JOBLESS DECLINE
Sinclair Weeks, Secretary of Commerce, announced that unemployment in the nation declined 78,000 to 5,120,000 from mid-March to mid-April. This reversed, at least temporarily, a steady upward trend that began in November. The drop, however, was much less than is normal for this season of the year. Employment, continuing a seasonal rise, increased 596,000 to 62,907,000, the Secretary reported. The rise in employment does not correspond to the drop in unemployment because of a seasonal increase in the labor force. (Morris. N.Y. Times, 4/30 p.1)

HOUSE APPROVES
JOBLESS PAY PLAN
The House of Representatives handed President Eisenhower a major victory, as it approved his plan for supplementary unemployment compensation to jobless workers. The Administration bill now goes to the Senate. The approved measure calls for thirteen weeks of payments in most states at rates ranging up to $45 a week. Workers who exhaust their benefits in the current recession under the existing Federal-State unemployment insurance system would be eligible. More than 3 million may benefit if the bill is enacted in its present form. The cost, estimated at $800 million, would ultimately be paid either by the states or by a higher Federal tax on business concerns participating in the unemployment insurance program. (Morris. N.Y. Times, 5/2 p.1)

SALES, ORDERS, INVENTORIES
Durable goods makers' new orders, down more in the current recession than in either of the other post-World War II business downturns, are continuing to decline. But the rate of the drop steadied in March on a seasonally adjusted basis. The Department of Commerce said producers of durable goods reported new orders declined $100 million to a total of $10.5 billion in March on a

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seasonal basis—the same as the February decline. This, however, was less than the monthly drops late last year. The Department also reported manufacturers continued to liquidate their inventories in March and said sales dropped still further. But the rate of decline in each category showed no increase from the previous month's pace. (Wall St. J., 5/1 p.26)

BUILDING AWARDS Down in March

Construction contract awards as measured by F.W. Dodge Corporation fell 12% to $2.7 billion in March. It was the fourth consecutive monthly decline from levels of a year ago. All major categories of construction declined, although housing showed the smallest drop in dollar volume. The March results brought the cumulative total of contracts in the first quarter to $6.7 billion, a decline of 11% from a year ago. Thomas S. Holden, Dodge chairman, said that there are indications of a step-up in highway and housing construction and "I will be surprised if there is no upward trend in total awards in April and May." (Wall St. J., 4/30 p.5)

G.M. PROFIT FELL, SALES LEAD IMPROVED

Net income of the General Motors Corporation for the first quarter of this year declined 29.4% to $184.6 million from $261.4 million in the first three months of last year. Sales were down 11.6% according to the report of Harlow H. Curtice, president, and Albert Bradley, chairman. Although unit sales of cars and trucks in the first quarter were below the 1957 level, the report noted a "substantial improvement in competitive position." Net income for the quarter equalled 65¢ a share on the common shares outstanding during the period. It compared with 93¢ a share a year earlier. (N.Y. Times, 4/30 p.45)

U.S. STEEL'S EARNINGS OFF

Net income of the nation's largest steel producer, the United States Steel Corporation, dropped 46% in the first quarter from that of the similar 1957 period. Income, however, was more than enough to cover the usual dividend of 75¢ a common share. (N.Y. Times, 4/30 p.45)

CORPORATION REPORTS

Corporation reports for the first quarter are difficult to generalize beyond the obvious fact that in most cases sales are holding up better than are profits. Faith and hope are prominent in the statements of company chief executives; many, for special or general reasons, foresee a better second and third quarter than the first three months has proved to be. Scattered through several of the top ranking corporation reports are cheerful observations about declining inventories and continued large outlays for capital purposes. (J. of Comm., 5/1 p.1)
INSTALMENT CREDIT CONTINUES DECLINE

Instalment credit outstanding decreased $180 million during March, the Federal Reserve Board has reported. This was the second straight month of decline following a steady rise since early 1954. But the $33 billion total of instalment debt as of March 31 was still about $1.5 billion above a year earlier. In March, as in February, the Board disclosed that nearly all the decline in consumer instalment credit was in auto loans. (Wall St. J., 5/2 p.1)

