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BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE FEDERAL RESERVE SYSTEM
Washington, D. C.

August 10, 1965

To persons or organizations on the Board's mailing list to receive any of the following releases:

- Weekly Department Store Sales-Selected Cities and Areas (H.8b)
- Monthly Department Store Sales-Selected Cities and Areas (G.7.2) *NOT FILMED **
- Monthly Department Store Sales, by Departments (G.7.3)
- Annual Department Store Trade, United States (C.7.3)

On January 31, 1966 the collection and publication of information on department store sales will be discontinued as a nationwide Federal Reserve System statistical program. During the past few years, national statistical agencies in consultation with representatives from retailing have been working to improve existing retail trade statistics, collection of which is centered in the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Early in 1964, the Federal Reserve discontinued publication of national figures on total weekly and monthly department store sales, which were also being released in reports of the Census Bureau. Most of the remaining portions of the Federal Reserve department store statistics program are slated for discontinuance at the end of January 1966. The weekly report of total sales for local areas will be discontinued at that time by all but three of the Reserve Banks (Boston, Cleveland, and Dallas), as well as by the Board of Governors, and the monthly reports of sales broken down by departments for major metropolitan areas and for the United States as a whole will then be terminated.

The Federal Reserve Banks and the Board of Governors will also discontinue the collection and release of monthly reports of total department store sales for local areas after the close of January 1966, but arrangements have been made for the Bureau of the Census to continue, under contract with the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, these reports at least until June 1967 for substantially the same list of cities and local areas that are now presented in the Federal Reserve monthly reports, provided that the department stores in any given locality furnish data to make the reports representative.

The termination date for the Federal Reserve reports--January 1966--is set a considerable distance in the future to allow ample time for all groups to establish alternative sources for compiling parts of the existing program that will be discontinued by the Federal Reserve. During this interval, the Federal Reserve Banks are prepared to cooperate in any way possible to assure an orderly transfer to successor agencies by the termination date.

At the present time, the Bureau of the Census publishes weekly retail sales data for the United States as a whole, and it also publishes monthly retail sales information for the United States, for Census divisions, for large States, and for major metropolitan areas--much of it broken down by line of trade. Future plans of the Bureau of the Census call for further expansion of retail sales information for major metropolitan areas that will be more indicative of consumer spending than the existing department store statistics.

* DATA IN FEDERAL RESERVE BULLETIN