CANADA
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS MERCHANDISING AND SERVICES BRANCH

## SUMMARY

## MONTHLY INDEXES

OF

## COUNTRY GENERAL STORE SALES

IN

CANADA

1937-1943

Average, $1935-1939=100$


> DEPARTRINT OF TRADE AND CUVERCE
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Summary of Nonthly Indexes of Country General Store Sales, 1937.1943
(Averace, 1935-1939-100)

Introduction

The country general store continues to occupy an important place in the retail marketing structure of Canada. Defined as stores selling a general line of merchandise usually including a substantial volume of groceries and located in places of less than 2,000 population these retail outlets fill a laree part of the requirements for convenience goods of persons living in the smaller towns and rural areas of the country. Results of the 1941 Census of Merchandising Establishments show that in that year there were 11.917 country general stures in Canada with annual sales of $\$ 214,747,800$, an amount which formed 6.2 per cent of the total retail trade.

Monthly surveys based on reports received from a sample number of these country general stores and designed to indicate the month-tomonth trend in the value of business transacted were instituted early in 1936. In recent months the number of reporting firms has been increased by the addition of some 200 stores and the index numbers from January, 1942 onwards have been revised to allow for the more representative coverage. innual averages for 1937 and subsequent years and the monthly indexes from Jenuary, 1938 to December, 1943 are shown in this bulletin.

Trend in Sales, 1942-1943
Compared with a 3.6 per cont incroase in urban retail trade between 1942 and 1943, country general store sales increased by 11.4 per cent in the same period. The more substantial gain in country general store business may be attributed in part to the marked increase in farmers' cash income between the two yeara and in part to the rostrictions on automobile transportation with the consoquent curtailment of shopping by the farm population in the larger urban centres.

All provinces recorded increases in country general store sales between 1942 and 1943. Percentage increases in sales between these two years for the various regions for which separate figures are compiled with percentage increases between 1941 and 1943 in brackets are as follows: Karitime Provinces, 18.1 per cent ( 35.2 per cent); quebec, 9.7 per cent ( 25.2 per cent); Ontario, 7.2 per cent ( 20.4 per cent); Manitoba, 11.6 per cent ( 30.0 per cent); Saskatchewan, 15.1 per cent ( 35.8 per cent); Alberta, 12.9 per cent ( 29.4 per cent); and British

Columbia, 9.2 per cent (19.3 per cent). Sales for all provinces combined averaged 27.4 per cent higher in 1943 than in 1941.

Cash income from the sale of farm products as recorded by the Agricultural Branch of the Bureau increused 253 per cent in 1943 over 1942, a large portion of this increase representing receipts from sales of the 1942 crop. The increase in cash income in Seskatchewan was particularly large at 59.3 per cent followed by increases of 34.5 per cent for hamitoba, 27.1 per cent for Alberta, 24.9 per cent for British Columbia, 22.7 per cent for the karitime provinces, 13.1 per cent for quebec and 9.8 per cent for ontario.

That the increase in country general store sales did not parallel that in casi income from the sale of farm products is to be expected. A large portion of the gain in farm revenue was used in making payments on mortages or other debts incurred in previous years. Bond purchases were an important factor. In addition it should be noted that the trade of country general stores is not restricted to the farm population. These stores also serve dwellers in small urban centres whose income fluctuated to a much smaller deeree than that indicated by the figures on cash receipts from the sale of farm products. Famers do not of course make all their retail purchases in country general stores. But in view of the scarcity of durable consumers goods existinfs in the period under review it is extremely unlikely that any substantial proportion of the gain in farm cash income would be expended in this direction.

## Coverage of Stores and Sales

The indexes of country general store sales are computed from returns roceived from a sample number of firms. Slifhtly over 900 stores are on the mailing list and these transacted some 19 per cant of the total business of all similar stores. The following table presents a comparison of the stores included in the sample and the totals for the trade as recorded in the results of the census of Merchandising and Service Establishments for 194.

