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Statistician:R.H. Coats, LL.D., F.R.S.C., F.S.S. (Hon.)
Herbert Marshall, B.A., F.S.S.
A.C. Steedman, B.A.PRELIMINARY REPORT ON DEPARTMENT STORE SALES, DECEMBER, 1940

Dollar volume of department store sales was greater in December, 1940, than in any previous month in the Bureau's records, which date from January, 1929. Sales were 12 per cent above December, 1939 and were 4 per cent above December, 1929, the previous peak in the period for which figures are available. The unadjusted index of sales stood at 160.4 for December, 1940 compared with 143.7 for December, 1939 and 154.1 for December, 1929. The increase in the last month of 1940 over the corresponding month of 1939 was on a par with the average monthly increase for the year 1940 over the preceding year which also amounted to 12 per cent.

Increases were of greater proportions in the east and west coast regions than in the central sections of the country. Sales increased 20 per cent over December, 1939 in the Maritime Provinces and 17 per cent in British Columbia. Ontario sales were up 12 per cent, while Quebec and the Prairie Provinces recorded identical gains of 8 per cent over December, 1939.

Department store sales are normally higher in December than in other months of the year due to the Christmas trade, the experience of the past 13 years indicating that December sales are generally about 65 per cent above the turnover of an average month. On making adjustments for the customary seasonal movement, the adjusted index for December was 101.1 or 3 per cent above November when the figure was 98.1. Adjusted indexes for earlier months were 92.3 for October, 89.1 for August and 81.4 for June.

INDEX OF THE DOLLAR VALUE OF DEPARTMENT STORE SALES, 1930 = 100

Month	Unadjusted Indexes			Adjusted Indexes(a)		
	1938	1939	1940	1938	1939	1940
January	56.3	54.2	64.2	78.1	75.2	86.0
February	57.8	54.2	64.7	76.9	72.2	82.8
March	66.5	65.6	72.8	75.5	70.1	80.8
April	79.6	74.0	80.3	76.6	77.9	81.2
May	73.0	77.4	85.4	73.5	75.2	82.7
June	77.6	75.5	83.0	74.4	72.1	81.4
July	56.6	57.2	67.1	75.3	77.3	87.5
August	62.4	61.3	76.1	74.7	73.1	89.1
September	78.4	89.5	87.1	76.8	86.6	89.2
October	87.9	100.8	107.6	77.3	90.0	92.3
November	90.4	94.4	115.0	78.6	81.8	98.1
December	131.5	143.7	160.4	78.2	89.0	101.1

(a) Adjusted to allow for differences in number of business days and also for normal seasonal variations.

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