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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, DECEMBER, 1939

Introduction

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 new 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. This report is the third of the series, the first being that for October, 1939.

Wholesale Trade

Sales

Sales of 44 wholesale houses in the grocery trade averaged 5 per cent higher in December, 1939 over December, 1938 but receded 6 per cent below November, unadjusted indexes on the base 1930 equals 100 standing at 103.2 for December, 1939, 109.5 for November, 1939 and 98.8 for December, 1938. The 5 per cent increase over December of the previous year compares with the 3 per cent increase recorded in the November corresponding-month comparison and with margins of 18 and 43 per cent which characterized comparisons of October and September sales with those of corresponding months of 1938.

Indexes of Sales, 1930 = 100

	1939			1938 December
	December	November	October	
Unadjusted index	103.2	109.5	126.7	98.8
Seasonally adjusted index	109.0	105.6	110.7	104.3

Results for December varied for different regions of the country, the 5 per cent increase for the Dominion as a whole being the net resultant of increased sales in the Maritimes, Prairies and British Columbia, and practically unchanged sales in Quebec and Ontario. Sales in the Maritime Provinces and British Columbia were up by 6 per cent and the Prairie Provinces, 9 per cent.

Percentage Change in Wholesale Sales, by Provinces

	December Dollar Sales Per cent change from		Calendar year 1939 1938	Number of Firms Reporting
	December 1938	November 1939		
Canada	+ 4.5	- 5.8	+ 7.5	44
Maritimes	+ 6.1	- 5.0	+ 8.1	7
Quebec	- 0.1	- 25.2	+ 5.7	12
Ontario	+ 0.8	+ 3.3	+ 6.2	10
Prairies	+ 8.7	- 7.7	+ 8.6	9
British Columbia	+ 6.3	+ 5.4	+ 8.9	6

Stocks

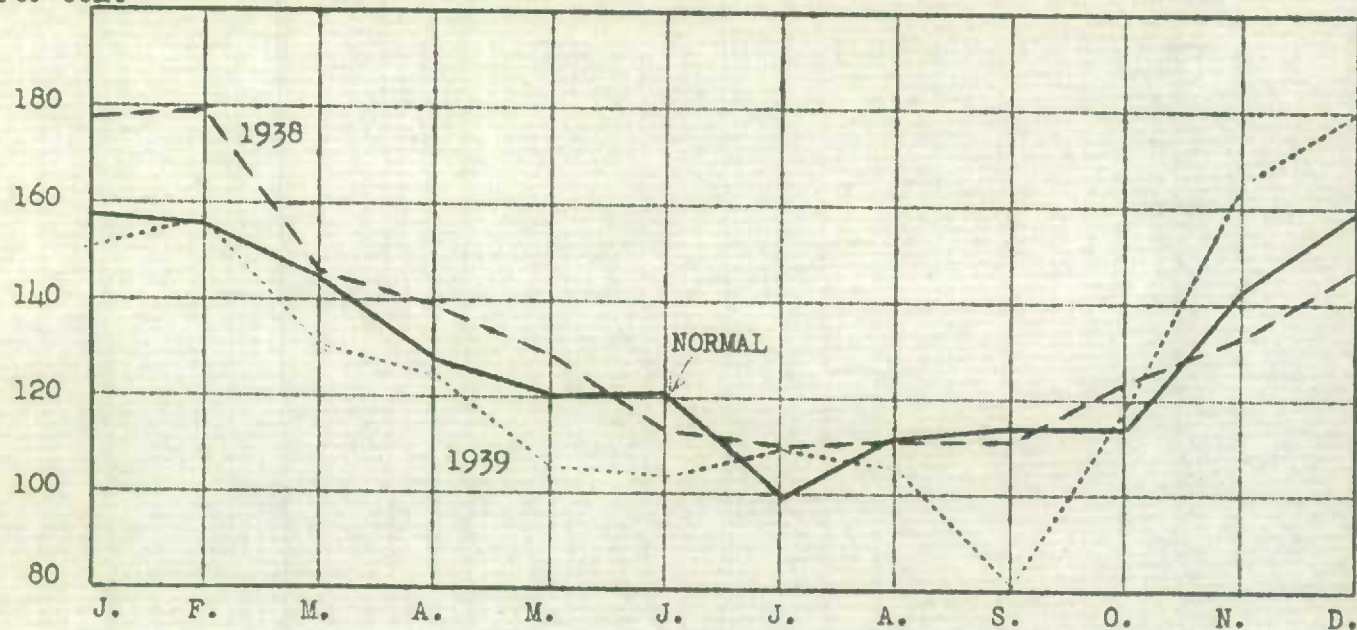
Wholesalers' inventories were valued 38 per cent higher at the end of December, 1939 than 1938 and were down 7 per cent from November 30, 1939. Stocks on hand at any period are unduly high or low only when considered in relation to sales in the immediately ensuing period. Stocks on hand at the beginning of December normally amount to approximately 160 per cent of December sales. The corresponding ratio for December, 1939 was 180 per cent indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were considerably in excess of the normal inventory position for that time of year.

