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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, NOVEMBER, 1940

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 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

Sales of 75 wholesale houses in the grocery trade averaged 15 per cent higher in November, 1940 than in November 1939 but were 10 per cent below the level of October 1940, unadjusted indexes on the base 1930 equals, as standing at 125.4 for November, 1940, 139.9 for October, 1940 and 109.5 for November, 1939. The 15 per cent increase over November, 1939 compares with a gain of 10 per cent in the October corresponding month comparison and with a decline of 27 per cent in September. In August and July sales were unchanged from the corresponding months of 1939. Sales for 1940 to date average 6 per cent higher than for the eleven-month period January - November, 1939.

All sections of the country shared in the increase over November a year ago, results for the various economic divisions showing increases of 22 per cent in the Maritimes, 18 per cent in Ontario, 13 per cent in Quebec and 11 per cent in British Columbia and in the Prairie Provinces.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		November 1939	November 1940	November, 1940 over -		Year to date 1940 1939
				November 1939	October 1940	
CANADA	75	\$ 13,760	\$ 15,762	+ 14.5	- 10.4	+ 6.1
Maritimes	15	1,475	1,806	+ 22.4	- 6.9	+ 12.2
Quebec	21	2,488	2,817	+ 13.2	- 12.0	+ 8.2
Ontario	21	3,890	4,600	+ 18.2	- 10.3	+ 5.8
Prairies	12	4,276	4,725	+ 10.5	- 8.9	+ 3.8
British Columbia..	6	1,631	1,814	+ 11.2	- 13.2	+ 4.6

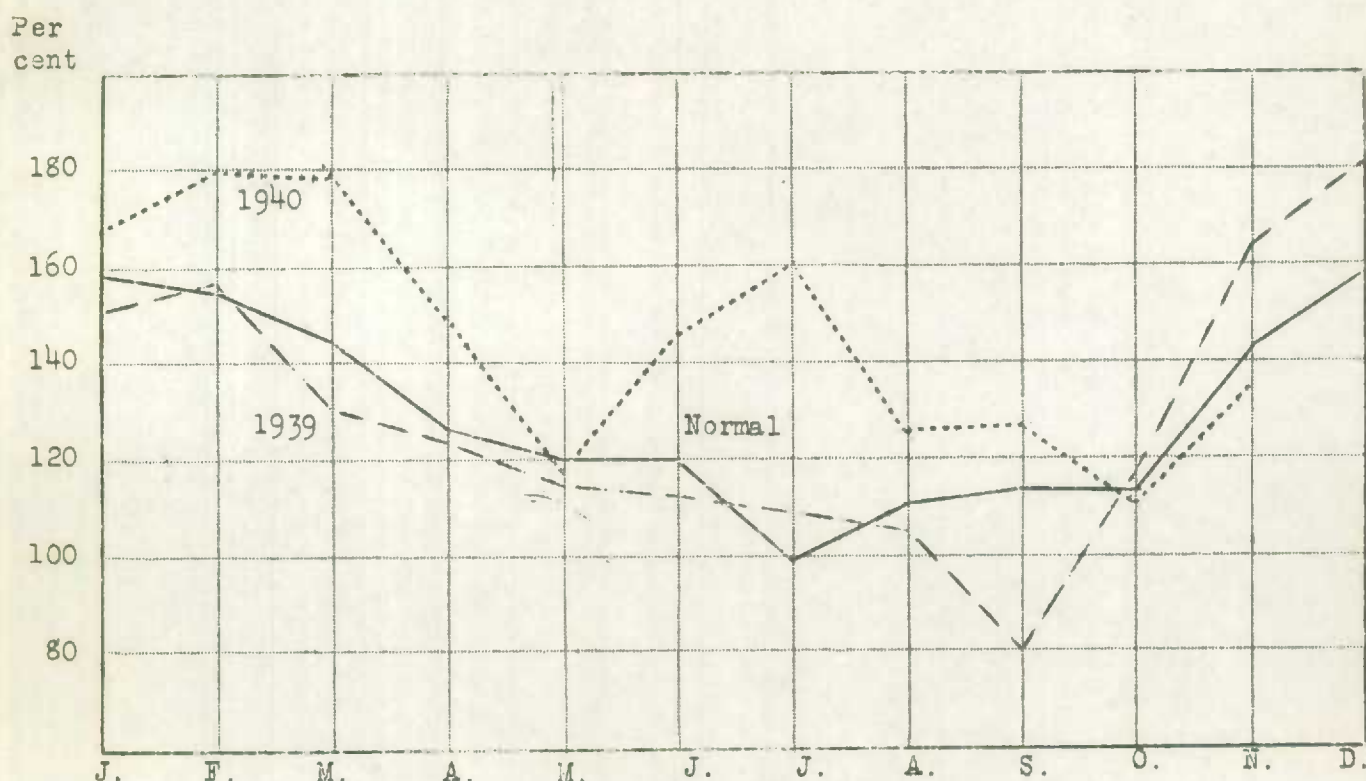
Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were 4 per cent lower at the end of November than on the corresponding date of 1939, but were 7 per cent higher than at the end of October, 1940. Stocks on hand at any period must be considered in relation to sales in the immediately following period. Stocks on hand at the beginning of November normally amount to approximately 143 per cent of the November turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of October formed 136 per cent of the November sales, indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were slightly lower than 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)



Retail TradeChain Stores

Sales of 1,089 chain store units operated by 30 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 26 per cent higher in November, 1940 than sales of 1,223 units operated by the same 30 firms in the corresponding month of 1939. Chain sales in the province of British Columbia were up 30 per cent; Ontario, 28 per cent; Quebec, 22 per cent and the Prairie Provinces, 18 per cent. Average daily sales for grocery and meat chains were 17 per cent higher in November, 1940 than in November, 1939.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for November, 1939 and 194030 Chain Companies

	November, 1939		November, 1940		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA	1,223	9,147,466	1,089	11,479,525	+ 25.5
Quebec	243	1,910,928	209	2,329,101	+ 21.9
Ontario	650	5,131,946	589	6,564,895	+ 27.9
Prairie Provinces ..	213	1,257,217	188	1,488,319	+ 18.4
British Columbia ...	117	847,375	103	1,097,210	+ 29.5

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 999 independent grocery and combination stores were 14 per cent higher in November, 1940 than in November, 1939. Results on a geographical basis indicate sales increases in every section of the country ranging from a gain of 19 per cent in the Maritimes to one of 8 per cent in Manitoba. British Columbia and Ontario were the same with a gain of 15 per cent, while Quebec and Saskatchewan each reported an increase of 13 per cent. Alberta sales showed a gain of 11 per cent in November, 1940 over the same month in 1939.

Comparison of Sales Reported for November, 1939 and 1940

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
Maritimes	148	130	+ 19.2
Quebec	212	178	+ 12.6
Ontario	392	341	+ 14.6
Manitoba	72	54	+ 8.3
Saskatchewan	36	28	+ 12.5
Alberta	63	48	+ 10.5
British Columbia	76	63	+ 15.1
CANADA	999	842	+ 14.1

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