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WEEKLY TRADE REVIEW
BOOST ANDOVER — LIVE IN ANDOVER

ROGER W. BABSON IS OPTIMISTIC ABOUT CHRISTMAS RETAIL TRADE SITUATION

The Retailer Has His Hand on Throttle of Prosperity and to a Large Extent Controls Output of Factories and Employment of Men and Women Retailers Perform a Great Economic Service

Babson Park, Massachusetts, December 2, 1927. Roger W. Babson today in his exclusive interview for this paper, discusses the retail trade situation. Mr. Babson is optimistic on the Christmas trade and believes that it may exceed all previous years. His official statement is as follows:

Importance of Retailers

"Next to the farmer, the merchant is the most useful member of the industrial organism. I make this restriction as, of course, teachers and preachers are even more useful than farmers. Surely retailers are far more important than bankers, manufacturers, wholesalers, or even wage workers. This is due to the fact that it is easier to manufacture goods than it is to sell goods. This is proved by the fact that it is costing more to sell goods than to manufacture goods. It is easy enough to increase production as fast as sales increase, but it is often difficult to sell goods as fast as they are produced. All this means that the retailer has his hand on the throttle of prosperity and to a very large extent controls the output of factories and the employment of men and women. I wish to especially emphasize this statement because so many look upon retailers as 'non-producers' or 'middle-men' who perform no economic service. Statistics clearly indicate that the retailers of the country perform great economic services.

"Few realize the great army of retailers who are devoting their lives to supply the banks with deposits, to keep the mills and factories operating, and to supply employment to labor. Moreover, these 2,000,000 retailers directly employ some 8,000,000 clerks, which means that about 10,000,000 people in this country are directly engaged in the distribution of goods. When one adds to these figures, those that are indirectly connected with merchandising, from the brakeman on the freight train transporting the goods to the compositor in the newspaper office setting up the department store advertisement, these figures could be easily doubled if not tripled. Hence, the retail situation is not only a barometer of business conditions, but it has much to do with determining business conditions. From this point of view, the following facts are of interest in forecasting what business will be in 1928.

Retail Trade Very Good at Present

"It is very encouraging to note the large number of cities in which retail trade is now profitable. I have been analyzing reports

on the retail situation, sent me by the Chambers of Commerce of ninety-seven representative cities, and I find that of this number, forty-six retail trade conditions are good, forty-five register as fair and only six indicate the retail business as being poor at this time. Many of these cities reporting conditions as being good, also show that retail trade is on the increase, with a promising outlook for the future. This in a way, is only natural, as any great increase in population will necessitate an increase in retail trade also. It is certainly a fact, that with conditions as at present, any retailer who knows the business should be making good money and when one is making money is the time to save money.

"I believe that at the present time the best retail trade conditions are found in Rhode Island, Illinois, Georgia, Alabama, and Oklahoma. These, however, are not the only sections of the country favorable to retail trade, but I consider them to be the best districts. Spartanburg (South Carolina) shows up well at this time and the outlook for this city during the next few months is also quite promising. Austin (Texas) is now witnessing the best retail trade conditions seen in three years, while conditions in Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) are excellent at this time. There are also many other cities in which retailers are doing a thriving business and, on the whole, I believe this good business will last throughout the winter, if not for a longer period of time.

Opportunities for Travelling Salesmen

"The travelling salesmen have opportunities in practically every section of the country at the present time. My study shows that out of the entire list of cities reporting on the situation, only one advises that travelling salesmen should not stop there. Of course, this does not mean that every section is a market for all the many lines of goods sold by the retailer; but it does indicate that practically every section has a better market now than has been seen for some time. Almost all sections report that there are opportunities for the travelling salesmen, the only restriction being the limitations to certain lines. Among the most promising cities I would mention, Hartford

(Connecticut); Cleveland and Cincinnati (Ohio); Wilmington (Delaware); Charlotte (North Carolina); Atlanta and Augusta (Georgia); Chattanooga (Tennessee); South Bend (Indiana); Beaumont (Texas); Lincoln (Nebraska); and San Francisco (California). Now is the time for the travelling salesmen to push their sales in every section using their lines. With all these cities recommending that salesmen stop off, there certainly must be some market for their goods.

"Many salesmen have undoubtedly witnessed a general upward tendency in their sales during the past year or two. This increase, found in many lines in which installment buying is thriving, indicates the effect of installment buying on retail trade. With installment buying continuing at a high level, there is another good reason why the travelling salesmen should find so many cities offering opportunities. I firmly believe that there are now great opportunities for the travelling salesman who knows his goods and is willing to work hard.

Merchandising Inventions

"Although the retailer is a most useful member of society, it nevertheless is true, that he has been very loath to adopt modern methods. It has only been within the past few years that there has been any marked improvements in retailing. The chain store is a progressive step; mail order houses are adopting up-to-date means; while self-service stores are blazing the trail for new developments. Personally, I feel that automatic vending machines have a great future and may some day be used for many more things than the sale of gum, candy, etc. None of these things, however, are comparable with great changes which are coming in the future. Some day something revolutionary will be devised, which will be to distribution what steam was to locomotion and electricity has been to light. Because no such revolutionary thing has yet been discovered is no reason why it will not come. Who, twenty years ago, would have thought radio broadcasting would ever become possible? Some time in the future the cost of distribution will be

(Continued on page 8)

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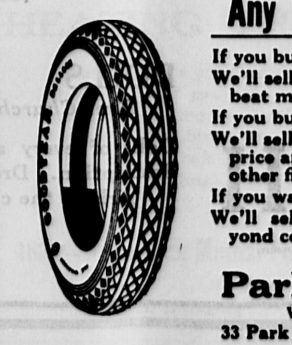
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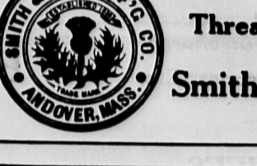
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