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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, JANUARY, 1942

Introduction

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail and wholesale grocery trading establishments forming components of the two regular monthly bulletins on retail and wholesale trade issued by the Internal Trade Branch of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. This series brings together in one report the information on retail and wholesale grocery sales contained in the other bulletins thus facilitating a comparison of the trends in monthly sales in the two stages of food distribution.

Wholesale Trade

Sales of 71 of the larger wholesale houses in Canada averaged 19 per cent higher in January, 1942 than in the corresponding month of 1941 and were 2 per cent higher than in December, 1941. Substantial gains over January, 1941 were reported in all sections of the country. Per cent increases for the various economic divisions standing as follows: Maritime Provinces, 20 per cent, Quebec, 15 per cent, Ontario, 21 per cent, Prairie Provinces, 21 per cent and British Columbia, 19 per cent.

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were valued 11 per cent higher at the end of January, 1942 than on the corresponding date of last year but were 15 per cent lower than the value of stocks reported on December 31, 1941. Stocks on hand at the beginning of January are normally about 63 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of January this year were 56 per cent in excess of the amount of business transacted during the month indicating that the stock position at the beginning of January, 1941 was slightly below the normal business for this period of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change	
		January 1941	January 1942	January, 1942 over	
				January 1941	December 1941
CANADA .....	71	13,316	15,875	+19.2	+ 2.2
Maritimes .....	12	1,307	1,562	+19.6	+ 0
Quebec .....	22	2,001	2,307	+15.2	+14.9
Ontario .....	20	4,070	4,935	+21.3	+ 2.4
Prairies.....	11	4,041	4,883	+20.9	+ 6.1
British Columbia ..	6	1,897	2,188	+19.2	+10.1

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 959 chain store units operated by 25 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 36 per cent higher in January, 1942, than sales of 1,035 units operated by the same 25 firms in January a year ago. Average sales per store were \$15,374 in January, 1942, 45 per cent greater than the \$10,496 average in the same month of 1941.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 39 per cent in Quebec, 38 per cent in the Prairie Provinces, 35 per cent in British Columbia, and 34 per cent in Ontario. Average daily sales for food chains increased 28 per cent in January of 1942 over 1941.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for January, 1941 and 1942

	January, 1941		January, 1942		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA .....	1,035	10,863,241	959	14,743,366	+35.7
Quebec.....	209	2,256,034	194	3,128,339	+38.7
Ontario .....	583	6,346,993	546	8,529,287	+34.4
Prairie Provinces ...	140	1,180,983	122	1,633,425	+38.3
British Columbia..	103	1,079,231	97	1,452,315	+34.6

Independent Stores

Sales of 981 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 22 per cent higher in January, 1942 than in January, 1941. All provinces reported increases ranging from 15 per cent in Saskatchewan to 24 per cent in the Maritime Provinces. Increases for other provinces were 23 per cent for Quebec, 22 per cent for Alberta, 21 per cent in Ontario, 20 per cent in Manitoba and 17 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Sales Reported for January, 1941 and 1942

Division	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA .....	981	897	+21.5
Maritimes .....	133	121	+23.8
Quebec .....	212	197	+23.2
Ontario .....	391	361	+21.3
Manitoba .....	63	56	+20.0
Saskatchewan .....	37	32	+14.8
Alberta .....	63	58	+21.5
British Columbia .....	82	72	+16.5





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