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

CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, JULY, 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 3 per cent higher in July of this year than last but declined by 5 per cent from June. Sales for the first seven months of the current year stand 12 per cent higher than for the corresponding period a year ago. The 3 per cent increase was considerably lower than the 23 per cent gain recorded between the two years in the immediately preceding month of June. The smaller increase in July may be attributed in part to the high level of wholesale grocery trading reported in July, 1941, when sales averaged 36 per cent above July, 1940. The Maritimes and Quebec reported decreases in sales of 3 per cent and 4 per cent respectively, while the other regions of the country reported the following increases: Ontario, 3 per cent; Prairies, 5 per cent; British Columbia, 11 per cent.

Stocks on hand at the end of July, 1942, were valued 2 per cent lower than on the corresponding date of last year, and declined by 8 per cent from the value of inventories reported on June 30, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of July are normally 5 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of July this year were 16 per cent in excess of the amount of business transacted during the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of July, 1942, was above the normal position for that period of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		July 1941	July 1942	July, 1942 over		Year to date 1942 1941
				July 1941	June 1942	
CANADA	73	\$ 19,150	\$ 19,659	+ 2.7	+ 5.0	+ 12.0
Maritimes	14	2,144	2,084	- 2.8	- 10.2	+ 14.3
Quebec	21	3,311	3,183	- 3.9	- 8.1	+ 12.0
Ontario	20	5,755	5,935	+ 3.1	+ 12.5	+ 11.5
Prairies	12	5,646	5,913	+ 4.7	+ 11.5	+ 10.1
British Columbia ...	6	2,294	2,544	+ 10.9	- 10.1	+ 15.2

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 981 chain store units operated by 26 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 12 per cent higher in July, 1942, than sales of 1,031 units operated by the same 26 firms in July a year ago. Average sales per store were \$14,000 in July, 1942, 17 per cent greater than the \$11,928 average for the same month of 1941.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 13 per cent in Quebec, 9 per cent in Ontario, 22 per cent in the Prairie Provinces, and 15 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for July, 1941 and 1942

	July, 1941		July, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA	1,031	\$ 12,298,200	981	\$ 13,733,769	+ 11.7
Quebec	190	2,489,046	181	2,801,754	+ 12.6
Ontario	571	7,105,720	545	7,709,068	+ 8.5
Prairie Provinces	169	1,560,086	160	1,904,352	+ 22.1
British Columbia.	101	1,143,348	95	1,318,595	+ 15.3

Independent Stores

Sales of 974 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 14 per cent higher in July of this year than last, all regions of the country contributing to the increase. Gains recorded for the provinces were as follows: Maritimes, 12 per cent; Quebec, 18 per cent; Ontario, 13 per cent; Manitoba, 11 per cent; Saskatchewan, 8 per cent; Alberta, 12 per cent; and British Columbia, 16 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for July, 1941 and 1942

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	974	795	+ 13.8
Maritimes	140	109	+ 12.4
Quebec	205	173	+ 17.6
Ontario	387	318	+ 12.6
Manitoba	67	53	+ 11.1
Saskatchewan	36	26	+ 8.0
Alberta	58	47	+ 11.6
British Columbia	81	69	+ 15.8

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