Coverage of Stores and Sales, by Provinces, 1941

| Province | Stores | Sales | Stores |  | Sales |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  |  |  | Number | Per cent of total | Arount | Per cent of total |
|  |  | \$ |  |  | \% |  |
| Niaritimes | 1,566 | 26,775,600 | 150 | 9.6 | 6,745,543 | 25.2 |
| Quebec | 2,943 | 49,290,600 | 127 | 4.3 | 6,289,687 | 12.8 |
| Ontario........ | 2,350 | 44,274,600 | 209 | 8.9 | 9,267,946 | 20.9 |
| Manitoba | 1,000 | 16,997,900 | 67 | 6.7 | 2,558,895 | 15.1 |
| Saskatchewan | 1,929 | 32,689,600 | 153 | 79 | 5,649,530 | 17.3 |
| Alberta ......... | 1,377 | 27,217,100 | 146 | 10.6 | 7,417,691 | 27.3 |
| British Columbia. | 728 | 16,057,400 | 73 | 10.0 | 3,400,868 | 21.2 |
| CANADA (1) | 11,917 | 214,747,800 | 925 | 7.8 | 41,330,160 | 19.2 |

(1) Includes Yukon and the Northwest Territories

In view of the limited number of stores reporting in the liaritime Provinces, a combined index is constructed for that region. A separate index is computed for each of the other provinces.

In addition to the index numbers, the monthly reports contain a table showing the percentate chances in sales between the month under review and the corresponding month in the previous year. For this table several of the provinces have been subdivided into regions for each of which a separate ratio of sales is computed.

The province of Alberta is divided into a northern and southern region by a line passing slightly to the north of Wetaskiwin. Saskatchewar. is dmilarly divided by a line passing slightly to the south of Yorkton Ontario is divided into three districts. One district covers the northern part of the province including Parry Sound, Nipissing and all territory north of these regions. The sucond district covers the southwestern part of the province including the counties of York and Simeoe: The third district covers the remainan of the province and includes that portion lying east of the counties of York and Simcoe and south of Parry Sound and Nipissing. The province of quebec is divided into two regions, the St. Lawrence River forming the boundary in this case

## Adjustments for Seasonal. Variations

Conforming with the experience of most other kinds of retail trade, country general store sales are subjected to fairly well defined seasonal variations, sales for cortain months standing consistently higher or lower than the average for the year. These seasonal variations are due partially to climatic changes, partially to lone established buying habits and, especially in the case of country eneral stores, to the seasonal distribution of purchasing power.

Sales importance of different days of the week also varies. Other factors remaining constant, a month containing five Saturdays would normally have more business than a month with four. Information received from a sample number of firms regarding the percentage of the weekly business transacted on different days of the week indicates the following distribution:

| Percentace of Weekly Bus iness Transacted |  |
| :---: | :---: |
| on Different Days of the Heek |  |
| Monday | 15 |
| Tuesday | 14 |
| Wednesday | 13 |
| Thursday | 15 |
| Friday | 16 |
| Saturday | 27 |
| Total | 100 |

In order to obtain an index more indicative of the underlying trend in sales, index numbers have been computed in which adjustments have, been made to eliminate the effects of differences in the number of business days in different months, differences in sales importance of different days of the week and also for normal seasonal movements. Corrections for the first two factors were made on the basis of the information submitted by the sample number of firms to which reference was made above. Corrections for seasonal variations were made by means of correction factors based on the average experience of recent years. These seasonal correction factors represent the ratio that sales in each month normally bear to sales in an average month, the word "average" being used merely to designate one-twelfth of the annual turnover. These correction factors vary for the different provinces. They are shown on the following page

Country General Stores - Seasonal Correction Factors

| Month | Maritime <br> Provinces | Quebec | Ontario | Manitoba |  |  |  |
| :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Sanuary | 85 | 75 | 79 | 75 | 70 | 76 | 81 |
| February | 90 | 77 | 83 | 76 | 71 | 77 | 82 |
| Narch | 86 | 87 | 85 | 80 | 73 | 78 | 85 |
| April | 92 | 91 | 95 | 96 | 90 | 95 | 98 |
| May | 113 | 113 | 112 | 96 | 92 | 93 | 104 |
| June | 98 | 113 | 105 | 97 | 95 | 95 | 112 |
| July | 99 | 113 | 110 | 101 | 94 | 96 | 104 |
| August | 103 | 107 | 104 | 105 | 107 | 107 | 105 |
| September | 102 | 104 | 108 | 118 | 132 | 119 | 110 |
| October | 104 | 106 | 105 | 114 | 138 | 123 | 106 |
| November | 103 | 102 | 98 | 111 | 114 | 106 | 97 |
| December | 125 | 112 | 116 | 131 | 124 | 135 | 116 |

Differences in the seasonal pattern of country general store trading in the several provinces may be more readily observed by grouping the figures in the above table into four month totals. When this is done it is found that about 36 per cent of the annual business of country general stores located in the haritime provinces, Quebec, Ontario and British Columbia is transacted in the last four months of the year. Reflecting the less uniform seasonal distribution of farm income in the Prairie Provinces, the corresponding ratios for these provinces are higher, standing at 40 per cent for Kanitoba and Alberta and at 42 per cent for Saskatchewan. The proportions of the total annual business transacted in the first eight months of the year in the Prairie Provinces are of course correspondingly lower.

