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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE  
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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION

DECEMBER, 1947

This bulletin brings together the information on retail grocery and wholesale grocery and fruit and vegetable sales contained in other monthly bulletins on the retail and wholesale trade thus facilitating a comparison of the trends in monthly sales in the two stages of food distribution.

WHOLESALE TRADE

Wholesale Grocers' Sales

Dollar volume of sales in the wholesale grocery trade in December, 1947 exceeded that of December a year ago by 14% and was 19% below November, 1947 according to statements submitted by 76 of the larger firms across Canada. Sales for the twelve months of 1947 were 17% higher than for the year 1946.

Greatest gains were recorded in Ontario and Quebec where sales were 18% and 17% respectively higher than in December a year ago. British Columbia dropped to third place with an increase of 14% while sales in the Maritimes were up 9% and in the Prairies, 8%. British Columbia recorded the largest increase over 1946 for the twelve-month period with sales up by 22%. Sales in Ontario in 1947 were 19% higher than during the year 1946 with those in Quebec up 16%. In the Prairies and the Maritimes, wholesale grocers' sales in 1947 were 15% and 14% respectively higher than in the previous year.

Fruit and Vegetable Dealers' Sales

Fruit and vegetable dealers' sales continued the trend which has been in evidence throughout 1947 with a drop of 12% in dollar volume of sales in December compared with December, 1946. This, however, was the largest decrease to be recorded for any month. Sales in December were 8% below November, while the cumulative sales for the 12 months of 1947 were 6% lower than 1946.

All regions recorded lower volumes in December, 1947 than in the same month a year ago. Sales of fruits and vegetables in the Western Provinces were down 15%; in Ontario, 11%; and in the Maritimes and Quebec combined, 10%. For the full year 1947, the Western Provinces also registered the largest decrease with sales 8% below the year 1946. Ontario sales were 5% lower and those in the Maritimes and Quebec combined, 3%.

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### Grocers' Inventories

Wholesale grocers' inventories at the end of December, 1947 were valued 16% higher than at the end of November, 1947. Stocks on hand at the beginning of December are normally 64% in excess of sales in that month. Inventories at the beginning of December this year were valued 21% in excess of sales in that month.

### Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		December 1946	December 1947	Dec., 1947 over Dec. Nov. 1946 1947		12 months 1947
						12 months 1946
		\$	\$			
CANADA .....	76	25,511	28,949	+13.5	-19.3	+17.0
Maritime Provinces	15	3,406	3,727	+ 9.4	-18.9	+13.7
Quebec .....	20	3,382	3,969	+17.4	-19.0	+16.0
Ontario .....	22	8,025	9,506	+18.4	-14.9	+18.7
Prairie Provinces.	13	6,906	7,422	+ 7.5	-29.8	+14.7
British Columbia .	6	3,792	4,325	+14.0	-11.0	+22.4

### Wholesale Fruit and Vegetable Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms reporting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		December 1946	December 1947	Dec., 1947 over Dec. Nov. 1946 1947		12 months 1947
						12 months 1946
		\$	\$			
CANADA .....	45	9,692	8,501	-12.3	- 7.7	- 5.6
Maritime and Quebec	16	2,170	1,957	- 9.8	-18.9	- 2.7
Ontario .....	17	3,618	3,211	-11.3	- 5.1	- 4.8
Western Provinces.	12	3,904	3,333	-14.6	- 7.8	- 8.0

Retail Trade

Chain Stores - December, 1947 sales of 933 chain store units operated by 29 chain companies in the food retailing field were 42% higher than sales of 928 stores operated by the same 29 firms in December, 1946. Average sales per store in December, 1947 were \$29,594, 42% above the \$20,893 average for the same month of the previous year.

Extensive gains were recorded in all sections of the country.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for December, 1946 and 1947

	December, 1946		December, 1947		% Change, In Sales <u>December, 1947</u> <u>December, 1946</u>
	No. of Stores	Sales \$	No. of Stores	Sales \$	
CANADA .....	928	19,388,800	933	27,611,500	+42.4
Maritime Provinces ..	43	639,700	45	920,600	+43.9
Quebec .....	164	4,177,100	164	5,942,100	+42.3
Ontario .....	487	10,319,900	487	15,069,200	+46.0
Prairie Provinces ...	141	2,393,100	141	3,114,400	+30.1
British Columbia ....	93	1,859,000	96	2,565,200	+38.0

Independent Stores - Ontario and Quebec marked up gains which exceeded the Canada average increase. Other regions, with the exception of Saskatchewan, experienced modest increases over December, 1946.

Comparison of Sales Reported for December, 1946 and 1947

	No. of Stores Reporting	No. Reporting An Increase	% Change in Sales <u>December, 1947</u> <u>December, 1946</u>
CANADA .....	1,066	675	+ 8.0
Maritime Provinces .	156	87	+ 5.4
Quebec .....	248	180	+11.6
Ontario .....	333	223	+ 9.5
Manitoba .....	79	46	+ 3.4
Saskatchewan .....	60	27	- 0.2
Alberta .....	90	42	+ 3.6
British Columbia ...	100	70	+ 7.3





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