

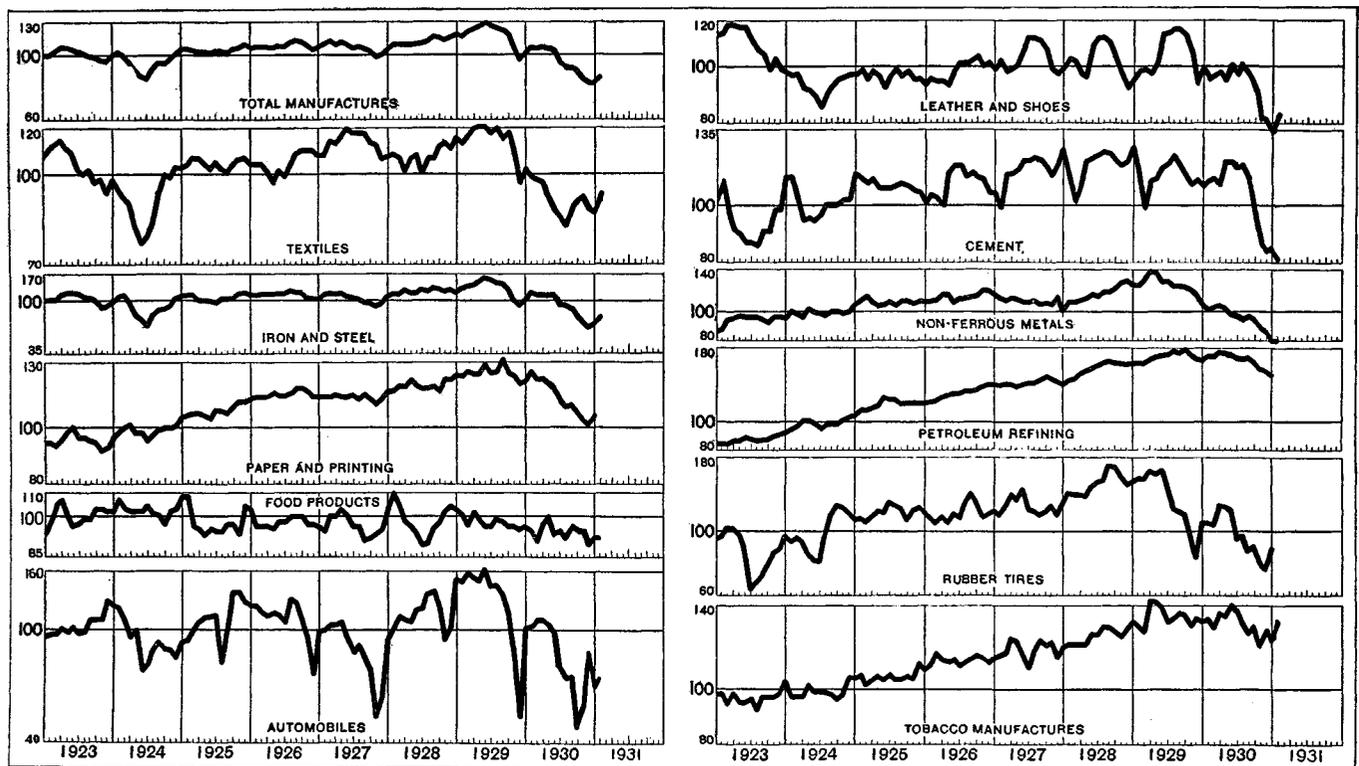
## PRELIMINARY SUMMARY FOR MARCH

Reports on general business and industrial conditions during the first weeks of March show evidence that business has been improving. While downward movements are still to be found among business indicators, upward swings in basic industries, passing seasonal expectations, must be noted as strong elements in the current business picture. Distribution of goods through primary channels, however, was running less than last year, as indicated by the returns on carloadings. The value of new building contracts awarded during the first part of March showed an increase over

strengthening of commodity prices is the first occurrence this year. Prices of agricultural products declined fractionally during the first half of March but prices of nonagricultural products continued the upward trend established during the closing weeks of February. Prices of wheat remained steady during the first weeks of the month, but were considerably under those of a like period last year. Cotton middling prices in New York declined during the opening weeks of March, and were under a year ago, while iron and steel prices remained on the same level as during

### MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION BY MAJOR GROUPS

[Relative numbers, monthly average 1923-1925, taken as 100, adjusted for seasonal variations]



the previous period, but was still materially under the corresponding period a year ago. During February residential contracts began to rise, which, taken with the increasing contracts for public works and utilities, resulted in a more than seasonal advance for the industry at the opening of March. The production of bituminous coal increased slightly during the first weeks of March, but was materially under the same period last year. The output of steel ingots continued the gradual increase established during February, but was under the 1930 output. Petroleum production continued to increase during the opening week of the month, but was materially under the volume of production recorded during the same period last year.

Wholesale prices of commodities, as measured by Fisher's index, though declining during February, moved upward during the opening week in March and remained steady during the second week. Such

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Loans and discounts of Federal reserve member banks declined slightly from the February level, and were below the level of March, 1930. Interest rates on time money at the middle of March were higher than at the close of February, and call money rates advanced during the second week of March for the first movement in eight weeks. Both rates, however, were materially lower than during a like period in 1930 and 1929. The second week of March witnessed a marked rise in bond financing. Pressure on old issues held the price down. Average prices of representative stocks declined from the closing week of February, but at the middle of March were still some 14 per cent above the December low. Stock prices, in general, however, were materially under the average prices during the same period last year.