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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, JULY, 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

Sales of 72 of the larger wholesale grocery houses in Canada averaged 4 per cent higher in July than in June and were up by 9 per cent compared with July, 1942. The increase over July, 1942 was considerably higher than the average gain recorded in earlier months, cumulative figures for the first seven months of the current year standing only 4 per cent above the corresponding period of 1942.

Sales in Quebec and British Columbia averaged 2 per cent lower in July of this year than last while the other three economic divisions for which separate figures are compiled recorded increases. Sales in the Maritimes and Ontario were up 10 per cent while the Prairie Provinces reported twice as large a gain with an increase of 20 per cent.

Dollar value of inventories held by the wholesale trade averaged 12 per cent lower at the end of July this year compared with the corresponding date a year ago. Wholesale grocers' stocks at the end of June are normally 5 per cent higher than the amount of business realized in July. Inventories at the end of June were 10 per cent lower than the volume of business transacted in July this year, indicating that the stock position in the wholesale grocery trade at the beginning of July was considerably below the normal situation for this 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
		July, 1942	July, 1943	July, 1943 over July, 1942	June, 1943	
CANADA	72	18,781	20,499	+ 9.1	+ 4.4	+ 3.6
Maritimes	14	2,006	2,197	+ 9.5	- 4.0	+ 7.7
Quebec	20	3,070	3,005	- 2.1	+ 0.9	+ 3.1
Ontario	20	5,936	6,538	+10.1	- 0.8	+ 6.9
Prairies	12	5,225	6,265	+19.9	+25.5	+ 2.3
British Columbia .	6	2,544	2,494	- 2.0	-12.3	- 3.6

Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 388 chain store units operated by 25 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 1 per cent higher in July, 1943, than sales of 317 units operated by the same 25 firms in July a year ago. Average sales per store were \$15,482 in July, 1943, 4 per cent higher than the \$14,825 average for the same month of 1942.

Sales decreased by 1 per cent in Quebec, 1 per cent in Ontario, while the Prairie Provinces and British Columbia recorded gains of 7 and 9 per cent respectively.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for July, 1942 and 1943

	July, 1942		July, 1943		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA	917	13,594,439	888	13,747,899	+ 1.1
Quebec	183	2,838,793	174	2,816,087	- 0.8
Ontario	534	7,710,700	514	7,653,304	- 0.7
Prairie Provinces.	105	1,726,351	106	1,844,354	+ 6.8
British Columbia .	95	1,318,595	94	1,434,154	+ 8.8

Independent Stores

Sales of 865 independent grocery or grocery and meat stores increased in dollar volume by 17 per cent in July, 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 July, 1942: Maritimes, 23 per cent; Quebec, 15 per cent; Ontario, 17 per cent; Manitoba, 22 per cent; Saskatchewan, 17 per cent; Alberta, 20 per cent; British Columbia, 12 per cent.

Comparison of Sales Reported for July, 1942 and 1943

	No. Stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	865	739	+17.3
Maritimes	131	120	+22.7
Quebec	138	148	+14.9
Ontario	346	294	+17.1
Manitoba	55	55	+21.7
Saskatchewan	32	26	+17.2
Alberta	50	46	+20.0
British Columbia	63	50	+11.9

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