SAVINGS RISE AT MUTUAL BANKS

The greatest upturn in liquid savings ever recorded for a single month by the nation's mutual savings banks took place when $336 million poured into the 520 institutions which operate in various States under mutual charters. The $336 million March gain compared with a rise of only $130 million in the like 1957 month, according to the National Association of Mutual Savings Banks. (J. of Comm., 4/30 p.3)

TREASURY PLANS FOR DEBT CEILING HIKE

Caught in the squeeze between falling revenues and soaring spending as a result of the recession, the Treasury is preparing to ask Congress to push the ceiling on the Federal debt back up near its record World War II top of $300 billion. Department officials are shaping a request for an increase of $10 billion or more in the present $280 billion ceiling--just a few months after getting a $5 billion boost in the statutory limit which they thought would last through fiscal 1959. This would clear the way for a heavy load of cash borrowing the Treasury expects to have to make in the last half of calendar 1958. At the same time, the Department will be faced with some substantial exchange offerings for securities coming due. (Grimes. Wall St. J., 4/30 p.7)

BRITISH RESERVES AT 3-1/2 YEAR HIGH

The sterling area's gold and dollar reserves rose by $144 million last month to a total of $2.9 billion. This was the highest since November 1954, the Treasury said. (N.Y. Times, 5/3 p.23)

FARM PRICES AT 5-YEAR HIGH

The Department of Agriculture reported that farm prices increased 1.14% during the month ended April 15. This brought the farm price level 9.3% above that of a year ago. Primarily responsible for the April increase were record high prices for fruits and vegetables and a substantial rise for cotton. The farm price level was the highest since January 1953, the month the Eisenhower Administration took office. Prices paid by farmers for goods and services used in production and in family living rose nearly 1% to a record high. These prices were 3% above those for a year earlier. (N.Y. Times, 5/1 p.45)
KRAFT PAPER PRICES REDUCED

Major paper makers reduced prices on kraft wrapping paper about $10 a ton in the wake of similar reductions initiated by smaller companies. The new price level is $180 a ton for 50-pound kraft paper—used widely in stores. (Wall St. J., 5/2 p.1)

PROCESSING OF OIL SETS 3-YEAR LOW

The nation's oil refineries operated at the lowest level since 1954 in the week ended April 25, the American Petroleum Institute reported. The volume of crude oil processed by the refineries averaged 6,984,000 barrels a day. (N.Y. Times, 5/1 p.53)

RUBBER FALLS TO NEW SEASON LOWS

Rubber prices in world markets continued to decline with prices moving into new lows for the season. Lack of manufacturer demand, increased use of synthetic rubber and larger offers from producing nations weighed on prices. At New York, losses extended to more than a cent a pound. At London, the extreme decline was almost 3/4¢ and at Singapore, about 1/2¢. (Wall St. J., 5/1 p.20)

GOODYEAR CUTS SOME TIRE PRICES

For the first time in several years, prices on some passenger tires will be reduced by a manufacturer, effective May 5. Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company is trimming the price tag on three of the most popular tires in the 6.70-15 size from 3% to 10%. Affected by this action are black, tube-type casings. The 6.70-15 group which includes the three being reduced in price, currently accounts for more than 40% of the replacement market for passenger tires. (Kuebler, Akron Beacon J., 5/3 p.13)

BED SHEET PRICE ADVANCE LIKELY

A hike in bed sheet prices is believed in the offing as better than anticipated retail activity has resulted in a stepped-up demand on mills to expedite deliveries. With good sales taking place over-the-counter, stores are finding themselves running low on inventories and are beginning to call in the goods originally intended for their May sales. The feeling now is that the sheet market is on the threshold of an upward revision, with the first price rise likely to be around 2-1/2%. (J. of Comm., 4/29 p.8)

MILITARY PAY RAISE PASSED BY SENATE

The Senate (April 29) passed a $577 million annual military pay increase designed to attract and hold a highly-skilled career force in the armed services. Passage came on a roll-call vote of 87 to 0 after two and a half hours of debate. The measure now goes to conference with the House. Except for approximately 1% of enlisted men, the bill would increase permanent pay rates a minimum of 6% for all service men with more than two years' service. (N.Y. Times, 4/30 p.1)