

OCTOBER 1938

SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS



**UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE
WASHINGTON**

VOLUME 18

NUMBER 10

Revised Estimates Of Monthly Income Payments In the United States



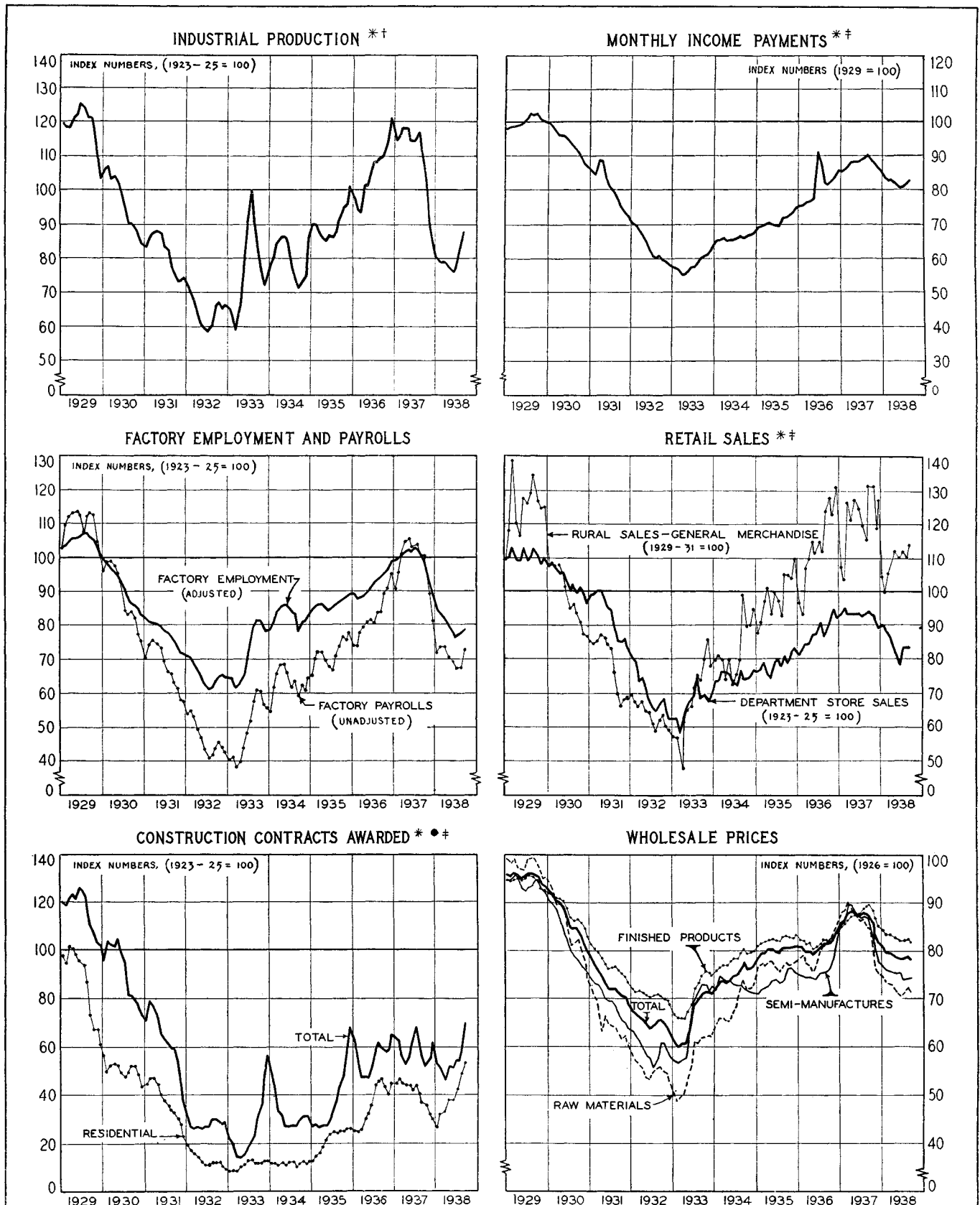
Income payments to individuals turned upward during the third quarter of the year after recording a 2-year low in May. The Bureau's seasonally adjusted index of income payments has recovered one-fifth of the loss during the 9-month recession that began last August. Income payments in August were 9 percent below the recovery high of last year, and for the first 8 months averaged 7 percent below the corresponding period of 1937.

