

February 5, 1945

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DEPARTMENT STORE CREDIT

DECEMBER 1944

Instalment accounts outstanding at department stores increased by more than the usual seasonal amount in December, and at the end of the month were only five per cent below the year-ago volume. Collections on instalment accounts rose slightly, resulting in a collection ratio of 36 per cent as compared with 39 per cent in the preceding month and 35 per cent a year ago. Instalment accounts were outstanding, on the average, about four and one-half months, approximately the same length of time as in December 1943.

Charge accounts receivable showed about the customary expansion from November to December, but were 18 per cent larger than a year earlier. Collections on charge accounts increased four per cent during the month, and continued 12 per cent above those in December last year. Charge accounts were collected in about 49 days, as compared with 48 days in the corresponding month of 1943.

Cash and credit sales showed about the usual seasonal rise in December, in spite of the comparatively heavy buying that prevailed in the two preceding months. The dollar volume of cash sales, which accounted for about 64 per cent of the total, reached an unprecedently high level during the month. Charge-account sales continued 14 per cent above the level of a year ago, while instalment sales, for the second consecutive month, were larger than last year.

Department Store Sales, Accounts Receivable and Collections

	Percentage change from:		
	November 1944 to December 1944	December 1943 to December 1944	
Sales during month			
Cash	+33	+13	
Instalment	+11	+5	
Charge account	+22	+14	
Accounts receivable, end of month			
Instalment accounts	+14	-5	
Charge accounts	+25	+18	
Collections during month			
Instalment accounts	+3	-7	
Charge accounts	+4	+12	
Ratio of collections during month to accounts receivable at beginning of month			
	Dec. <u>1944</u>	Nov. <u>1944</u>	Dec. <u>1943</u>
Instalment accounts	36	39	35
Charge accounts	62	67	63

DEPARTMENT STORES - DECEMBER 1944

Cash and Credit Sales, by Federal Reserve Districts

Federal Reserve District	Indexes: 1941 average = 100								
	Cash sales			Installment sales			Charge-account sales		
	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943
Boston	314	208	272	91	86	89	176	134	149
New York	278	204	242	135	112	121	165	136	148
Philadelphia	342	245	306	130	109	111	195	159	166
Cleveland	314	241	263	77	83	83	185	152	160
Richmond	341	254	308	111	112	102	181	151	160
Atlanta	283	326	324	90	113	67	159	161	173
Chicago	313	r252	276	27	r80	34	173	142	150
St. Louis	324	r252	277	134	92	120	181	r151	157
Minneapolis	352	253	313	96	115	88	187	153	160
Kansas City	428	318	353	91	89	89	180	145	153
Dallas	528	366	467	115	86	116	231	198	192
San Francisco	404	309	357	84	74	68	135	153	167
U. S. Total	335	245	289	106	95	100	182	149	159

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		
	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943	Dec. 1944	Nov. 1944	Dec. 1943
Boston	43	35	46	136	106	117	32	35	31	53	50	53
New York	52	48	60	120	96	103	27	33	26	53	53	52
Philadelphia	50	41	48	141	111	122	35	41	36	58	66	59
Cleveland	44	40	45	123	104	110	35	40	37	50	57	63
Richmond	56	47	54	125	99	103	25	33	29	52	60	57
Atlanta	50	45	51	123	106	108	35	36	33	51	56	55
Chicago	33	34	40	132	107	111	46	47	52	71	73	71
St. Louis	45	35	47	127	105	107	43	46	40	63	72	63
Minneapolis	53	49	52	120	91	102	40	47	41	60	81	80
Kansas City	47	42	52	113	93	103	49	49	37	72	74	71
Dallas	40	35	42	128	104	107	40	38	40	66	69	65
San Francisco	40	34	44	177	99	107	42	42	57	70	75	69
U. S. Total	46	40	48	128	102	109	36	39	35	62	67	63

r - Revised.

* - Collections during month as per cent of accounts receivable 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 300 having installment accounts. Back figures may be obtained on request from the Division of Research and Statistics.