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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, FEBRUARY, 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

The dollar value of sales transacted by 71 of the larger wholesale grocery establishments increased 3 per cent in February of this year over February, 1942, and recorded a 4 per cent gain over the value of merchandise sold in January. Gains registered in Ontario and the Eastern Provinces were offset by the decline in sales reported in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia. Reports received from grocery wholesalers in Quebec revealed a 10 per cent increase; sales in Ontario and the Maritime Provinces were up 8 per cent; while the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia recorded decreases of 2 and 5 per cent respectively.

Stocks on hand on February 28, 1943, declined by 14 per cent from the inventory position on the corresponding date of last year, and were valued 3 per cent lower than the stocks held at the end of January, 1943. Stocks at the beginning of February are normally 67 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in that month. Stocks at the beginning of February, 1943, were 43 per cent in excess of the volume of business realized in the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of February was below 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	
		February 1942 \$	February 1943 \$	February, 1943 over February 1942	January 1943
CANADA	71	15,757	16,231	+ 3.0	+ 3.7
Maritimes	14	1,707	1,841	+ 7.8	+ 0.7
Quebec	20	2,303	2,524	+ 9.5	+ 9.2
Ontario	19	4,685	5,035	+ 7.5	+ 1.3
Prairies	12	4,684	4,579	- 2.2	+ 4.4
British Columbia	6	2,378	2,252	- 5.3	+ 8.7

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 929 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 12 per cent lower in February, 1943, than sales of 965 units operated by the same 27 firms in February a year ago. Average sales per store were \$11,730 in February, 1943, 8 per cent lower than the \$12,757 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 14 per cent in Quebec, 15 per cent in Ontario, and 6 per cent in British Columbia, while an increase of 2 per cent occurred in the Prairie Provinces.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for February, 1942 and 1943

	February, 1942		February, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales \$	No. Stores	Sales \$	
CANADA	965	12,310,809	929	10,897,035	-11.5
Quebec	167	1,978,398	154	1,711,874	-13.5
Ontario	552	7,483,102	537	6,369,746	-14.9
Prairie Provinces	149	1,558,539	144	1,595,929	+ 2.4
British Columbia	97	1,290,270	94	1,219,436	- 5.5

Independent Stores

Sales of 910 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores averaged 14 per cent higher in February, 1943, than in February, 1942. Increases in the dollar volume of business transacted were reported by all regions of the country. Gains recorded over February of last year were as follows: Maritimes, 10 per cent; Quebec, 18 per cent; Ontario, 13 per cent; Manitoba, 8 per cent; Saskatchewan, 7 per cent; Alberta, 12 per cent; British Columbia, 18 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for February, 1942 and 1943

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	910	683	+13.7
Maritimes	131	87	+ 9.3
Quebec	194	158	+17.7
Ontario	360	261	+13.2
Manitoba	65	47	+ 8.3
Saskatchewan	35	28	+ 6.5
Alberta	55	44	+11.5
British Columbia	70	58	+17.7

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