The revised estimates of monthly income payments are discussed in an article on page 15, with the detailed estimates from January 1929 to date.

SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS

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Business Indicators



* ADJUSTED FOR SEASONAL VARIATION

• THREE-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE

† VOLUME BASIS

‡ DOLLAR BASIS

D.D. 9402

Business Situation Summarized

DOMESTIC business conditions improved during September, extending the forward movement in progress since June. Industrial activity increased at a more-than-seasonal rate in response to the rising volume of orders from distribution groups. Primary distribution, as reflected by the movement of freight-car loadings, also expanded by more than the normal seasonal rise. Improvement in the building industry has had an important bearing on the general trend. Government projects have been let recently in enlarged volume under the public works program, and activities in the residential field still constitute a constructive business influence. Since September 1937 was a month of sharp contraction in business activity, in contrast with the recent trend, comparisons with a year ago now make a better showing than was true in the mid-summer months.

International developments during the month influenced business sentiment and directly affected price movements on security and commodity exchanges. Prospects of a general war in Europe became immediate during the month as the German-Czechoslovak controversy over the Sudeten area reached a climax. European currencies weakened, and there was a tremendous flow of gold to this country. Foreign bond "averages" dropped, with wide declines in numerous issues. Following the Munich agreement the markets generally reversed these movements.

Changes in our foreign trade in August, however, the latest month for which data are available, were influenced more by domestic than by foreign events. The rise that has occurred in industrial output during recent months has caused a sharp increase in demands for imported raw materials, and the general improvement in business has occasioned larger demands for finished products from abroad. Exports of finished products reflected the less favorable economic situation in the major foreign countries; but the maintenance of agricultural exports at a relatively favorable rate, and more particularly a sharp advance in tobacco shipments, resulted in a moderate (though less-than-seasonal) rise in total exports.

Industrial production has recovered to about the level reached last November in the downward movement initiated in the third quarter of 1937. Increases in production in both the durable-goods and nondurable-goods industries have occurred recently as the recovery movement broadened. Industries of the former type experienced the more rapid contraction in 1937 (note the extent of the decline in orders for machine tools and electrical equipment indicated in fig. 1), and have only recently recovered a substantial part of the loss. The

general trend is indicated by the change in the steel industry—from a low this year below one-fourth of ingot capacity output expanded until at the end of September nearly half of the capacity was engaged. At the peak in 1937 the ingot rate was above 90 percent of capacity. The automobile industry has not been a major factor in the rise in steel production to date, since assemblies of new cars have remained at a seasonal low. October is expected to bring a sharp advance in automobile production.

Activity in consumer-goods industries has been well above the midsummer rate. Production of textiles, leather manufacturers, and tobacco manufacturers, among others, has advanced. Demands for industrial

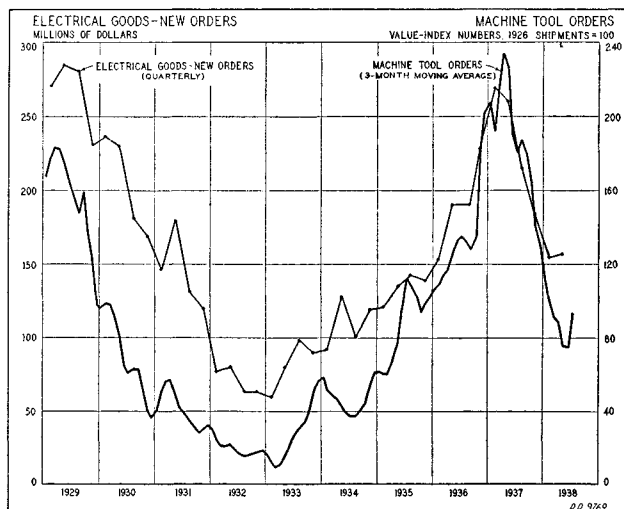


Figure 1.—New Orders for Electrical Goods and Machine Tools, 1929–38. (Bureau of the Census and National Machine Tool Builders' Association.)

fuels (coal and electric power) have expanded, as well as those for industrial materials for fabrication.

