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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, MARCH, 1941

Introduction

Indexes reflecting current trends in food distribution in Canada have been published for some years, indexes of retail and whole-sale 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 70 of the larger wholesale grocery firms in Canada averaged 19 per cent higher in March, 1941 than in March, 1940 and were 10 per cent above the level of February, 1941, unadjusted indexes on the base, average for 1935 - 1939 = 100 standing at 117.1 for March, 1941, 106.3 for February, 1941 and 98.1 for March, 1940. Since March sales in the wholesale grocery trade are normally 16 per cent above the level of February, the gain registered in March, 1941 from the previous month, is somewhat lower than the usual seasonal increase for that time of year. In the corresponding-month comparisons for February, January and December gains of 10, 2 and 17 per cent were recorded over the same months of the previous year.

Results on a regional basis indicate that the 19 per cent increase in March for Canada as a whole was the result of increased sales in all five economic sections of the country. Sales in the Maritimes were up 27 per cent over March a year ago; sales in Ontario were up 26 per cent; sales in the Prairies were up 15 per cent; while sales in both Quebec and British Columbia were up 14 per cent.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		March 1940	March 1941	March, 1941 over -		Year to date <u>1941</u> 1940
				March 1940	February 1941	
CANADA .....	70	12,035	14,367	+ 19.4	+ 10.1	+ 10.2
Maritimes .....	16	1,430	1,820	+ 27.2	+ 12.9	+ 17.5
Quebec .....	20	1,871	2,135	+ 14.1	+ 4.0	+ 7.2
Ontario .....	20	3,750	4,710	+ 25.6	+ 17.3	+ 12.3
Prairies .....	9	3,491	4,001	+ 14.6	+ 8.0	+ 5.1
British Columbia ..	5	1,493	1,701	+ 13.9	+ 3.9	+ 14.5

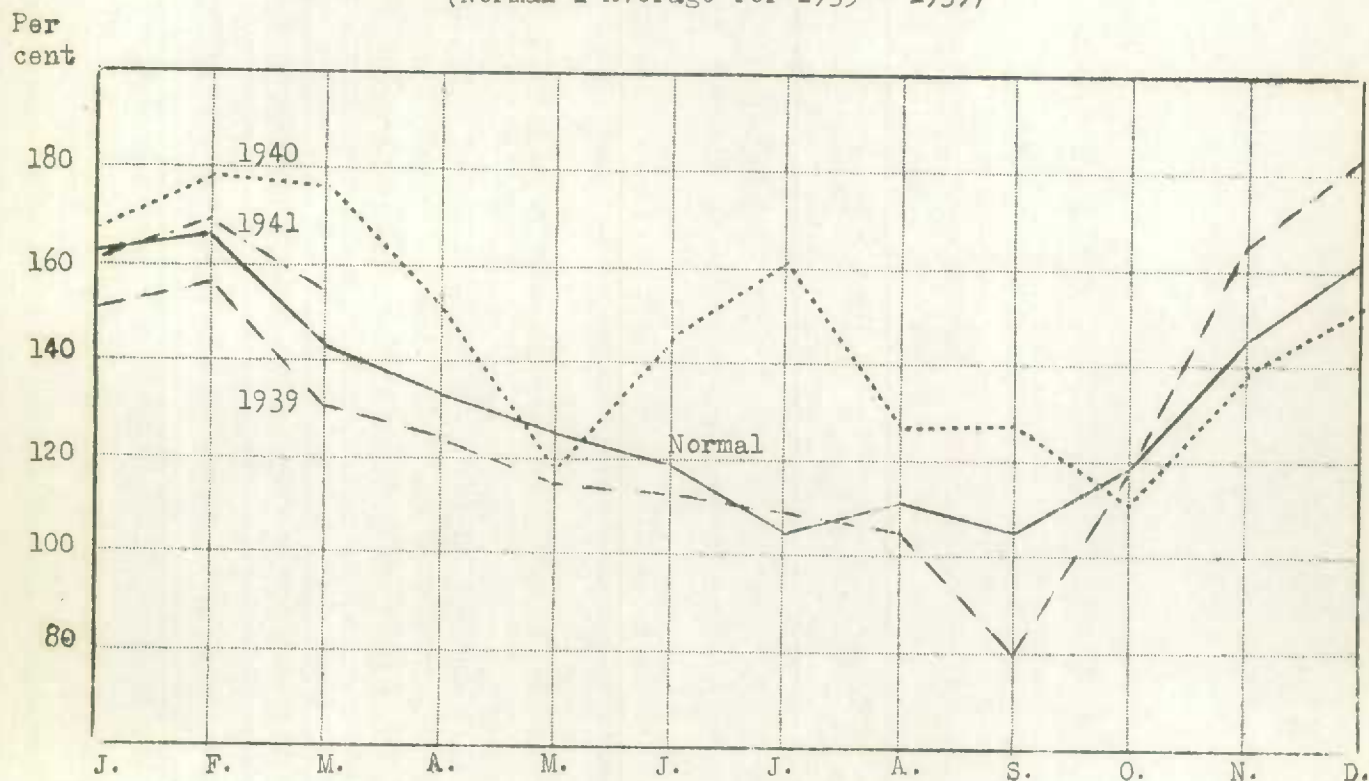
Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were up 8 per cent at the end of March from the corresponding date of 1940 and showed a decrease of 2.5 per cent from inventories at the end of February, 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 March normally amount to approximately 143 per cent of the March turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of February formed 155 per cent of the March sales, indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were slightly 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 - 1939)





Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 1,058 chain store units operated by 24 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 14 per cent higher in March, 1941 than sales of 1,168 units operated by the same 24 firms in March a year ago. Average sales per store were \$11,105 in March of this year, 26 per cent greater than the \$8,814 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: 17 per cent in Ontario; 16 per cent in British Columbia; 12 per cent in Quebec and 6 per cent in the Prairie Provinces. Average daily sales for food chains increased 12 per cent in March this year over last.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for March, 1940 and 1941

24 Chain Companies

	March, 1940		March, 1941		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA .....	1,168	10,294,367	1,058	11,748,697	+ 14.1
Quebec .....	221	2,174,384	200	2,426,780	+ 11.6
Ontario .....	663	5,943,724	618	6,936,663	+ 16.7
Prairie Provinces .....	205	1,313,734	170	1,387,624	+ 5.6
British Columbia .....	79	862,525	70	997,630	+ 15.7

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 974 independent grocery and combination stores were 6 per cent higher in March, 1941 than in March, 1940. Gains of between 7 and 8 per cent were reported for the Maritime Provinces, for Ontario and for British Columbia. Sales in Saskatchewan and Alberta were practically unchanged from last year while minor increases of 3 per cent and 4 per cent were reported in Quebec and Manitoba respectively.

Comparison of Sales reported for March, 1940 and 1941

	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
Maritimes .....	139	98	+ 7.7
Quebec .....	208	125	+ 2.8
Ontario .....	376	267	+ 7.8
Manitoba .....	71	40	+ 4.2
Saskatchewan .....	40	21	+ 0.7
Alberta .....	64	33	+ 0.1
British Columbia .....	76	46	+ 7.3
CANADA .....	974	630	+ 5.5



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The following table shows the number of persons in the population of Canada, by age and sex, in 1981. The population is shown in thousands.

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Population, by Age and Sex, 1981.

Table 1. Population of Canada, by age and sex, 1981.

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
0-4	1,100	1,150	2,250
5-9	1,050	1,100	2,150
10-14	1,000	1,050	2,050
15-19	950	1,000	1,950
20-24	900	950	1,850
25-29	850	900	1,750
30-34	800	850	1,650
35-39	750	800	1,550
40-44	700	750	1,450
45-49	650	700	1,350
50-54	600	650	1,250
55-59	550	600	1,150
60-64	500	550	1,050
65-69	450	500	950
70-74	400	450	850
75-79	350	400	750
80-84	300	350	650
85-89	250	300	550
90-94	200	250	450
95-99	150	200	350
100+	100	150	250

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Population, by Age and Sex, 1981.

The following table shows the number of persons in the population of Canada, by age and sex, in 1981. The population is shown in thousands.

Table 2. Population of Canada, by age and sex, 1981.

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25-29	850	900	1,750
30-34	800	850	1,650
35-39	750	800	1,550
40-44	700	750	1,450
45-49	650	700	1,350
50-54	600	650	1,250
55-59	550	600	1,150
60-64	500	550	1,050
65-69	450	500	950
70-74	400	450	850
75-79	350	400	750
80-84	300	350	650
85-89	250	300	550
90-94	200	250	450
95-99	150	200	350
100+	100	150	250

Source: Statistics Canada, 1981 Census of Canada, Population, by Age and Sex, 1981.