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PRELIMINARY REPORT ON DEPARTMENT STORE SALES, MARCH, 1945

Department store sales in Canada were almost 25 per cent higher in March of this year than last and were 49 per cent higher than the volume of business transacted in February. The marked increase in sales over March a year ago may be attributed to two factors. The early date of Easter in 1945 was such that the entire pre-Easter business this year was transacted in the month of March whereas in 1944 the corresponding pre-Easter trade occurred partly in March and partly in April. The early spring conditions and unseasonably warm weather prevailing in March this year also stimulated retail purchases, especially in the clothing and shoe trades. Unadjusted indexes (on the base, 1935-1939=100) stood at 203.5 for March, 1945, 136.2 for February and at 163.2 for March a year ago.

The index, when adjusted for differences in the number of business days in different months, for normal seasonal movements and for the changing date of Easter stood at 218.7 for March compared with 181.1 for February and 163.3 for January.

INDEXES OF THE DOLLAR VALUE OF DEPARTMENT STORE SALES, 1935 - 1939 = 100

| | 1944 | 1945 | | |
|--------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | <u>March</u> | <u>January</u> | <u>February</u> | <u>March</u> |
| Unadjusted Indexes | 163.2 | 122.6 | 136.2 | 203.5 |
| Adjusted Indexes | 174.0 | 163.3 | 181.1 | 218.7 |

Results on a regional basis indicate that March increases over March a year ago were greater in Ontario and Quebec than in other parts of the country. Percentage gains for March with cumulative gains for the first three months of the year in brackets are as follows: Maritime Provinces, 16 per cent (12 per cent); Quebec, 31 per cent (21 per cent); Ontario, 28 per cent (20 per cent); Prairie Provinces, 23 per cent (15 per cent); British Columbia, 20 per cent (12 per cent).

Comparative sales by departments for 18 firms furnishing information on this basis reveal a marked gain of 62 per cent for the millinery department, 38 per cent for the footwear department and for women's dresses, suits and coats, 37 per cent for girls' and infants' wear and 36 per cent for men's and boys' clothing and furnishings. Smaller gains were recorded for the other departments for which figures are shown.

DEPARTMENT STORE SALES IN OTTAWA

Sales of Ottawa department stores were 40 per cent higher in March, 1945 compared with March, 1944 and averaged 22 per cent greater in the first three months of this year compared with last.



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DEPARTMENT STORE SALES IN CANADA, BY SELECTED DEPARTMENTS

March, 1944 and March, 1945

(Based on dollar sales of 18 firms including mail order houses.)

| | March, 1944 | March, 1945 | % Change, 1945/1944 |
|--|----------------|----------------|------------------------|
| | \$ | \$ | |
| TOTAL SALES, ALL DEPARTMENTS | 29,861,018 | 37,571,083 | +25.8 |
| 1. Women's dresses, coats and suits | 3,759,098 | 5,175,311 | +37.7 |
| 2. Girls' and infants' wear | 1,459,117 | 1,995,510 | +36.8 |
| 3. Hosiery and gloves | 1,185,265 | 1,459,632 | +23.1 |
| 4. Lingerie and corsets | 1,465,784 | 1,576,026 | + 7.5 |
| 5. Millinery | 401,815 | 650,012 | +61.8 |
| 6. Women's and children's apparel - (Total, 1-5) | 8,271,079 | 10,856,491 | +31.3 |
| 7. Men's and boys' clothing and furnishings | 3,233,143 | 4,399,069 | +36.1 |
| 8. Drugs and toilet articles and preparations ... | 841,120 | 948,381 | +12.8 |
| 9. Piece goods | 2,690,253 | 3,262,229 | +21.3 |
| 10. Smallwares | 1,075,122 | 1,242,830 | +15.6 |
| 11. Food and kindred products | 2,559,017 | 2,905,757 | +13.5 |
| 12. Furniture (including mattresses and springs) . | 1,723,793 | 2,125,219 | +23.3 |
| 13. Home furnishings | 2,120,618 | 2,485,126 | +17.2 |
| 14. Household appliances and electrical supplies . | 494,678 | 549,845 | +11.2 |
| 15. Hardware and kitchen utensils | 1,258,498 | 1,564,868 | +24.3 |
| 16. Radios, musical instruments and supplies | 219,348 | 230,663 | + 5.2 |
| 17. Shoes and other footwear | 2,047,461 | 2,822,297 | +37.8 |
| 18. Stationery, books and magazines | 453,574 | 526,636 | +16.1 |
| 19. All other departments, total | 2,873,314 | 3,651,672 | +27.1 |