 high of \$227,601 per store, according to the annual report on retail chain stores by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This was 63 per cent more than the 1946 average of \$154,725 per store and more than four times the 1939 average of \$59,879. Total sales rose for the nineteenth consecutive year to reach a new peak of \$1,929,750,000 that was 12 per cent above the 1951 record of \$1,726,354,400. The number of local, provincial, sectional and national retail chain companies fell by 21 to 458 during the year, but the maximum number of stores operated increased by 112 to 7,935 and the average number of stores operated throughout the year by 75 to 7,660.

Chain store sales were higher last year in all parts of Canada, the percentage gains over 1951 ranging from 1.3 per cent in the Yukon and Northwest Territories to 25.9 per cent in Newfoundland. In Saskatchewan sales were up 20.2 per cent; in New Brunswick, 15.8 per cent; in Quebec, 14.9 per cent; in Prince Edward Island, 12.5 per cent; in Nova Scotia, 12.4 per cent; in British Columbia, 10.4 per cent; in Alberta, 10.3 per cent; in Ontario, 9.9 per cent; and in Manitoba, 9.8 per cent. Ontario and Quebec stores together accounted for 66 per cent of the total sales, about the same proportion as in 1951.

The increase in sales last year was common to almost all kinds of chain stores, the notable exceptions being family clothing stores and men's and boy's clothing and furnishing stores (including custom tailors), with sales drops of 17 per cent and 0.6 per cent respectively. Among the principal kinds of chain stores the largest percentage gains were made by household appliance, radio and music stores (22.6 per cent), lumber and building materials dealers (21.5 per cent), furniture stores (18.2 per cent) and grocery and combination stores (15.3 per cent). Grocery and combination stores accounted for 36.4 per cent of the total retail chain store sales in 1952 as compared with 34.7 per cent in 1951.

Sectional and national chains accounted for 50.1 per cent of the total chain store trade last year as compared with 49.3 per cent in 1951, while provincial chains accounted for 45 as against 45.7 per cent, and local chains for 4.9 as against five per cent. Chains operating 100 or more stores did 47.8 per cent of the business in 1952 as compared with 46.4 per cent in the preceding year, while chains with annual sales of \$5,000,000 and over got 78.1 per cent of the trade as compared with 76 per cent in 1951. The latter increased in number to 57 in 1952 from 52 in 1951.

In 1951 primary iron and steel replaced fish processing as the leading industry of Nova Scotia.

NEW DEFENCE LABORATORY: On October 16, Defence Minister Brooke Claxton opened the new buildings of the Defence Research Chemical Laboratories (DRCL), a chemical warfare establishment created by the Canadian Army in mid-thirties and Canada's first defence laboratory. The staff was formerly housed in Ottawa at John and Sussex Streets. The establishment first produced chemical warfare equipment and investigated improvements to anti-gas measures.

With Mr. Claxton were Dr. Omond M. Solandt, Chairman of the Defence Research Board, C.M. Drury, Deputy Minister of National Defence, Dr. J.C. Arnell, DRCL Superintendent, and Dr. Otto Maass, internationally known McGill University scientist, who is a DRB advisor on special weapons.

DRCL lists an impressive series of accomplishments, many with useful civilian as well as military applications, including a carbon monoxide gas detector which employs a reagent unaffected by water vapour. This is of use to industry for automatic alarm systems.

Another development is a new-type storage battery designed to start engines in northern climates where lead batteries lose efficiency during extreme cold.

Thickening agents developed at DRCL and readily available from synthetic chemicals, improve flame-thrower and fire-bomb fuels. Some of the agents are now used widely in the grease and paint industries.

Another important activity is the development of protective clothing and equipment for the Armed Services -- with the respirator receiving by far the most attention. The scientists continually seek improvements such as increased comfort, reduction in weight and better vision. A recent advance is the development of a respirator which offsets misting of the eye-pieces during intense cold.

ST. LAWRENCE POWER: The Minister of Transport, Mr. Chevrier, on October 15, urged that Eastern Ontario be given "an adequate share of the new power" to be developed in the International Rapids Section of the St. Lawrence River under the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project. In an informal talk in Ottawa, he considered that Eastern Ontario should receive at least one third of the power developed.

"This area has lagged in development up to now for lack of power reserves, particularly the area that will be directly affected by the physical changes brought about by the power works," said the Minister. He added that "in all equity therefore it seems to me that Eastern Ontario has a right to ask for priority in the distribution of power from the St. Lawrence."

Canada had 17 producing asbestos mines last year, three more than in 1951 and eight more than in 1950.