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ADVANCE REPORT ON RETAIL TRADE, DECEMBER 1957

The Department of Commerce announced today that December 1957 retail store sales totaled \$19.7 billion, bringing sales for the full year 1957 to a record high of more than \$199.8 billion, 5 percent above sales for the year 1956. December 1957 sales, after adjustment for seasonal factors and trading day differences were 1 percent above November of this year and 2 percent above December a year ago.

The December 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 ½ percent.

The preliminary Census figures for December 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 a rise in December sales of non-durable goods stores, and more particularly at general merchandise stores, more than offset a decline in sales in the durable goods group. The decline for the latter group from November to December was attributable primarily to lower sales by automotive dealers. Final estimates for November indicate that seasonally adjusted retail sales were 1 percent below October.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES REPORT--PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR DECEMBER 1957

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)				
	12 months		December 1957 (Advance estimate)	November 1957	December 1956
	1957	1956			
Retail stores, total ¹	199,812	189,732	19,661	17,126	19,380
Food group.....	47,675	44,227	4,146	4,233	4,053
Grocery stores.....	42,362	39,182	3,660	3,769	3,572
Eating and drinking places.....	14,763	14,318	1,216	1,205	1,201
General merchandise group.....	21,132	20,760	3,071	2,009	3,033
Apparel group.....	12,204	11,611	1,722	1,133	1,694
Furniture and appliance group.....	10,599	10,666	1,157	962	1,194
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip.	13,772	13,769	1,012	1,095	1,036
Automotive group.....	38,556	36,121	2,974	2,977	3,122
Gasoline service stations.....	15,064	13,738	1,280	1,262	1,182
Drug and proprietary stores.....	6,337	5,775	703	532	632

See footnote 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 Dec. 1957 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change Nov. 1957 from--	
	Nov. 1957	Dec. 1956	1957			1956	Oct. 1957	Nov. 1956
			Dec.	Nov.	Oct.	Nov.		
Retail stores, total ¹	+1	+2	16,677	16,556	16,714	16,212	-1	+2
Durable goods stores, total ¹ ..	-2	-6	5,486	5,606	5,612	5,664	0	-1
Nondurable goods stores, total ¹	+2	+6	11,191	10,950	11,102	10,548	-1	+4
Food group.....				4,028	4,109	3,778	-2	+7
Eating and drinking places.....				1,233	1,215	1,188	+1	+4
General merchandise group.....				1,704	1,706	1,760	0	-3
Apparel group.....				1,001	1,029	1,004	-3	0
Furniture and appliance group.....				870	828	912	+4	-5
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group...				1,114	1,154	1,126	-3	-1
Automotive group.....				3,159	3,180	3,159	-1	0
Gasoline service stations.....				1,254	1,250	1,179	0	+6
Drug and proprietary stores.....				551	571	488	-4	+13

Source: Office of Business Economics

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