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Chart 6



## General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Average, $1935-1939=100$ )

Annual veraper, 1937 - 1943. Canada


| Month | Indexes of Monthly Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seusonal Variations | Indexes of Nonthly Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations | Indexes of Montbly Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |

1938
1939
1940

| January | 78.2 | 106.0 | 73.1 | 99.5 | 81.7 | 107.9 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| February | 77.7 | 107.0 | 70.8 | 97.6 | "9.7 | 105.7 |
| March | 90.0 | 106.3 | 82.8 | 97.1 | 89.6 | 105.7 |
| April | 102.3 | 106.8 | 89.4 | 97.0 | 95.7 | 103.5 |
| Nay | 111.0 | 105.6 | 108.0 | 39.6 | 116.5 | 106.8 |
| June | 110.9 | 107.1 | 102.4 | 98.0 | 110.2 | 106.9 |
| July | 111.1 | 104.4 | 104.9 | 39.0 | 111.2 | 104.7 |
| August | 110.1 | 101.8 | 107.7 | 99.7 | 118.4 | 105.5 |
| September | 112.1 | 100.2 | 126.1 | 103.0 | 111.0 | 103.6 |
| october | 114.6 | 99.9 | 119.2 | 106.7 | 122.2 | 107.0 |
| November | 102.2 | 99.3 | 100.6 | 97.5 | 116.1 | 108.6 |
| December | 118.3 | 97.7 | 123.5 | 105.6 | 128.3 | 113.3 |

1941
1942
1943

| January | 83.9 | 108.3 | 101.2 | 127.4 | 109.7 | 143.4 |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| February | 82.1 | 210.8 | 95.1 | 128.5 | 110.2 | 143.1 |
| sarch | 95.0 | 111.8 | 108.? | 131.9 | 123.7 | 145.4 |
| April | 108.2 | 117.0 | 124.1 | 133.7 | 141.2 | 151.0 |
| day | 126.9 | 112.7 | 143.5 | 131.8 | 162,8 | 150.4 |
| June | 115.8 | 116.1 | 133.1 | 129.2 | 153.9 | 150.6 |
| July | 125.9 | 117.6 | 141.2 | 130.9 | 164.0 | 153.1 |
| August | 131.6 | 121.0 | 146.6 | 135.3 | 157.2 | 149.5 |
| September | 124.1 | 115.9 | 140.6 | 130.9 | 149.5 | 139.1 |
| October | 132.0 | 117.9 | 155.0 | 133.4 | 183.5 | 146.1 |
| Irovember | 121.7 | 118.4 | 139.0 | 138.5 | 156.1 | 150.8 |
| December | 147.4 | 123.4 | 166.3 | 133.4 | 184.5 | 157.0 |

