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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, FEBRUARY 1957

Total sales of retail stores in February were \$14.2 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences showed no change from January but was about 7 percent above February a year ago.

The February sales figures are based on the Advance Report on Retail Trade, a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 1,700 retail firms which, in total, operate some 35,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision, but the revision of the total seldom exceeds 1 1/2 percent.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal variations and trading day differences, sales in February continued at the same rate as in the previous two months. The movements among the major groups were small and offsetting.

(more)

Table 1.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1957		February 1956
	February	January	
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	14,190	14,889	13,686
Food group.....	3,618	3,838	3,446
Grocery stores.....	3,087	3,281	2,927
Eating and drinking places.....	1,039	1,096	1,041
General merchandise group.....	1,250	1,328	1,271
Department stores <sup>2</sup> .....	669	719	667
Apparel group.....	686	785	667
Furniture and appliance group.....	735	776	757
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> .....	837	830	849
Automotive group.....	2,961	2,997	2,812
Gasoline service stations.....	1,074	1,137	983
Drug and proprietary stores.....	468	488	451

See footnotes below table 2.

Source: Bureau of the Census

Table 2.--SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP  
(ADJUSTED for seasonal factors and trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change Jan. 1957 from--	
	1957		1956		Dec. 1956	Jan. 1956
	February	January	December	January		
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	16,492	16,439	16,491	15,658	0	+5
Durable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	5,754	5,706	5,814	5,456	-2	+5
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ....	10,738	10,733	10,677	10,202	+1	+5
Food group.....		3,969	3,977	3,747	0	+6
Eating and drinking places.....		1,182	1,194	1,171	-1	+1
General merchandise group.....		1,722	1,738	1,714	-1	0
Apparel group.....		980	991	927	-1	+6
Furniture and appliance group.....		856	932	869	-8	-1
Lumber, building, hardware group <sup>3</sup> .....		1,096	1,129	1,135	-3	-3
Automotive group.....		3,324	3,285	3,020	+1	+10
Gasoline service stations.....		1,213	1,164	1,082	+4	+12
Drug and proprietary stores.....		484	497	465	-3	+4

Source: Office of Business Economics

<sup>1</sup> Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

<sup>2</sup> Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

<sup>3</sup> Includes farm equipment dealers.