

Published by Authority of the HON. JAMES A. MacKINNON, M.P.
Minister of Trade and Commerce

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

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Vol. 3 - No. 2

Year's Subscription, \$1.00
Single copies, .10

CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, FEBRUARY, 1941

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 of the larger wholesale grocery firms in Canada averaged 10 per cent higher in February, 1941 than in February, 1940 but were slightly below the level of January, 1940, unadjusted indexes on the base, average for 1935-1939 = 100 standing at 105.9 for February, 1941, 106.7 for January, 1941 and 96.7 for February, 1940. Since February sales in the wholesale grocery trade are normally 2 per cent below the level of January, the slight decrease registered in February, 1941 from the previous month, is in accord with the usual seasonal movement for that time of year. In the corresponding-month comparisons for January, December and November gains of 2, 17 and 15 per cent were registered over the same months of the previous year.

Results on a regional basis indicate that the 10 per cent increase in February for Canada as a whole was the result of widely varied trends in the different sections of the country. Sales in the Maritimes were up 25 per cent over February a year ago; sales in British Columbia were up 21 per cent; sales in both Ontario and Quebec were up 10 per cent; while the Prairies showed a decrease of 1 per cent from February, 1940.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		February 1940	February 1941	February, 1941 over -		Year to date <u>1941</u> <u>1940</u>
				February 1940	January 1941	
CANADA	75	12,228	13,390	+ 9.5	- 0.8	+ 5.6
Maritimes	16	1,314	1,643	+ 25.1	+ 2.8	+ 12.6
Quebec	21	1,736	1,903	+ 9.6	+ 8.0	+ 2.7
Ontario	21	3,738	4,110	+ 10.0	- 2.2	+ 5.8
Prairies	11	3,901	3,878	- 0.6	- 2.0	+ 0.6
British Columbia ...	6	1,539	1,856	+ 20.6	- 3.2	+ 14.8

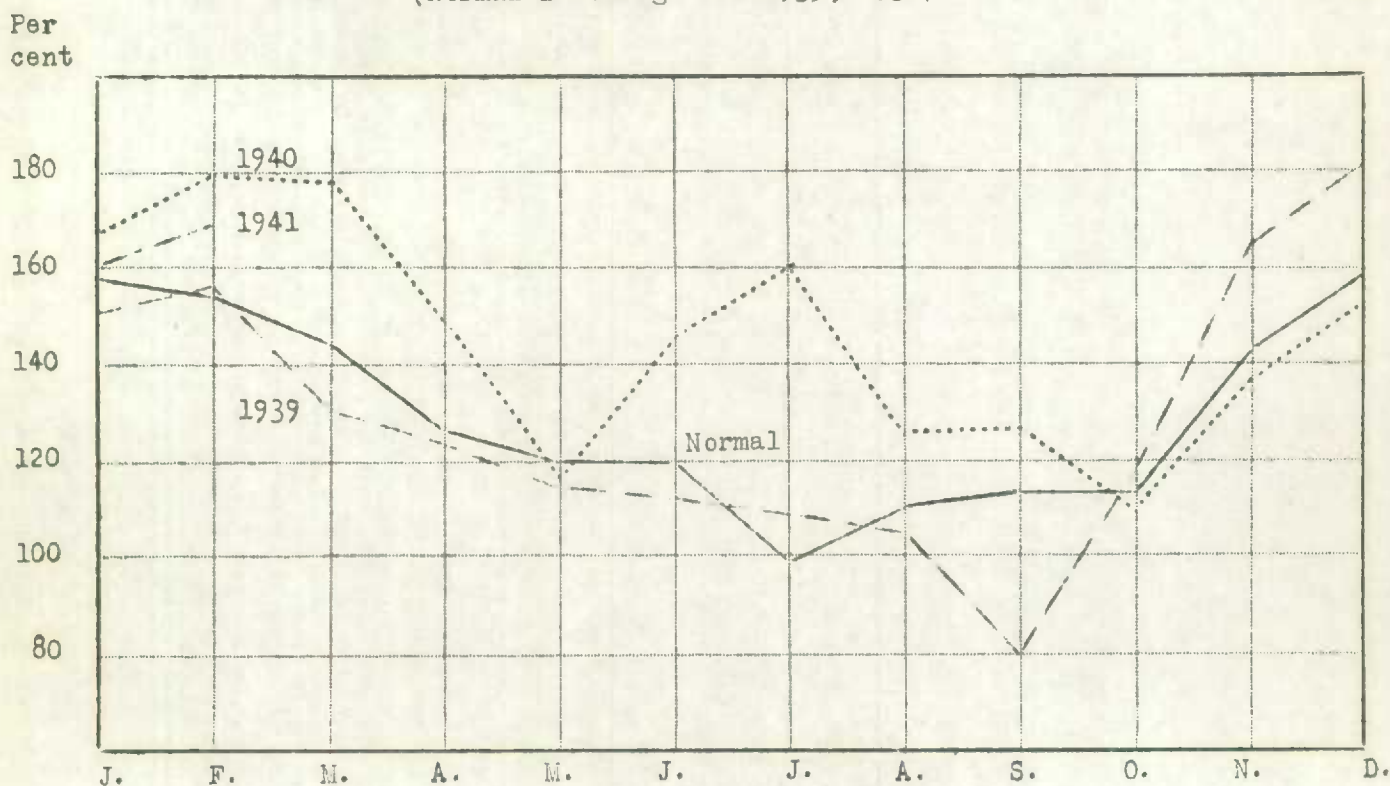
Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were almost unchanged at the end of February from the corresponding date of 1940 and showed only a slight decrease from inventories at the end of January, 1941. 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 February normally amount to approximately 155 per cent of the February turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of January formed 168 per cent of the February sales, indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were higher 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 Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 1,115 chain store units operated by 28 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 14 per cent higher in February, 1941 than sales of 1,223 units operated by the same 28 firms in February a year ago. Average sales per store were \$9,499 in February of this year, 25 per cent greater than the \$7,584 average in the same month of 1940. A considerable reduction in the number of stores operated by the reporting chain companies is responsible, to some extent, for the increased sales volume per store.

