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Dominion Statistician:	S.A. Cudmore, M.A. (Oxon.) F.S.S., F.R.S.C.
Chief, Internal Trade Branch:	Herbert Marshall, B.A., F.S.S.
Statistician:	A.C. Steedman, B.A.

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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, OCTOBER, 1943

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail and wholesale grocery sales 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 70 of the larger grocery wholesale establishments indicated a 7 per cent decline in sales in Ontario, 1943, compared with October of last year. The dollar volume of business transacted during the month decreased 10 per cent from September, 1943. Cumulative figures for the ten-month period of the current year stand 2 per cent higher than for the corresponding period last year. The 7 per cent decline below October, 1942 reflects a falling off in wholesale grocery trading in all regions of the country except the Maritime Provinces where sales increased 11 per cent. Dollar sales decreased by 15 per cent in the Prairies; 11 per cent in Quebec; 9 per cent in British Columbia; and 3 per cent in Ontario.

Stocks on hand at the end of October, 1943, were valued 4 per cent higher than on the corresponding date of last year, and increased by 10 per cent over the value of stocks reported on hand September 30, 1943. Stocks on hand at the beginning of October are normally 18 per cent in excess of the amount of business transacted in that month. Stocks on hand at the beginning of October of this year were 10 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of October, 1943, was below the normal position for that period of the year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per Cent Change		Year- to- date, 1943 1942
		October, 1942	October, 1943	October, 1943 over October, 1942	September 1943	
		\$	\$			
CANADA .....	70	19,947	18,585	- 6.8	-10.0	+ 2.4
Maritimes .....	14	2,053	2,276	+10.9	+ 1.5	+ 9.6
Quebec .....	18	3,172	2,840	-10.5	+ 0.9	- 0.6
Ontario .....	20	6,202	6,026	- 2.8	-12.8	+ 3.7
Prairies .....	12	6,020	5,138	-14.7	-19.4	- 2.5
British Columbia ....	6	2,499	2,306	- 8.7	-11.9	- 2.4

Retail Sales

Chain Stores

Sales of 951 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 7 per cent lower in October, 1943, than sales of 975 units operated by the same 27 firms in October a year ago. Average sales per store were \$14,102 in October, 1943, 4 per cent lower than the \$14,741 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 12 per cent in Quebec, 6 per cent in Ontario, 2 per cent in the Prairie Provinces and 9 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for October, 1942 and 1943

	October, 1942		October, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA .....	975	14,372,660	951	13,410,915	- 6.7
Quebec .....	181	3,066,054	174	2,706,947	-11.7
Ontario .....	532	7,863,507	518	7,424,985	- 5.6
Prairie Provinces .....	149	1,978,627	148	1,947,090	- 1.6
British Columbia .....	113	1,464,472	111	1,331,893	- 9.1

### Independent Stores

Sales of 877 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores increased in dollar volume by 6 per cent in October, 1943, over the value of business transacted in the same month of last year. The increase was shared by all regions of the country except British Columbia, the following gains being recorded over October, 1942: Maritimes, 9 per cent; Quebec, 4 per cent; Ontario, 6 per cent; Manitoba, 9 per cent; Saskatchewan, 10 per cent; and Alberta, 14 per cent. Sales were practically unchanged in British Columbia.

### Comparison of Sales Reported for October, 1942 and 1943

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA .....	877	598	+ 6.0
Maritimes .....	127	92	+ 8.5
Quebec .....	186	118	+ 4.0
Ontario .....	352	233	+ 5.8
Manitoba .....	69	45	+ 8.7
Saskatchewan .....	33	27	+10.0
Alberta .....	56	47	+14.3
British Columbia .....	64	36	+ 0.2



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