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The U.S. Department of Commerce announced today that total sales of retail stores in January were estimated at \$21.9 billion. Statistics prepared by the Department's Bureau of the Census show that this advance figure, after adjustment for seasonal and holiday variations and trading day differences, but not for price changes, was about 1 percent below the December level but 8 percent above January 1965.

The Office of Business Economics noted that, after adjustment, sales of both durable and nondurable goods stores fell 1 percent in January. Sales by most major lines of trade were lowered or unchanged from the December levels, except for the general merchandise group where sales rose.

The January sales figures are based on a monthly survey of the Bureau of the Census conducted in cooperation with a representative cross-section of about 2,500 retail firms, which, in total, operate some 48,000 stores in the United States. The firms which are cooperating in the early reporting of sales are part of a larger sample group which furnishes figures at a later date. The advance estimates are subject to revision by estimates subsequently derived from the full sample.

The revision of the total seldom exceeds 1.5 percent and for the past year has averaged 1.0 percent. For individual kind-of-business groups, revisions have been greater, ranging on the average from 0.8 percent for drug and proprietary stores to 3.2 percent for the lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.

(more)

ADVANCE RETAIL SALES FOR JANUARY 1966

Table 1. SALES OF RETAIL STORES IN THE UNITED STATES, BY KIND-OF-BUSINESS GROUP

(NOT ADJUSTED for seasonal variations or trading day differences)

Kind-of-business group	Sales (millions of dollars)		
	1966	1965	
	January ¹	December ²	January
Retail stores, total ⁴	21,917	30,923	20,581
Durable-goods stores, total ⁴	6,915	8,982	6,605
Nondurable-goods stores, total ⁴	15,002	21,941	13,976
Food group.....	5,624	6,653	5,300
Grocery stores.....	5,144	6,080	4,868
Eating and drinking places.....	1,648	1,821	1,575
General merchandise group.....	2,391	5,677	2,123
Department stores.....	1,587	3,717	1,400
Apparel group.....	1,007	2,431	1,081
Furniture and appliance group.....	1,060	1,636	961
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equip. group	1,040	1,453	930
Automotive group.....	4,291	4,789	4,237
Gasoline service stations.....	1,749	1,905	1,676
Drug and proprietary stores.....	769	1,107	718

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 variations and trading day differences⁵)

Kind-of-business group	Percentage change, January 1966 from--		Sales (millions of dollars)				Percentage change, December 1965 from--	
	Dec. 1965	Jan. 1965	1966	1965		1964	Nov. 1965	Dec. 1964
			Jan. ¹	Dec. ²	Nov. ³	Dec.		
Retail stores, total ⁴	-1	+8	24,855	25,130	24,640	22,757	+2	+10
Durable-goods stores, total ⁴ ...	-1	+6	8,224	8,289	8,050	7,567	+3	+10
Nondurable-goods stores, total ⁴	-1	+10	16,631	16,841	16,590	15,190	+2	+11
Food group.....				6,038	5,785	5,411	+4	+12
Eating and drinking places.....				1,816	1,824	1,674	0	+8
General merchandise group.....				3,115	3,192	2,852	-2	+9
Apparel group.....				1,360	1,350	1,275	+1	+7
Furniture and appliance group.....				1,221	1,246	1,138	-2	+7
Lumber, building, hardware, farm equipment group.....				1,540	1,430	1,257	+8	+23
Automotive group.....				4,882	4,716	4,593	+4	+6
Gasoline service stations.....				1,853	1,882	1,739	-2	+7
Drug and proprietary stores.....				842	820	734	+3	+15

¹ Advance sample estimates.

² Advance estimates revised.

³ Preliminary estimates from full sample.

⁴ Totals include data for kinds of business not shown separately.

⁵ Data adjusted for seasonal variations and trading day differences have been derived by a new method.