

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMERCE**

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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MARCH 1958

Total sales of retail stores in March were \$15.4 billion, the U. S. Department of Commerce announced today. This advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences was 1 percent below February, and 2 percent below March a year ago.

The March 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 1½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for March are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics noted that after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences, sales from February to March at durable goods stores declined moderately, due primarily to a further decrease in automotive buying. In the nondurable goods groups, department store sales, seasonally adjusted, picked up from February. Other major groups showed mixed trends.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR MARCH 1958

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)		
	1958		1957
	March	February	March
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	15,417	13,807	15,789
Food group.....	4,145	3,801	3,915
Grocery stores.....	3,657	3,366	3,499
Eating and drinking places.....	1,144	1,027	1,140
General merchandise group.....	1,519	1,201	1,492
Department stores.....	2,877	665	( <sup>3</sup> )
Apparel group.....	955	698	832
Furniture and appliance group.....	782	719	806
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group..	915	749	1,030
Automotive group.....	2,728	2,471	3,317
Gasoline service stations.....	1,208	1,122	1,181
Drug and proprietary stores.....	524	507	500

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	Percentage change, Mar. 1958 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, Feb. 1958 from--	
	Feb. 1958	Mar. 1957	1958			1957	Jan. 1958	Feb. 1957
			Mar.	Feb.	Jan.	Feb.		
Retail stores, total <sup>1</sup> .....	-1	-2	15,928	16,115	16,718	16,356	-4	-2
Durable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup> ..	-2	-13	4,932	5,055	5,538	5,747	-9	-12
Nondurable goods stores, total <sup>1</sup>	-1	+4	10,996	11,059	11,180	10,608	-1	+4
Food group.....				4,193	4,116	3,821	+2	+10
Eating and drinking places.....				1,186	1,236	1,219	-4	-3
General merchandise group.....				1,640	1,772	1,718	-7	-5
Apparel group.....				1,004	1,059	992	-5	+1
Furniture and appliance group.....				852	869	899	-2	-5
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,030	1,134	1,120	-9	-8
Automotive group.....				2,741	3,094	3,264	-11	-16
Gasoline service stations.....				1,282	1,290	1,220	-1	+5
Drug and proprietary stores.....				540	539	493	0	+10

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> Comparable data not available.