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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, AUGUST, 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 72 of the larger grocery wholesale houses, as measured by dollar volume, remained unchanged in August of this year compared with August, 1941, and declined 1 per cent from July. Sales for the first eight months of the current year stand 10 per cent higher than for the corresponding period a year ago. Ontario recorded an increase of 7 per cent in sales over August of last year while a 3 per cent increase was reported in the Maritime Provinces. Sales in British Columbia declined by 7 per cent while 6 per cent less business was transacted in the Prairies. Grocery wholesalers in Quebec reported no change in sales from August, 1941.

Stocks on hand at the end of August, 1942, were valued 10 per cent lower than on the corresponding date of last year, and declined by 7 per cent from the value of inventories reported on July 31, 1942. Stocks on hand at the beginning of August are normally 11 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of August this year were at the normal stock position, wholesalers reporting inventory holdings 11 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted during that month.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		August 1941	August 1942	August, 1942 over		Year to date <u>1942</u> <u>1941</u>
				August 1941	July 1942	
CANADA.....	72	19,204	19,127	- 0.4	- 1.2	+10.2
Maritimes	15	2,093	2,164	+ 3.4	- 2.5	+13.2
Quebec	21	3,212	3,199	- 0.4	- 0.3	+10.1
Ontario	19	5,489	5,878	+ 7.1	+ 3.7	+10.9
Prairies	11	5,889	5,530	- 6.1	- 4.7	+ 7.6
British Columbia ...	6	2,521	2,356	- 6.6	- 6.0	+12.1

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 953 chain store units operated by 24 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 6 per cent higher in August, 1942, than sales of 999 units operated by the same 24 firms in August a year ago. Average sales per store were \$14,420 in August, 1942, 11 per cent greater than the \$12,967 average for the same month of 1941.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 11 per cent in Quebec, 3 per cent in Ontario, 11 per cent in the Prairie Provinces, and 8 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for August, 1941 and 1942

	August, 1941		August, 1942		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA.....	999	\$ 12,954,493	953	\$ 13,742,253	+ 6.1
Quebec	193	2,581,549	184	2,854,049	+10.6
Ontario	551	7,397,089	524	7,630,404	+ 3.2
Prairie Provinces	155	1,702,093	150	1,884,300	+10.7
British Columbia.	100	1,273,762	95	1,373,500	+ 7.8

Independent Stores

Sales of 925 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 11 per cent higher in August of this year than last, all regions of the country, except Saskatchewan, contributing to the increase. Sales in Saskatchewan remained unchanged from August, 1941. Gains recorded for the other provinces were as follows: Maritimes, 6 per cent; Quebec, 15 per cent; Ontario, 10 per cent; Manitoba, 8 per cent; Alberta, 7 per cent; and British Columbia, 17 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for August, 1941 and 1942

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	925	717	+10.8
Maritimes	125	85	+ 6.1
Quebec	196	165	+14.6
Ontario	368	286	+10.3
Manitoba	68	53	+ 8.1
Saskatchewan	36	24	+ 0.4
Alberta	55	41	+ 7.4
British Columbia	77	63	+16.9

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