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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, JANUARY, 1943

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

Reports received from 63 of the larger wholesale grocery establishments revealed a 3 per cent decline in the dollar volume of sales in January of this year compared with January, 1942, and a decrease of 14 per cent from the value of business transacted in December. The Maritime Provinces and Quebec reported increases of 3 and 3 per cent respectively, while sales in Ontario remained unchanged from last year. Wholesalers in the Prairie Provinces did 12 per cent less business than in January, 1942, and British Columbia registered an 13 per cent drop in sales.

Stocks in the hands of wholesale grocers on January 31, 1943, were valued 12 per cent lower than on the corresponding date of last year, and were 6 per cent lower than the inventories held at the end of December, 1942. Stocks at the beginning of January are normally 63 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks at the beginning of January, 1943, were 61 per cent in excess of the volume of business realized in the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of January was practically on a par with 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	
		January 1942	January 1943	January, 1943 over January 1942	
		\$	\$		
CANADA	66	14,789	14,313	- 3.2	-14.3
Maritimes	14	1,640	1,764	+ 7.5	- 5.9
Quebec	21	2,187	2,386	+ 9.1	-13.6
Ontario	18	4,866	4,887	+ 0.4	-11.1
Prairies	10	4,634	4,082	-11.9	-16.7
British Columbia	5	1,462	1,194	-18.3	-32.8

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 957 chain store units operated by 23 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 14 per cent lower in January, 1943, than sales of 934 units operated by the same 23 firms in January, a year ago. Average sales per store were \$13,506 in January, 1943, 10 per cent lower than the \$15,030 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 11 per cent in Quebec, 15 per cent in Ontario, 3 per cent occurred in the Prairie Provinces and 13 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for January, 1942 and 1943

	January, 1942		January, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA	934	14,939,402	957	12,924,343	-13.5
Quebec	194	3,128,339	181	2,788,076	-10.9
Ontario	554	8,612,250	537	7,293,576	-15.3
Prairie Provinces	143	1,746,438	145	1,585,042	- 3.2
British Columbia	37	1,452,315	34	1,258,255	-13.4

Independent Stores

Sales of 902 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 11 per cent higher in January, 1943, than in January, 1942. All regions of the country, except Saskatchewan, sharing in the increase. Dollar sales in Saskatchewan remained on a par with the volume of business transacted in January of last year while increases for other regions are as follows: Maritimes, 6 per cent; Quebec, 17 per cent; Ontario, 11 per cent; Manitoba, 6 per cent; Alberta, 1 per cent; British Columbia, 6 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported For January, 1942 and 1943

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	902	667	+11.3
Maritimes	131	87	+ 5.7
Quebec	134	162	+16.6
Ontario	356	270	+11.3
Manitoba	64	42	+ 5.5
Saskatchewan	33	26	- 0.1
Alberta	55	34	+ 0.5
British Columbia	69	46	+ 5.8

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