Increases in various regions of the country were as follows: 20 per cent in British Columbia; 16 per cent in Ontario; 11 per cent in Quebec and 6 per cent in the Prairie Provinces. Average daily sales for food chains increased 18 per cent in February this year over last.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for February, 1940 and 1941

28 Chain Companies

	February, 1940		February, 1941		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales \$	No. Stores	Sales \$	
CANADA	1,223	9,274,784	1,115	10,591,727	+ 14.2
Quebec	228	1,952,668	205	2,160,211	+ 10.6
Ontario	669	5,248,792	626	6,108,687	+ 16.4
Prairie Provinces ...	211	1,185,408	181	1,260,832	+ 6.4
British Columbia	115	887,916	103	1,061,997	+ 19.6

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 1,035 independent grocery and combination stores were 5 per cent higher in February, 1941 than in February, 1940. Results on a geographical basis indicate sales increases in every section of the country, ranging from an increase of 10 per cent in the Maritimes to one of 1 per cent in Alberta. Ontario and Quebec each showed a gain of 5 per cent and Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia were the same with an increase of 4 per cent.

Comparison of Sales reported for February, 1940 and 1941

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
Maritimes	142	109	+ 10.4
Quebec	229	157	+ 4.8
Ontario	410	275	+ 5.0
Manitoba	71	40	+ 3.6
Saskatchewan	37	21	+ 4.0
Alberta	68	37	+ 1.0
British Columbia	78	38	+ 3.9
CANADA	1,035	677	+ 5.3

THE following table shows the number of persons in the population of Canada, by age and sex, in 1971. The population is shown in thousands.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1971 Census of Canada, Part 1, Population, by Age and Sex, Table 1.

Population by Age and Sex, 1971				
Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of Total
0-14	1,100,000	1,150,000	2,250,000	14.5%
15-24	1,050,000	1,000,000	2,050,000	13.5%
25-34	1,000,000	950,000	1,950,000	12.5%
35-44	950,000	900,000	1,850,000	12.0%
45-54	900,000	850,000	1,750,000	11.5%
55-64	850,000	800,000	1,650,000	11.0%
65-74	800,000	750,000	1,550,000	10.5%
75-84	750,000	700,000	1,450,000	10.0%
85 and over	700,000	650,000	1,350,000	9.5%
Total	7,800,000	7,800,000	15,600,000	100.0%

NOTE: The population of Canada in 1971 was 15,600,000. The population of the United Kingdom in 1971 was 23,000,000. The population of the United States in 1971 was 200,000,000.

Population by Age and Sex, 1971 (continued)				
Age Group	Male	Female	Total	Percentage of Total
0-14	1,100,000	1,150,000	2,250,000	14.5%
15-24	1,050,000	1,000,000	2,050,000	13.5%
25-34	1,000,000	950,000	1,950,000	12.5%
35-44	950,000	900,000	1,850,000	12.0%
45-54	900,000	850,000	1,750,000	11.5%
55-64	850,000	800,000	1,650,000	11.0%
65-74	800,000	750,000	1,550,000	10.5%
75-84	750,000	700,000	1,450,000	10.0%
85 and over	700,000	650,000	1,350,000	9.5%
Total	7,800,000	7,800,000	15,600,000	100.0%