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CURRENT TRENDS IN FOOD DISTRIBUTION, SEPTEMBER, 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 houses in Canada were 31 per cent higher in September of this year than last and were 2 per cent above the level recorded in August. The 31 per cent increase in September over September, 1940, is higher than the increase reported in earlier corresponding-month comparisons of this year with the exception of July, when the increase stood at 36 per cent over July, 1940. In August, sales were up 29 per cent over August, 1940; in June, sales were up 9 per cent and in May only 3 per cent, while the earlier months of April and March showed gains of 23 per cent and 20 per cent respectively. Wholesale grocers' sales for the first nine months of 1941 stand 18 per cent above the level for the corresponding nine-month period of 1940.

Sales increases for September by economic divisions are as follows: British Columbia, 22 per cent; the Maritimes, 21 per cent; Quebec, 19 per cent; Ontario, 17 per cent; and the Prairies, 16 per cent.

Wholesale Grocery Trade by Economic Divisions

Division	Number of firms re- porting	Dollar Sales (add 000)		Per cent change		
		September 1940	September 1941	September, 1941 over		Year to date 1941 1940
				September 1940	August 1941	
CANADA	75	\$ 14,890	\$ 19,536	+ 31.2	+ 1.6	+ 18.0
Maritimes	16	1,743	2,210	+ 26.8	+ 2.3	+ 20.7
Quebec	20	2,087	2,919	+ 39.9	+ 6.7	+ 17.8
Ontario	21	4,633	6,085	+ 31.4	+ 7.1	+ 17.3
Prairies	12	4,672	5,931	+ 27.0	- 2.1	+ 16.4
British Columbia ..	6	1,755	2,391	+ 36.2	- 2.4	+ 21.5

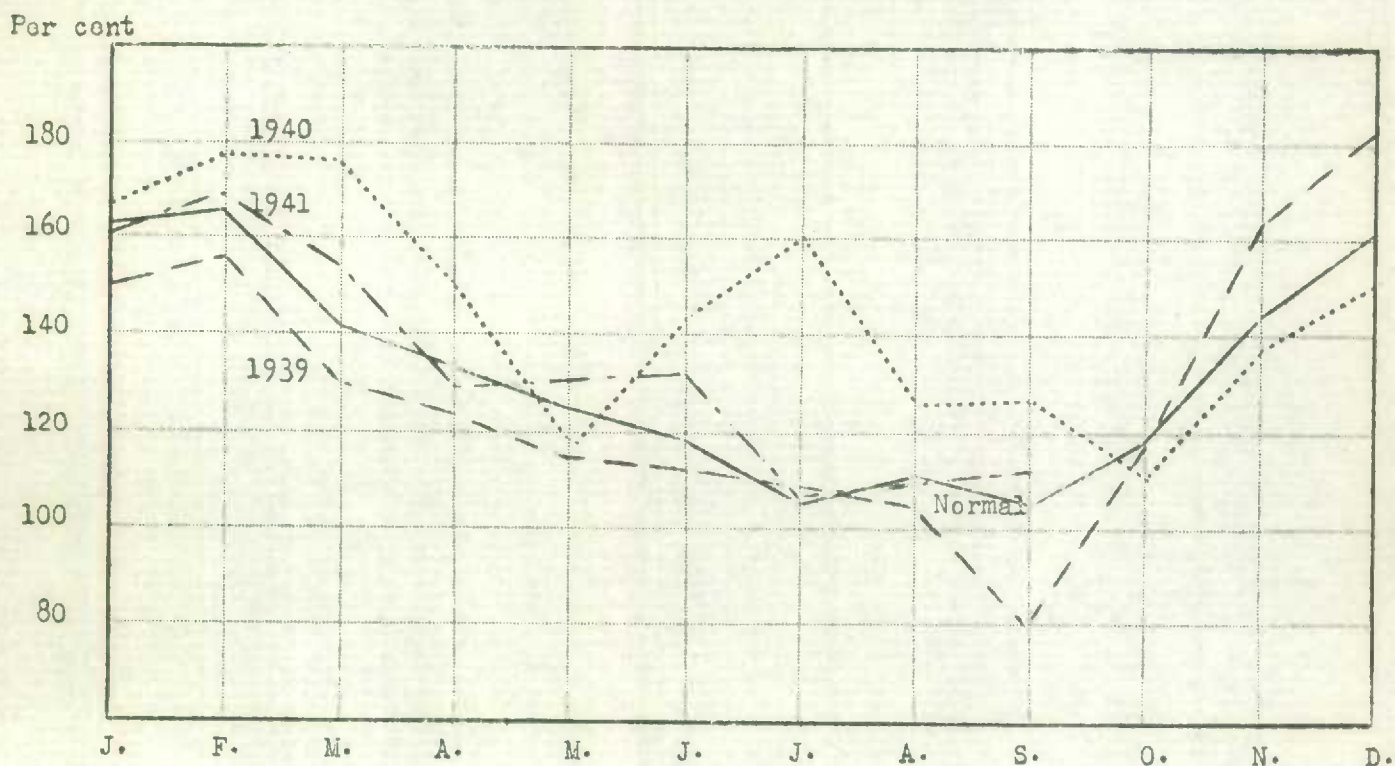
Stocks

Inventories carried by the wholesale grocery trade were up 25 per cent at the end of September from the corresponding date of 1940 and were 12 per cent higher than inventories at the end of August, 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 September normally amount to approximately 105 per cent of the September turnover. Stocks on hand at the end of August formed 113 per cent of the September sales, indicating that stocks on hand at the beginning of the month were above 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 984 chain store units operated by 27 chain companies in the food retailing field averaged 32 per cent higher in September, 1941, than sales of 1,063 units operated by the same 27 firms in September a year ago. Average sales per store were \$12,345 in September of this year, 43 per cent greater than the \$8,633 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: 36 per cent in Quebec, 32 per cent in Ontario and in British Columbia, and 30 per cent in the Prairie Provinces. Average daily sales for food chains increased 29 per cent in September of this year over last.

Comparison of Stores and Sales for September, 1940 and 1941

Division	September, 1940		September, 1941		Per cent change in Sales
	No. Stores	Sales	No. Stores	Sales	
		\$		\$	
CANADA	1,063	9,176,974	984	12,145,834	+ 32.4
Quebec	211	1,861,647	194	2,537,725	+ 36.3
Ontario	599	5,272,757	563	6,932,403	+ 31.5
Prairie Provinces	149	1,152,609	127	1,498,817	+ 30.0
British Columbia	104	889,961	100	1,176,889	+ 32.2

Independent Stores

Dollar sales of 1,059 independent grocery and combination stores were 17 per cent higher in September, 1941, than in September, 1940. Gains were reported in every section of the country, ranging from a substantial increase of 21 per cent in Quebec to a gain of 6 per cent in Saskatchewan. Ontario sales were up 18 per cent, the Maritimes, 17 per cent; while British Columbia and Manitoba showed gains of 14 per cent and 13 per cent respectively. Alberta sales were 10 per cent higher in September of this year than last.

Comparison of Sales Reported for September, 1940 and 1941

Division	No. stores reporting	No. reporting increase	Per cent change in sales
CANADA	1,059	944	+ 17.0
Maritimes	145	124	+ 17.2
Quebec	272	242	+ 20.7
Ontario	381	356	+ 17.7
Manitoba	68	56	+ 12.9
Saskatchewan	43	41	+ 6.2
Alberta	69	58	+ 10.4
British Columbia	81	67	+ 14.1