Wholesale Grocery Trade:- Percentage that Stocks on Hand

at Beginning of Month bear to Sales during Month

(Normal = Average for 1935, 1936)

Per cent



Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 1,181 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 17 per cent higher in December, 1939, than the sales of 1,395 units operated by the same 27 firms in the corresponding month of 1938. Increases were greater in the West than in the East. Chain sales in the province of Quebec were up 10 per cent; Ontario, 12 per cent; Prairie Provinces, 46 per cent and British Columbia, 58 per cent.

Results on an average daily sales basis differ but little from those based on calendar month totals. Average daily sales for grocery and meat chains were 21 per cent higher in December, 1939 than in December, 1938.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for December, 1938 and 1939

27 Chain Companies

	December, 1938		December, 1939		Per cent change in sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
Canada	1,395	9,020,350	1,181	10,593,498	+ 17.4
Quebec	297	1,997,547	236	2,202,126	+ 10.2
Ontario	807	5,582,556	690	6,222,340	+ 11.5
Prairie Provinces	164	851,628	150	1,241,241	+ 45.7
British Columbia	127	588,619	105	927,791	+ 57.6

Independent Stores

Dollar sales for 1,108 independent grocery and combination stores were unchanged in December, 1939 compared with December, 1938, gains of 3 per cent in the Maritime Provinces and Saskatchewan being offset by declines of 1 per cent and 4 per cent in Ontario and British Columbia. Results for other regions showed practically no change.

Comparison of Sales Reported for December, 1938 and 1939

Region	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
Maritimes	155	89	+ 3.2
Quebec	243	129	+ 0.7
Ontario	425	181	- 1.4
Manitoba	78	37	+ 0.7
Saskatchewan	42	24	+ 3.3
Alberta	73	36	+ 1.2
British Columbia	92	29	- 4.4
Canada	1,108	525	- 0.2



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THE following table shows the number of persons who were employed in the manufacturing industries of Canada in 1954, by province and territory, and by sex. The figures are in thousands of persons.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1955, "Employment in Manufacturing Industries, 1954", Table 1.

Table 1. Employment in Manufacturing Industries, 1954, by Province and Territory, and by Sex.

(In thousands of persons)

Province and Territory	Male	Female	Total
Alberta	10.2	1.8	12.0
Saskatchewan	12.5	2.5	15.0
Manitoba	15.0	3.0	18.0
Ontario	45.0	10.0	55.0
Quebec	35.0	8.0	43.0
Atlantic Provinces	10.0	2.0	12.0
Nunavut	0.5	0.5	1.0
Canada	128.2	38.1	166.3

The figures in this table are based on the 1954 Census of Manufacturing Industries. The figures for the Atlantic Provinces are based on the 1954 Census of Manufacturing Industries for the Province of New Brunswick, the Province of Nova Scotia, and the Province of Prince Edward Island.

Table 2. Employment in Manufacturing Industries, 1954, by Province and Territory, and by Sex.

Province and Territory	Male	Female	Total
Alberta	10.2	1.8	12.0
Saskatchewan	12.5	2.5	15.0
Manitoba	15.0	3.0	18.0
Ontario	45.0	10.0	55.0
Quebec	35.0	8.0	43.0
Atlantic Provinces	10.0	2.0	12.0
Nunavut	0.5	0.5	1.0
Canada	128.2	38.1	166.3