Retail trade has improved with the advent of the fall season, but the changes in distribution to consumers on a seasonally corrected basis have not been so pronounced as those in industrial activity. Trade did not experience the abrupt decline that occurred in production last year, following more closely the trend of the volume of income payments, which at the low in May were off about 11 percent from the 1937 high. As outlined in the article on page 15, aggregate income payments have moved definitely upward during recent months, mainly by reason of the rise in payments for labor services.

Employment and Unemployment Trends.

Employment conditions have improved generally since midsummer. The aggregate gains to date have been sufficient to relieve only to a moderate extent the heavy volume of unemployment, and the total number

of workers employed in nonagricultural pursuits in August was still nearly 9 percent lower than a year earlier, according to the estimate of the Bureau of Labor Statistics; nevertheless, the increase in factory employment and pay rolls since July has been much larger than the usual seasonal rise.

In August the number of persons at work in nonagricultural pursuits increased to 32.0 million, and there are evidences of a further gain this month. The estimate for August compares with a 1929 peak of 37.0 million; the depression low of 25.9 million in March 1933; and the recovery high of 35.1 million in September 1937. These estimates of nonagricultural employment cover all persons engaged in gainful work outside of agriculture, including self-employed and casual work-

these figures, which include persons normally engaged in both agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits, the aggregate volume of unemployment was around 10.6 million in August. The Board's estimates consider as unemployed those persons referred to in the preceding paragraph, as well as the members of the Civilian Conservation Corps.

The aggregate volume of unemployment increased sharply after September of last year, when the number of persons out of work had declined to a recovery low of 5.7 million. From February through May of this year the number of unemployed averaged over 11 million persons. The severity of the unemployment situation is indicated by a comparison of this figure with the peak of 14.7 million in March 1933 and an average of 12.5 million during 1932. The Board's estimate of the increase in the total labor force from March 1933 to the summer of 1938 was about 3.3 million persons; thus, whereas unemployment was only about 3.7 million less than in March 1933, the number of employed in both agricultural and nonagricultural pursuits was 7 million higher—this difference arising from the increase in the labor force. Independent estimates of unemployment by the American Federation of Labor and the revised figures of the Committee on Economic Security show the same general pattern of change as the above estimates.

The increased volume of unemployment during the past year has occasioned enlarged public expenditures for relief. (See fig. 2.) Expenditures of \$259,000,000 in August for all public relief were the largest on record, according to the data of the Social Security Board. Relief expenditures have increased considerably since September 1937, when total public outlay for relief was \$169,000,000, the 1937 low. So far this year, total expenditures for public relief have averaged about \$241,000,000 monthly, as compared with \$202,000,000 in the same months of last year and \$219,000,000 in the first 8 months of 1936. As shown in figure 2, the Works Progress Administration has provided the bulk of the relief funds. Special types of public relief, such as old-age assistance and aid to the blind, have increased in the past 2 years, though currently accounting for only one-sixth of all relief expenditures.

In addition to the relief expenditures, the unemployed have received unemployment compensation benefits. Payments from this source have been about \$40,000,000 monthly since March. This is the first year that unemployment compensation benefits have been large, as last year only Wisconsin was making such payments.

Inventory Data.

