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DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND COMMERCE  
DOMINION BUREAU OF STATISTICS  
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OTTAWA, CANADA

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Vol. 3 - No. 1

Year's Subscription, \$1.00  
Single copies, 10CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, JANUARY, 1941Introduction

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 71 of the larger wholesale grocery firms in Canada averaged 2 per cent higher in January, 1941 than in January, 1940 but were 11 per cent below the level of December, 1940, unadjusted indexes on the base, average for 1935 - 1939 equals 100, standing at 106.2 for January, 1941, 119.0 for December, 1940 and 104.6 for January, 1940. Sales in January, 1940 were 28 per cent higher than in the corresponding month of 1939 so that sales in January, 1941, while only 2 per cent higher than sales in January, 1940, were actually 30 per cent above the level recorded in January two years ago. Gains of 17, 15 and 10 per cent were registered in the corresponding-month comparisons for December, November and October, 1940 over the same months in 1939.

Results on a regional basis indicate decreased sales in Quebec, slightly increased sales in the Maritimes, the Prairies and Ontario and substantially increased sales in British Columbia. Percentage changes for economic regions are as follows: British Columbia up 10 per cent; Ontario up 3 per cent; the Maritimes and the Prairies up 2 per cent; and Quebec down 4 per cent.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change	
		January 1940	January 1941	January, 1941 over -	
				January 1940	December 1940
		\$	\$		
CANADA .....	71	12,993	13,285	+ 1.5	- 10.7
Maritimes .....	14	1,434	1,460	+ 1.8	- 9.9
Quebec .....	21	1,974	1,903	- 3.6	- 19.7
Ontario .....	20	3,943	4,053	+ 2.8	- 12.3
Prairies .....	11	3,962	4,025	+ 1.6	- 6.4
British Columbia .....	5	1,680	1,844	+ 9.7	- 8.2