## General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (nverace, $1930-1309=100$ )

Annual Averages, 1937 - 1943, Naritime Provinces

| Month | 1937 <br> 1338 <br> 1933 <br> 1940$\ldots \ldots$. |  107.5 <br> $\ldots .$. 101.2 <br> $\ldots .$. 98.6 <br> $\ldots .$. 106.2 | $\begin{aligned} & 1941 \\ & 1942 \\ & 1943 \end{aligned}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & \therefore 115.3 \\ & \therefore \quad 132.0 \\ & \therefore 155.9 \end{aligned}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Horithly <br> Indexes of <br> lionthly <br> Sales | Indexes, 193 <br> Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations | $\begin{gathered} -1943 \\ \text { Indexes } \\ \text { of } \\ \text { Monthly } \\ \text { Sales } \end{gathered}$ | Haritime Provinces |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations | Indexes of lionthly Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations |
|  | 1938 |  | 1939 |  | 1940 |  |
| January | .. 83.9 | 107.0 | 80.5 | 96.2 | 92.0 | 106.6 |
| February | . 87.2 | 109.0 | 76.7 | 95.9 | 92.2 | 111.0 |
| March. | . 90.7 | 105.1 | 83.6 | 96.2 | 93.5 | 108.0 |
| April | . 98.6 | 103.9 | 88.0 | 96.4 | 95.0 | 103.7 |
| May. | .... 123.8 | 106.2 | 117.5 | 97.8 | 123.6 | 102.1 |
| June | .... 104.1 | 102.5 | 100.1 | 37.7 | 104.8 | 103.5 |
| July | . 103.4 | 99.3 | 97.8 | 94.4 | 103.5 | 99.8 |
| August | .. 108.5 | 100.8 | 102.4 | 100.7 | 112.6 | 106.7 |
| September | ... 98.7 | 98,9 | 108.0 | 105.2 | 102.4 | 106.9 |
| October | .... 102.0 | 96.1 | 100.6 | $9 ? .8$ | 114.7 | 108.0 |
| Novernber | . . 97.5 | 94.5 | 103.5 | 99.9 | 117.3 | 109.4 |
| December | $\ldots . .116 .0$ | 95.3 | 124.1 | 105.6 | 130.3 | 114.4 |
|  | 1941 |  | 1942 |  | 1943 |  |
| January ........... | ...... 89.2 | 104.5 | 104.7 | 119.5 | 122.9 | 145.8 |
| February . | .... 95.0 | 113.4 | 105.4 | 125.9 | 124.6 | 148.8 |
| March .... | . .... 98.1 | 111.0 | 108.8 | 127.0 | 136.2 | 154.3 |
| April. | .... 103.6 | 113.5 | 118.9 | 129.8 | 143.5 | 155.3 |
| bay ... | .... 133.4 | 110.7 | 152.7 | 131.1 | 180.6 | 155.7 |
| June | ..... 108.2 | 114.4 | 128.1 | 131.2 | 154.7 | 159.1 |
| July | ..... 120.1 | 118.2 | 133.6 | 130.4 | 165.9 | 162.5 |
| August | .... 126.1 | 118.7 | 145.8 | 137.9 | 159.7 | 155.6 |
| September | .... 117.0 | 119.3 | 131.2 | 133.7 | 152.6 | 155.0 |
| october.. | .... 124.8 | 120.0 | 144.4 | 134.7 | 161.0 | 155.4 |
| November. <br> December | .... 121.5 | 118.9 | 138.5 | 139.3 | 166.3 | 162.1 |
|  | .... 146.5 | 118.2 | 172.3 | 139.5 | 202.8 | 166.8 |

Ceneral Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Averuge, 1935 - 1939 - 100 )

|  | $\begin{aligned} & 1937 \\ & 1938 \\ & 1939 \\ & 1940 \end{aligned} \ldots .$ | $\begin{array}{cc}  & \ldots . \\ \ldots & 107.4 \\ \ldots . & 106.5 \\ \ldots . & 103.2 \\ \ldots . & 111.6 \end{array}$ |  | $\begin{aligned} & 941 \quad . . . . . . \\ & 942 \\ & 343 \end{aligned} \ldots .$ | $\begin{array}{cc} \ldots & 127.1 \\ \ldots & 145.0 \\ \ldots . & 153.1 \end{array}$ |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Month | Eonthly Indexes, 1908 - 1943 , quever |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Indexes of <br> lionthly Sules | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations | Indexes or Nontrily Salos | Inderes Corrected for Suasonal Variations | Indexes of <br> Monthly Sules | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations |
|  | 1938 |  | 1939 |  | 1940 |  |
| January | . 79.5 | 109.9 | 73.7 | 102.1 | 84.0 | 112.9 |
| $F \in$ bruary | -78.2 | 109.2 | 72.7 | 101.6 | 79.0 | 106.2 |
| Lasch | . 99.5 | 111.4 | 91.0 | 101.0 | 94.2 | 105.1 |
| April | . 104.9 | 111.9 | 88.6 | 98.1 | 95.5 | 105.4 |
| Nay | .... 124.3 | 110.4 | 122.2 | 105.3 | 132.9 | 113.6 |
| June | .... 125.8 | 111.8 | 114.5 | 100.9 | 125.0 | 111.5 |
| July | -124.5 | 106.9 | 120.6 | 104.0 | 129.2 | 111.3 |
| August | ... 113.1 | 103.0 | 108.0 | 98.3 | 121.5 | 106.5 |
| September | .... 101.9 | 101.2 | 111.5 | 107.6 | 104.0 | 107.5 |
| October | . . 110.3 | 104.9 | 114.2 | 112.1 | 124.7 | 118.6 |
| November | . 100.1 | 98.9 | 99.5 | 97.9 | 115.9 | 110.2 |
|  | . 116.1 | 100.5 | 121.5 | 108.9 | 132.2 | 122.3 |
|  | 1941 |  | 1942 |  | 1943 |  |
| January | .... 88.1 | 116.9 | 104.1 | 134.7 | 110.8 | 148.9 |
| February | .... 84.9 | 118.6 | 99.1 | 138.3 | 112.0 | 156.4 |
| March | .... 104.4 | 116.9 | 123.2 | 142,2 | 138.4 | 154.9 |
| April | ... 117.9 | 130.5 | 139.2 | 153.6 | 149.9 | 161.1 |
| Nay ........ | ..... 148,2 | 123.0 | 172.9 | 148.4 | 189.7 | 163.5 |
| June . . . . . . | ...... 134.4 | 123.2 | 160.5 | 142.6 | 177.7 | 158.5 |
| July | . . . 149.0 | 128.4 | 169.1 | 144.6 | 186.9 | 160.4 |
| August | ... 144.2 | 130.7 | 162.7 | 148.1 | 173.9 | 163.2 |
| jeptember .. | ..... 125.9 | 125.9 | 139.0 | 139.0 | 149.0 | 148.5 |
| October .... | .... 144.8 | 136.6 | 160.3140.1 | 146.7 | 175.7 | 166.4 |
| November | ... 123.0 | 121.6 |  | 142.3 | 160.6184.2 | 158.0169.1 |
| December | . .. 160.5 | 144.5 | 169.8 | 153.4 |  |  |

