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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, APRIL, 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 77 of the larger wholesale grocery firms in Canada averaged 23 per cent higher in April, 1941 than in April, 1940 and were 13 per cent above the level of March, 1941, unadjusted indexes on the base, average for 1935 - 1939 equals 100, standing at 132.4 for April, 1941, 117.4 for March, 1941 and 107.8 for April, 1940. Since April sales in the wholesale grocery trade are normally slightly lower than the level of March, the gain registered in April, 1941 from the previous month, is contrary to the usual seasonal movement for that time of year. In the corresponding-month comparisons for March, February and January gains of 20, 10 and 2 per cent were recorded over the same months of the previous year.

Results on a regional basis indicate that the 23 per cent increase in April for Canada as a whole was the result of increased sales in all five economic sections of the country. Sales in the Prairies were up 28 per cent over April a year ago; sales in British Columbia were up 26 per cent, sales in the Maritimes were up 25 per cent and sales in Ontario were up 21 per cent. Sales of wholesale grocers in Quebec were up 14 per cent.

# Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		April 1940	April 1941	April, 1941 over		Year to date <u>1941</u> <u>1940</u>
				April 1940	March 1941	
CANADA .....	77	13,712	16,841	+ 22.8	+ 12.7	+ 13.7
Maritimes .....	16	1,514	1,896	+ 25.2	+ 5.1	+ 19.5
Quebec .....	22	2,290	2,609	+ 13.9	+ 20.5	+ 9.2
Ontario .....	21	4,160	5,029	+ 20.9	+ 8.3	+ 14.5
Prairies .....	12	3,941	5,038	+ 27.8	+ 15.8	+ 11.1
British Columbia	6	1,807	2,269	+ 25.6	+ 13.5	+ 18.2

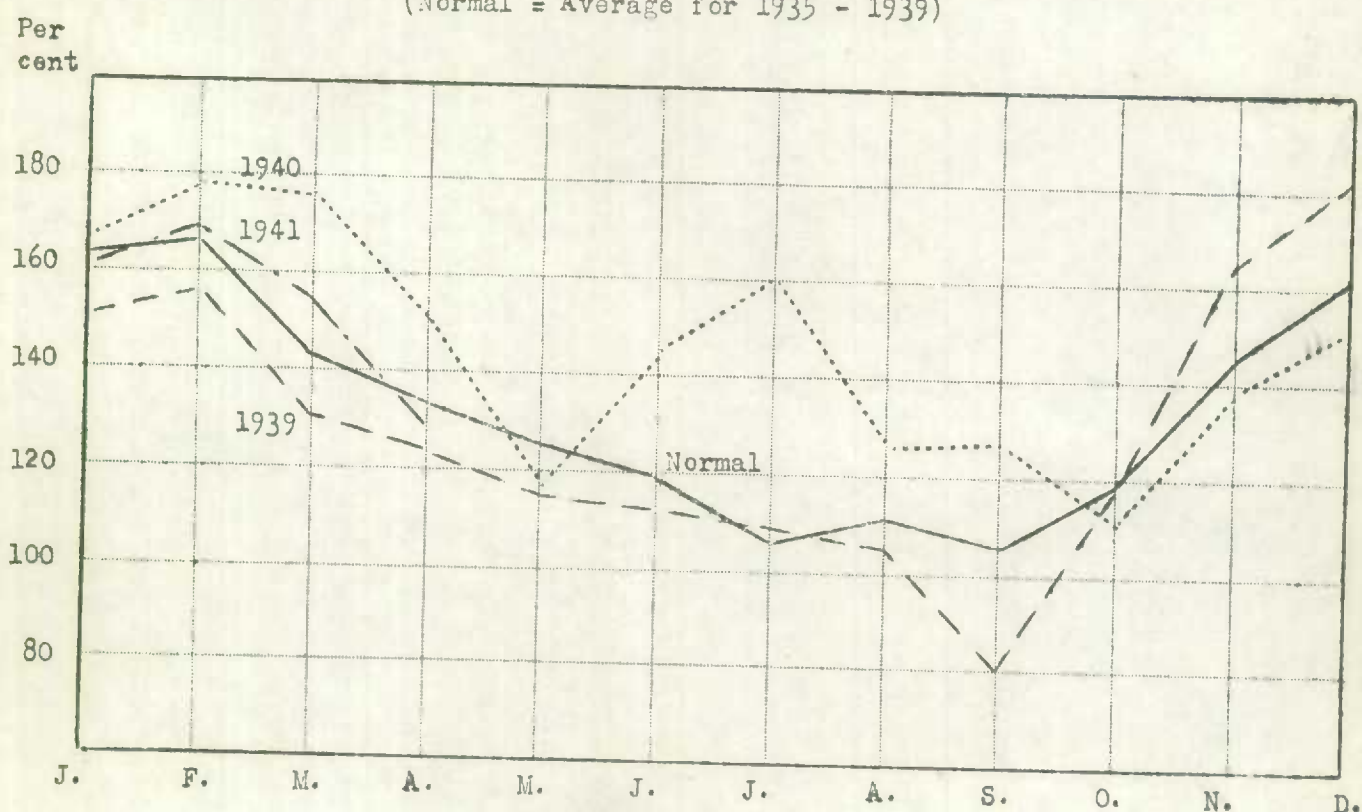
## Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were up 13 per cent at the end of April from the corresponding date of 1940 and were 7 per cent higher than inventories at the end of March, 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 April normally amount to approximately 133 per cent of the April turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of March formed 129 per cent of the April 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 - 1939)





Retail Trade

Chain Stores

Sales of 953 chain store units operated by 22 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 23 per cent higher in April, 1941 than sales of 1,048 units operated by the same 22 firms in April a year ago. Average sales per store were \$11,723 in April of this year, 35 per cent greater than the \$8,686 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: 24 per cent in Ontario; 23 per cent in British Columbia and 20 per cent in both Quebec and the Prairie Provinces. Average daily sales for food chains increased 27 per cent in April this year over last.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for April, 1940 and 1941

22 Chain Companies

Division	April, 1940		April, 1941		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
CANADA .....	1,048	9,102,580	953	11,171,863	+ 22.7
Quebec .....	209	1,874,642	188	2,245,745	+ 19.8
Ontario .....	601	5,296,987	567	6,591,862	+ 24.4
Prairie Provinces .....	159	1,100,909	128	1,317,758	+ 19.7
British Columbia .....	79	830,042	70	1,016,498	+ 22.5

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 983 independent grocery and combination stores were 9 per cent higher in April, 1941 than in April, 1940. Results on a geographical basis indicate sales increases in every section of the country ranging from a gain of 11 per cent in the Maritimes to one of 4 per cent in Manitoba. Gains of 9 and 10 per cent were reported for Ontario and Quebec respectively while Saskatchewan and Alberta showed an increase of 7 per cent. British Columbia sales were up 6 per cent over April, 1940.

Comparison of Sales Reported for April, 1940 and 1941

Division	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA .....	983	725	+ 9.1
Maritimes .....	138	107	+ 10.7
Quebec .....	211	168	+ 10.4
Ontario .....	373	278	+ 9.3
Manitoba .....	66	47	+ 4.3
Saskatchewan .....	42	25	+ 6.9
Alberta .....	69	47	+ 7.0
British Columbia .....	84	53	+ 6.4

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