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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, APRIL, 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

Statements received from 72 of the larger wholesale grocery houses in Canada showed a 6 per cent increase in sales in April, 1943 compared with the dollar volume of business transacted in April, 1942, but sales declined by 7 per cent from the March level of trading. Gains reported in the Maritimes, Quebec and Ontario were offset by the declines in dollar sales in the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia. Sales increased by 14 per cent in the Maritimes, 16 per cent in Quebec, 14 per cent in Ontario while decreases of 5 and 14 per cent were registered for the Prairies and British Columbia respectively. Cumulative indexes for the first four months of this year stand 4 per cent higher than for the corresponding period of last year.

Stocks in the hands of grocers on April 30, 1943, were value 14 per cent lower than inventories held at the end of April last year, and were practically unchanged from the value of merchandise reported on hand at the end of March. Stocks at the beginning of April are normally 33 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted in the ensuing month. Stocks at the beginning of April, 1943, were 19 per cent in excess of the volume of business realized in the month, indicating that the stock position at the beginning of April had fallen considerably 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		Year- to- date 1943 1942
		April, 1942	April, 1943	April, 1943 over April, 1942	March, 1943	
CANADA	72	15,955	16,884	+ 5.8	- 6.9	+ 4.0
Maritimes	15	1,935	2,209	+14.1	- 4.3	+10.3
Quebec	22	2,686	3,107	+15.7	+ 1.6	+ 9.8
Ontario	19	4,901	5,605	+14.3	- 5.0	+ 8.9
Prairies	11	4,916	4,657	- 5.3	-12.6	- 2.0
British Columbia ..	5	1,517	1,306	-13.9	-19.4	-21.8

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 893 chain store units operated by 26 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 4 per cent lower in April, 1943, than sales of 923 units operated by the same 26 firms in April a year ago. Average sales per store were \$14,779 in April, 1943, 1 per cent lower than the \$14,941 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 2 per cent in Quebec, 7 per cent in Ontario, and were unchanged in British Columbia, while an increase of 4 per cent occurred in the Prairie Provinces.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for April, 1942 and 1943

	April, 1942		April, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA	923	13,790,964	893	13,197,372	- 4.3
Quebec	185	2,933,131	174	2,868,709	- 2.2
Ontario	543	7,953,563	527	7,372,160	- 7.3
Prairie Provinces ..	99	1,569,268	98	1,624,845	+ 3.5
British Columbia ...	96	1,335,002	94	1,331,658	- 0.2

Independent Stores

Sales of 894 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores increased in dollar volume by 17 per cent in April, 1943 over the value of business transacted in the same month of last year. The increase was shared by all regions of the country, the following gains being recorded over April, 1942: Maritimes, 16 per cent; Quebec, 17 per cent; Ontario, 17 per cent; Manitoba, 12 per cent; Saskatchewan, 18 per cent; Alberta, 16 per cent; British Columbia, 17 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for April, 1942 and 1943

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	894	750	+16.6
Maritimes	127	108	+15.6
Quebec	190	154	+17.4
Ontario	348	290	+17.0
Manitoba	62	57	+11.6
Saskatchewan	33	30	+18.2
Alberta	61	51	+16.0
British Columbia	73	60	+17.3

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