## General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Average, $1935-1339=100$ )

## Annual Averages, 1937 - 1943, Ontario



## General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Average, $1935-1939-100$ )

## Annual Avoragos, 1937 - 1943 , Lanitoba



General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Average, $1935-1939$ - 100)

Annual Averages, 1937 - 1943, Saskatchewan


General Iudex of Country General Store Sales in Canada (Average, $1935-1939=100$ )

Annual Averages, 1937 - 1943, Alberta

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| lionth | acathly Iadexes, 1938-2943, Alberta |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Indexes of <br> Montily Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal Variations | Indexes of konthly Sales | Indexes Corrected for Seasonal. Variations | Indexes of Monthly Sales | Inderas Corrected for Seasonal Variations |
|  | 1938 |  | 1939 |  | 1940 |  |
| January | 74.9 | 104.9 | 70.0 | 98.4 | 78.6 | 107.0 |
| February | 71.2 | 104.8 | 65.2 | 96.0 | 75.8 | 107.5 |
| Harch | 83.1 | 102.4 | 77.1 | 94.3 | 86.9 | 106.7 |
| April | 103.3 | 104.4 | 93.8 | 98.5 | 93.6 | 97.9 |
| May | 93.6 | 103.3 | 92.1 | 98.6 | 105.8 | 112.3 |
| June. | 100.7 | 106.4 | 93.8 | 98.3 | 104.8 | 111.2 |
| July . | 97.4 | 102.7 | 93.7 | 99.2 | 101.0 | 107.0 |
| August | 111.5 | 102.5 | 112.2 | 103.1 | 122.2 | 108.1 |
| Soptember | 127.7 | 103.0 | 1415 | 111.0 | 121.1 | 101.7 |
| October . | 137.5 | 106.6 | 13\%.9 | 106.3 | 137.3 | 106.5 |
| November. | 108.2 | 100.1 | 104.3 | 96.1 | 124.0 | 110.4 |
| December | 128.1 | 97.9 | 136.0 | 107.5 | 138.2 | 112.8 |
|  | 1941 |  | 1942 |  | 1943 |  |
| January | 82.7 | 108. 4 | 101.8 | 129.9 | 108.9 | 144.5 |
| February | 78.2 | 109.2 | 91.5 | 127.8 | 112.5 | 157.0 |
| barch | 89.1 | 111.3 | 102.0 | 131.3 | 113.6 | 141.8 |
| April .... | 110.0 | 1167 | 121.8 | 128.7 | 145.3 | 152.3 |
| Way .... | - 111.6 | 112.6 | 126.6 | 132.0 | 145.7 | 152.6 |
| June . | - 108,7 | 118.5 | 122.2 | 129.2 | 143.3 | 152.0 |
| July ... | -114.4 | 116.0 | 130.4 | 131.3 | 157.4 | 159.1 |
| August | . 130,0 | 117.9 | 147.4 | 134.2 | 154.2 | 144.7 |
| September . | - 129.6 | 113.3 | 150.3 | 131.3 | 156.9 | 136.6 |
| october .. | - 133.7 | 108.7 | 171.5 | 135.3 | 180.8 | 147.6 |
| November . . | - 124.9 | 118.8 | 144.9 | 141.6 | 153.3 | 145.2 |
| December | 160.5 | 119.3 | 182.2 | 136.6 | 203.5 | 155.0 |

## General Index of Country General Store Sales in Canada <br> (Average, $1935-1939=100$ )

Annual Averages, 1937 - 1943, British Columbia


