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DEPARTMENT STORE CREDIT

JANUARY 1944

Instalment accounts outstanding at department stores at the end of January showed about the usual seasonal decline from December, and continued 26 per cent below the level of a year ago. Collections on instalment accounts decreased 5 per cent in January, resulting in a collection ratio of 50 per cent as compared with 35 per cent in the preceding month and 28 per cent in the corresponding month last year. Instalment accounts were outstanding, on the average, approximately five and one-half months as compared with about six months in January 1943.

Charge accounts receivable declined by slightly more than the customary seasonal amount in January, but continued near the level of a year ago. Collections on charge accounts increased considerably in January, as is usual at this time of the year, and were in about the same volume as a year ago. The average length of time charge accounts were outstanding in January was about 49 days, one day less than in January 1943.

The volume of cash and credit sales at department stores showed the usual sharp seasonal declines in January from the high levels of the preceding month. Cash sales, which account for more than three-fifths of the total, were 14 per cent above the level of the corresponding month a year ago. Both instalment and charge-account sales showed slight decreases from January 1943.

Department Store Sales, Accounts Receivable and Collections

	Percentage change from:		
	December 1943		January 1945
	to	to	to
	January 1944	January 1944	January 1944
Sales during month			
Cash	-52		+14
Instalment	-48		- 2
Charge account	-50		- 3
Accounts receivable, end of month			
Instalment accounts	- 9		-26
Charge accounts	-25		- 1
Collections during month			
Instalment accounts	- 5		-20
Charge accounts	+18		+ 1
Ratio of collections during month to receivables at beginning of month			
	January	December	January
	1944	1943	1943
Instalment accounts	p 30	35	28
Charge accounts	p 61	63	60

DEPARTMENT STORES

Cash and Credit Sales, by Federal Reserve Districts

Federal Reserve District	Indexes; 1941 average = 100								
	Cash sales			Installment sales			Charge-account sales		
	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943
Boston	124	r275	113	58	r 71	68	77	149	82
New York	113	241	106	59	r121	68	68	148	76
Philadelphia	134	306	116	45	r110	51	81	166	79
Cleveland	138	283	125	50	85	60	77	160	84
Richmond	123	307	119	46	93	51	83	160	81
Atlanta	182	324	136	35	87	59	97	179	88
Chicago	136	273	121	48	r 96	60	79	r154	80
St. Louis	146	r282	124	57	118	57	82	r154	84
Minneapolis	130	328	131	85	84	61	81	161	80
Kansas City	185	r359	132	56	r 89	73	86	r139	90
Dallas	231	457	174	69	116	61	97	192	101
San Francisco	p185	362	147	p 48	94	76	p 85	163	83
U. S. Total	p140	289	123	p 52	r 99	65	p 80	159	82

Accounts Receivable and Collections, by Federal Reserve Districts

Federal Reserve District	Accounts outstanding, end of month						Collection ratios *					
	Indexes; 1941 average = 100						Installment			Charge accounts		
	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943	Jan. 1944	Dec. 1943	Jan. 1943
Boston	39	42	55	92	118	99	28	30	26	51	52	47
New York	54	60	65	82	r106	86	24	25	24	53	52	52
Philadelphia	42	46	55	86	122	85	27	35	25	61	59	61
Cleveland	p40	45	54	p79	113	81	p52	37	30	p61	63	61
Richmond	49	54	64	80	103	76	26	29	23	53	57	53
Atlanta	49	51	52	83	108	76	27	33	22	52	55	53
Chicago	39	39	57	83	112	81	39	49	37	68	71	71
St. Louis	41	r47	57	81	107	84	33	r43	27	57	69	66
Minneapolis	48	52	61	69	102	62	36	41	35	71	80	73
Kansas City	47	r52	64	81	r102	86	37	r37	31	72	75	66
Dallas	37	42	52	85	107	83	30	40	26	63	65	61
San Francisco	39	44	60	83	107	85	32	r37	29	68	69	65
U. S. Total	p43	48	58	p82	109	83	p30	35	28	p61	63	60

r - Revised. p - Preliminary.

* - Collections during month as per cent of accounts at beginning of month.

Note: These data are based on reports of about 475 large department stores reporting sales by type of transaction, more than 400 having charge accounts and about 100 having installment accounts. Back figures may be obtained on request from the Division of Research and Statistics.