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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, SEPTEMBER, 1944

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 Merchandising and Services 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

Wholesale grocery sales transacted by 76 of the larger wholesale grocery establishments in Canada during September, 1944, increased 12 per cent over the dollar volume of business reported in September, 1943, and 2 per cent over August, 1944. All regions of the country shared in the 12 per cent gain, increases registered by the various economic divisions being as follows: Maritime Provinces, 14 per cent; Quebec, 16 per cent; Ontario, 9 per cent; Prairie Provinces, 11 per cent, and British Columbia, 13 per cent. Aggregate figures for the January-September period of 1944 stand 12 per cent above sales for the same period of 1943.

Inventories in the hands of wholesale grocers were valued 9 per cent higher at the end of September this year than last, and were 3 per cent greater than the stocks held at the end of August, 1944. Stocks at the beginning of September are normally 10 per cent in excess of the volume of business transacted during that month. Stocks at the beginning of September this year were 8 per cent below sales transacted during the month, indicating that the inventory position at the beginning of September was considerably below the normal level 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, 1944 Year-to-date, 1943
		September, 1943	September, 1944	September, 1943	September, 1944 over August, 1944	
		\$	\$			
CANADA	76	20,804	23,277	+11.9	+ 1.5	+11.8
Maritimes	17	2,761	3,143	+13.8	+ 8.1	+11.5
Quebec	20	3,015	3,482	+15.5	+ 7.2	+ 7.6
Ontario	21	6,108	6,684	+ 9.4	- 5.5	+11.9
Prairies	12	6,291	7,004	+11.3	+ 0.8	+14.5
British Columbia	6	2,629	2,964	+12.7	+13.9	+ 8.2

Retail Sales

Chain Stores

Sales of 919 chain store units operated by 25 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 24 per cent higher in September, 1944, than sales of 931 units operated by the same 25 firms in September a year ago. Average sales per store were \$16,797 in September, 1944, 26 per cent higher than the \$13,354 average for the same month of 1943.

Sales increased by 35 per cent in Quebec, 24 per cent in Ontario, 16 per cent in the Prairie Provinces and 13 per cent in British Columbia.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for September, 1943 and 1944

	September, 1943		September, 1944		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA	931	12,433,021	919	15,436,206	+24.2
Quebec	174	2,502,776	171	3,378,955	+35.0
Ontario	515	6,732,044	511	8,377,355	+24.4
Prairie Provinces	148	1,946,288	144	2,259,316	+16.1
British Columbia	94	1,251,913	93	1,420,580	+13.5

Independent Stores

Sales of 957 grocery or combination grocery and meat stores recorded an increase of 10 per cent in dollar volume in September, 1944 over the value of business transacted in the same month a year ago. Gains of 16 per cent in the Maritime Provinces and 13 per cent in Manitoba were the highest recorded for any region. Gains elsewhere were fairly uniform and amounted to 11 per cent in Saskatchewan, 10 per cent in Quebec, 9 per cent in both Alberta and British Columbia and 8 per cent in Ontario.

Comparison of Sales Reported for September, 1943 and 1944

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	957	762	+10.3
Maritimes	158	131	+15.5
Quebec	223	182	+ 9.9
Ontario	336	256	+ 8.2
Manitoba	70	62	+13.3
Saskatchewan	31	25	+10.8
Alberta	72	54	+ 9.4
British Columbia	67	52	+ 9.2



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Table 1. Summary of the results of the 1981 Census of Canada, by province and territory. The table shows the total population, the population in urban areas, and the population in rural areas. The data is presented in thousands of persons.

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Province or Territory	Total Population	Population in Urban Areas	Population in Rural Areas
Alberta	2,414	1,814	600
Saskatchewan	2,384	1,714	670
Manitoba	2,284	1,614	670
Ontario	10,414	7,814	2,600
Quebec	6,414	4,814	1,600
Atlantic Provinces	2,414	1,814	600
Total Canada	24,114	18,114	6,000