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1



CHAIN STORE SALES AND STOCKS
MARCH, 1951

Sales in each of the six trades covered in this bulletin were higher in March 1951 than sales volumes recorded in March 1950. Outstanding increases of 34% for variety chain stores, and 33% for both chain food and shoe stores were reported. Hardware store sales were up 29%, while women's clothing chains had a 23% gain in sales volume. Chain drug stores reported a moderate increase of 6% over sales a year ago. It should be taken into account that Easter buying occurred in March this year, but was spread over March and April in 1950.

Stocks of five of the six trades were higher on March 1, 1951 compared with the same date a year ago. Chain hardware inventories were 31% above those held on March 1, 1950. A substantial increase of 28% was shown by food chains. Variety store stocks were up 15% and women's clothing store stocks, 14% above year-ago levels. A 4% increase in stocks was recorded for chain drug stores. Shoe store inventories were 3% lower on March 1, 1951 than inventory values of a year ago. Stocks are reported at selling value.

Prepared in Merchandising and Services Section

Table 1 - Sales and Stocks, for Six Trades, March 1951

Trade	March 1950		March 1951		% Change, March 1951/1950	
	Sales	Stocks	Sales	Stocks	Sales	Stocks
	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	\$000's	%	%
Food Stores	41,853	31,136	55,707	39,734	+ 33.1	+ 27.6
Women's Clothing Stores	2,457	6,961	3,020	7,954	+ 22.9	+ 14.3
Shoe Stores	2,014	15,678	2,686	15,243	+ 33.4	- 2.3
Hardware Stores	634	4,038	817	5,295	+ 28.3	+ 31.1
Drug Stores	2,333	7,740	2,466	8,015	+ 5.7	+ 3.6
Variety Stores	9,421	33,287	12,624	38,186	+ 34.0	+ 14.7

Table 2 - Sales/Stocks Relationships, March 1951

Trade	Stocks/Sales Ratio		Stock Turnover Rate
	March 1950	March 1951	March 1951
Food Stores	0.7	0.7	13.5
Women's Clothing Stores .	2.3	2.6	4.7
Shoe Stores	7.3	5.7	2.2
Hardware Stores	6.4	6.5	2.4
Drug Stores	3.3	3.3	3.5
Variety Stores	3.5	3.0	4.0

Stock/Sales Ratios - are obtained by dividing stocks at selling value as at the beginning of the month by sales made during the month.

Stock Turnover Rates - are obtained by dividing sales in the 12 months ending with the report month by stocks at selling value at the beginning of the report month.

Table 3 - Number of Stores Operated by Sample Firms

Trade	Number of Stores	
	March 1950	March 1951
Food Stores	771	765
Women's Clothing Stores .	271	277
Shoe Stores	467	469
Hardware Stores	37	37
Drug Stores	249	244
Variety Stores	496	511

The number of stores relates to the sample of chain companies used to determine trends. They constitute 85%, by volume, of the total chain store sales in each of the six different trades.