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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, MAY 1955

Total sales of retail stores in May were \$15.3 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 April but was about 8 percent above May a year ago.

The May 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 1,800 retail firms which, in total, operate some 37,000 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. Therefore, the advance estimates are preliminary and subject to revision.

The preliminary Census figures are shown in table 1 on the reverse side. The Office of Business Economics indicated that, after allowance for seasonal variations, May sales in most major kinds of business continued at their generally strong rates of recent months.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR MAY 1955

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)		
	1955		May 1954
	May	April	
Retail stores, total ¹	15,323	15,622	14,247
Food group.....	3,471	3,689	3,447
Grocery stores.....	2,921	3,127	2,886
Eating and drinking places.....	1,150	1,081	1,101
General merchandise group.....	1,568	1,650	1,478
Department stores ²	861	897	819
Apparel group.....	844	986	821
Furniture and appliance group.....	808	757	740
Lumber, building, hardware group ³	1,242	1,176	1,140
Automotive group.....	3,414	3,431	2,832
Gasoline service stations.....	1,033	988	955
Drug and proprietary stores.....	415	416	406

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)			Percent change, April 1955 from--	
	1955		April 1954	March 1955	April 1954
	April	March			
Retail stores, total ¹	15,247	15,060	14,242	+1	+7
Durable goods stores, total ¹	5,524	5,458	4,882	+1	+13
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹ ..	9,723	9,602	9,360	+1	+4
Food group.....	3,520	3,602	3,366	-2	+5
Eating and drinking places.....	1,141	1,083	1,105	+5	+3
General merchandise group.....	1,677	1,615	1,606	+4	+4
Apparel group.....	889	867	876	+3	+1
Furniture and appliance group.....	837	836	777	0	+8
Lumber, building, hardware group ³ ..	1,122	1,093	1,015	+3	+11
Automotive group.....	3,204	3,169	2,728	+1	+17
Gasoline service stations.....	1,023	1,007	938	+2	+9
Drug and proprietary stores.....	427	418	416	+2	+3

Source: Office of Business Econo

¹ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

² Based on preliminary estimates supplied by Federal Reserve Board.

³ Includes farm equipment dealers.