

Published by Authority of the HON. JAMES A. MacKINNON, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Commerce

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS
INTERNAL TRADE BRANCH
OTTAWA, CANADA

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Vol. 4 - No. 2

Year's Subscription, \$1.00
Single copies, .10

CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, FEBRUARY, 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 75 of the larger wholesale houses in Canada averaged 18 per cent higher in February, 1942, than in the corresponding month of 1941 and were 1 per cent down from January. Substantial gains over February, 1941, were reported in all sections of the country, per cent increases for the various economic divisions standing as follows: Maritime Provinces, 12 per cent; Quebec, 14 per cent; Ontario, 18 per cent; Prairie Provinces, 18 per cent; and British Columbia, 28 per cent.

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were valued 13 per cent higher at the end of February, 1942, than on the corresponding date of last year but were 1 per cent lower than the value of stocks reported on January 31, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of February are normally about 67 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of February this year were 58 per cent in excess of the amount of business transacted during the month indicating that the stock position at the beginning of February, 1942, was slightly below the normal position 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	
		February 1941	February 1942	February, 1942 over	
				February 1941	January 1942
		\$	\$		
CANADA	75	13,452	15,891	+ 18.1	- 1.1
Maritimes	14	1,527	1,715	+ 12.3	- 3.1
Quebec	22	2,118	2,416	+ 14.1	+ 9.4
Ontario	20	3,289	4,696	+ 17.7	- 5.1
Prairies	12	3,962	4,685	+ 18.2	- 3.6
British Columbia	6	1,855	2,379	+ 28.2	- 0.9

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 872 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 27 per cent higher in February, 1942, than sales of 945 units operated by the same 27 firms in February a year ago. Average sales per store were \$10,989 in February, 1942, 38 per cent greater than the \$1,969 average in the same month of 1941.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 31 per cent in Quebec, 28 per cent in Ontario and the Prairie Provinces, and 20 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for February, 1941 and 1942

	February, 1941		February, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA	945	7,522,051	872	9,582,358	+ 27.4
Quebec	205	2,160,211	190	2,819,015	+ 30.5
Ontario	472	3,113,388	437	3,976,372	+ 27.7
Prairie Provinces	143	1,155,657	127	1,473,202	+ 27.5
British Columbia.	125	1,092,795	118	1,313,769	+ 20.2

Independent Stores

Sales of 969 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 17 per cent higher in February, 1942, than in February, 1941. Sales in Saskatchewan were up 6 per cent while more substantial gains were recorded in other parts of the country as follows: British Columbia, 12 per cent; Alberta, 14 per cent; Manitoba, 15 per cent; Ontario, 16 per cent; the Maritime Provinces, 19 per cent; and Quebec, 21 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for February, 1941 and 1942

Division	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	969	822	+ 17.1
Maritimes	142	116	+ 19.0
Quebec	209	188	+ 21.3
Ontario	383	329	+ 16.4
Manitoba	66	52	+ 14.8
Saskatchewan	36	27	+ 5.7
Alberta	56	48	+ 13.7
British Columbia	77	62	+ 12.1

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