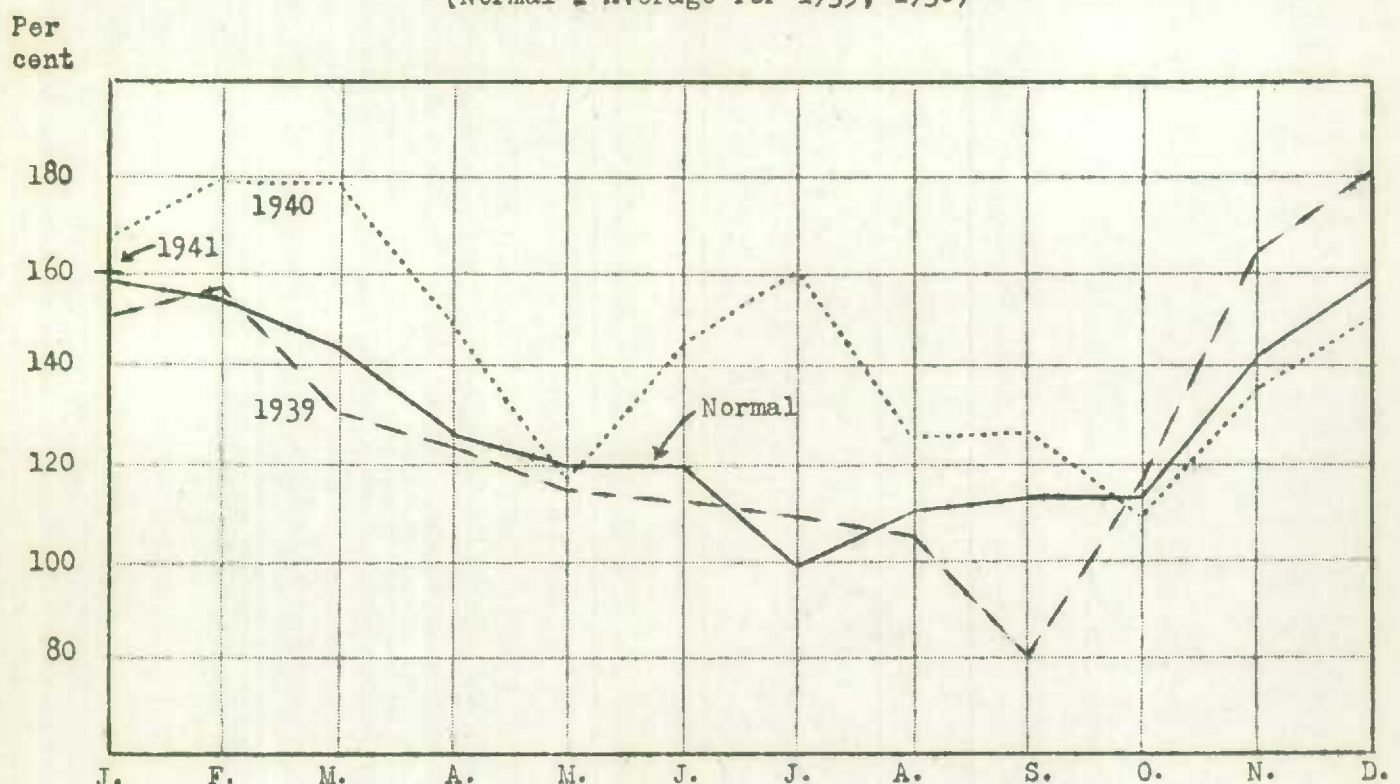
Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were 2 per cent lower at the end of January than on the corresponding date of 1940, but were 3 per cent higher than at the end of December, 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 January normally amount to 158 per cent of the January turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of December formed 160 per cent of the January sales, indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were almost at 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 Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 1,011 chain store units operated by 25 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 24 per cent higher in January, 1941 than sales of 1,129 units operated by the same 25 firms in January a year ago. The reduction in Number of stores operated resulted in an even greater increase in average sales per store which rose by 39 per cent from \$7,704 in January, 1940 to \$10,703 for January, 1941. Increases in aggregate sales ranged from 18 per cent in Quebec to 30 per cent in British Columbia while increases in average sales per store ranged from 35 per cent in Quebec to 48 per cent in the Prairie Provinces. Average daily sales for food chains were 22 per cent higher in January of this year than last.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for January, 1940 and 1941

25 Chain Companies

	January, 1940		January, 1941		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA .....	1,129	8,697,342	1,011	10,820,706	+ 24.4
Quebec .....	240	1,917,660	209	2,256,034	+ 17.6
Ontario .....	634	5,011,332	585	6,355,771	+ 26.8
Prairie Provinces ....	140	940,151	114	1,129,670	+ 20.2
British Columbia .....	115	828,199	103	1,079,231	+ 30.3

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 1,035 independent grocery and combination stores were 7 per cent higher in January, 1941 than in January, 1940. Results on a geographical basis indicate sales increases in every section of the country ranging from an increase of 13 per cent in the Maritimes to one of 3 per cent in Alberta. Quebec and Ontario showed a gain of 7 per cent and British Columbia one of 6 per cent. Manitoba and Saskatchewan were the same with an increase of 5 per cent in January, 1941 over January, 1940.

Sales per store for the 1,035 independent stores reporting averaged \$3,653 for the month of January, 1941 or 34 per cent of the average chain unit figure. The average per store was highest in Quebec at \$4,469 and was lowest in Alberta at \$2,443. Average turnover figures for January for other provinces were as follows: Maritime Provinces, \$2,976; Ontario, \$3,558; Manitoba, \$2,747; Saskatchewan, \$2,984 and British Columbia, \$3,770.

Comparison of Sales Reported for January, 1940 and 1941

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
Maritimes .....	148	118	+ 12.9
Quebec .....	224	169	+ 7.4
Ontario .....	406	281	+ 6.8
Manitoba .....	69	43	+ 5.2
Saskatchewan .....	40	21	+ 5.0
Alberta .....	68	44	+ 3.0
British Columbia ...	80	55	+ 6.0
CANADA .....	1,035	731	+ 7.4

