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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, DECEMBER, 1942

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 69 of the larger wholesale grocery houses averaged 16 per cent higher in December, 1942, than in the corresponding month of 1941, and remained unchanged from the dollar volume of business transacted in November. The 16 per cent increase is considerably greater than gains recorded in the five immediately preceding months, annual totals for 1942 standing 9 per cent above 1941. Increases over 1941 were reported by all the provinces, both for the month of December and also for the year. Increases over December, 1941, for the economic divisions of the country with the percentage gains for the year in brackets are as follows: Maritime Provinces, 13 per cent (10 per cent); Quebec, 8 per cent (7 per cent); Ontario, 16 per cent (11 per cent); Prairie Provinces, 13 per cent (7 per cent); British Columbia, 34 per cent (11 per cent).

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocers at the end of December, 1942, were valued 9 per cent lower than the stocks on hand at the end of 1941, but were 4 per cent higher than at the end of November, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of December are normally 62 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of December, 1942, were 31 per cent above the volume of business realized in the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of December was decidedly lower than the normal situation for this time of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		December 1941	December 1942	December 1941	November 1942	Year 1942 1941
		\$	\$	\$	\$	date
CANADA	69	15,249	17,674	+15.9	+ 0.3	+ 8.8
Maritimes	13	1,566	1,776	+13.4	- 7.7	+10.0
Quebec	20	2,381	2,559	+ 7.5	-18.0	+ 7.0
Ontario	19	4,744	5,517	+16.3	+ 3.8	+10.6
Prairies	11	4,504	5,073	+12.6	+ 5.4	+ 6.5
British Columbia	6	2,054	2,749	+33.8	+13.0	+10.5

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 989 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 2 per cent lower in December, 1942, than sales of 1,028 units operated by the same 27 firms in December a year ago. Average sales per store were \$14,271 in December, 1942, 1 per cent higher than the \$14,073 average for the same month of 1941.

Sales decreased by 5 per cent in Quebec, 8 per cent in Ontario, while increases of 18 and 8 per cent occurred in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia respectively.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for December, 1941 and 1942

	December, 1941		December, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
	\$		\$		
CANADA	1,028	14,466,764	989	14,113,542	- 2.4
Quebec	193	2,927,277	179	2,796,405	- 4.5
Ontario	558	8,365,575	539	7,715,679	- 7.8
Prairie Provinces	180	1,773,815	177	2,089,870	+17.8
British Columbia	97	1,400,097	94	1,511,588	+ 8.0

Independent Stores

Sales of 906 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 16 per cent higher in December, 1942, than in December, 1941, gains in Ontario and Quebec exceeding those in the Eastern and Western Provinces. Percentage increases in dollar sales for the various divisions are as follows: Maritime Provinces, 12 per cent; Quebec, 20 per cent; Ontario, 18 per cent; Manitoba, 8 per cent; Saskatchewan, 8 per cent; Alberta, 9 per cent; British Columbia, 12 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported For December, 1941 and 1942

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	906	747	+16.1
Maritimes	126	94	+11.5
Quebec.....	192	171	+20.2
Ontario	363	301	+17.9
Manitoba	65	50	+ 8.3
Saskatchewan	40	33	+ 8.1
Alberta	56	47	+ 9.3
British Columbia	64	51	+12.2

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