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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, MAY, 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 73 of the larger grocery wholesale houses in Canada averaged 4 per cent higher in May of this year than last and increased 5 per cent over April sales. Sales for the first five months of the current year stand 12 per cent higher than the corresponding period a year ago. The 4 per cent increase conforms with the increase of 2 per cent recorded in April, but is smaller than the spread recorded for the earlier months of 1942. The Maritime Provinces showed a marked gain of 20 per cent over May a year ago, while smaller increases were reported for other regions as follows: Quebec, 4 per cent; Prairie Provinces, 2 per cent; British Columbia, 3 per cent. Sales in Ontario remained unchanged from May, 1941.

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were valued 5 per cent higher at the end of May, 1942, than on the corresponding date of last year but declined 3 per cent from the value of stocks reported on April 30, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of May are normally 25 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of May this year were 33 per cent in excess of the amount of business transacted during the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of May, 1942, was above 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		
		May 1941	May 1942	May, 1942 over		Year to date <u>1942</u> 1941
				May 1941	April 1942	
CANADA	73	17,368	18,002	+ 3.6	+ 5.3	+11.8
Maritimes.....	13	1,642	1,964	+19.6	+17.1	+14.7
Quebec	22	3,003	3,130	+ 4.2	+41.4	+12.8
Ontario.....	20	5,263	5,308	+ 0.9	+ 4.4	+10.4
Prairies	12	5,018	5,097	+ 1.6	+ 0.9	+10.9
British Columbia ..	6	2,442	2,503	+ 2.5	+ 7.3	+13.8

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 1,000 chain store units operated by 26 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 20 per cent higher in May, 1942, than sales of 1,055 units operated by the same 26 firms in May a year ago. Average sales per store were \$15,425 in May, 1942, 27 per cent greater than the \$12,187 average for the same month of 1941.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 33 per cent in Quebec, 16 per cent in Ontario, 23 per cent in the Prairie Provinces, and 16 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for May, 1941 and 1942

	May, 1941		May, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA	1,055	12,857,545	1,000	15,424,895	+20.0
Quebec	190	2,485,698	183	3,298,054	+32.7
Ontario	567	7,466,513	536	8,646,043	+15.8
Prairie Provinces	176	1,598,518	165	1,965,983	+23.0
British Columbia	122	1,306,816	116	1,514,815	+15.9

Independent Stores

Sales of 996 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 12 per cent higher in May of this year than last, all sections of the country except Saskatchewan contributing to the increase. Gains recorded for the provinces were as follows: Quebec, 16 per cent; Maritime Provinces, 14 per cent; Ontario, 11 per cent; Manitoba, Alberta and British Columbia, each 9 per cent. Dollar value of sales in Saskatchewan remained unchanged from May, 1941.

Comparison of Sales Reported for May, 1941 and 1942

	No. Stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	996	805	+12.0
Maritimes	113	116	+13.5
Quebec	219	191	+16.3
Ontario	389	310	+11.1
Manitoba	69	56	+ 9.3
Saskatchewan	38	26	+ 0.7
Alberta	62	46	+ 9.1
British Columbia	82	60	+ 8.6



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