More complete statistics on the midyear inventory situation have been made available by Dun & Bradstreet, Inc. These data confirm the statement in last

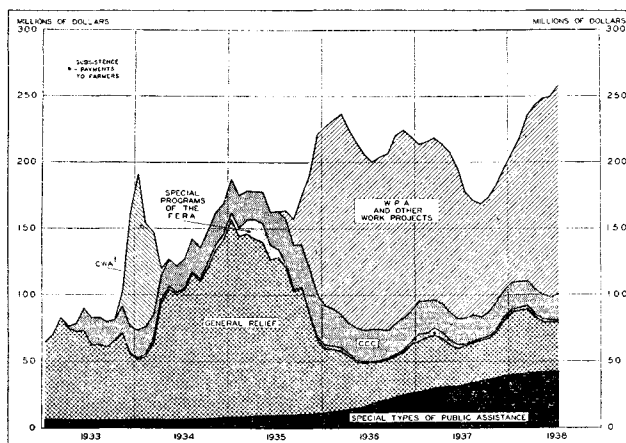


Figure 2.—All Public Relief in the Continental United States, 1933-38. (Source: Social Security Board.)

NOTE.—Transient care and administrative expenses are excluded. C. W. A. relief in 1933-34 represents the estimated earnings of persons who were previously receiving relief.

ers, but exclude those employed on projects of the Works Progress Administration, The Civilian Conservation Corps, and other emergency relief projects.

Employment on W. P. A. and other emergency projects was curtailed during 1937 as private employment expanded. By September 1937, employment on these projects was reduced to around 1.6 million persons, more than 1 million lower than in the early fall of 1936. As private employment decreased after the third quarter of 1937, the Works Progress Administration added to the number at work on its projects. Total number of persons at work on W. P. A. and emergency relief projects has moved steadily upward to over 3.1 million in September.

Unemployment increased materially during the latter part of 1937 and the first half of this year, but the number has been reduced recently. Estimates of the volume of unemployment vary because of the difficulties of definition and measurement. The estimates of the National Industrial Conference Board, which check closely with the Unemployment Census of last fall, provide one estimate of the changes in the volume of unemployment over a period of years. According to

month's issue of the *Survey* that the decline in inventories of all manufacturing concerns this year was smaller than the decline for the 50 large manufacturers for which quarterly data are available. In the larger sample, which comprises reports from over 5,000 manufacturers of all sizes, reduced inventories of the large corporations were in part offset by increased inventories of smaller enterprises. In the more comprehensive estimates of Dun & Bradstreet, the various size groups are given their proper weights on the basis of census data.

These figures indicate a decline of 8 percent in the dollar value of manufacturers' inventories during the first half of 1938, as compared with a decline of about one-fifth for the 50 large corporations. The trend of inventories of these latter is, however, of considerable significance with regard to cyclical fluctuations, because of the important influence which policies of such concerns exercise on the general business situation. Also, the data indicate that declines have been greatest in the lines where inventories at the end of 1937 were most burdensome.

Of the 5,106 manufacturers supplying data, 56 percent reported decreased inventories over the 6-month interval. The sharpest reduction, amounting to 38 percent, was reported by automobile manufacturers whose inventories were at a very high level at the end

of 1937. Other lines effecting marked reductions in inventories included iron and steel products, stone, clay, and glass products and leather and leather products. The textile group as a whole reported a decline of about 8 percent during the first 6 months of 1938, or approximately the same percentage as was reported for all manufacturing industries. During 1936 and 1937, however, textile producers accumulated stocks less rapidly than most other manufacturing industries. For the various industry totals, increases were generally small, except in a few lines such as breweries and confectioneries where supplies are customarily built up during the early months of the year. Price changes account for an important, but indeterminate part of the shift in inventory positions for various industries. An additional factor is the seasonal element which cannot be accurately measured with the limited data at hand.

Over the 6-month interval, inventories of approximately 2,400 wholesalers were reduced about 5 percent in value; and for nearly 12,000 retailers, a decline of 4 percent was recorded. These changes are also computed on the basis of weighted returns. It may be seen from figure 3, however, that 46 percent of the retailers and 44 percent of the wholesalers reported an increase during this period. Seasonal considerations are undoubtedly a factor in this change, although it is not possible to assess their importance.

MONTHLY BUSINESS INDEXES

Year and month	Industrial production						Factory employment and pay rolls		Freight-car loadings		Retail sales, value, adjusted ²		Foreign trade, value, adjusted ²		New Bank debits, outside New York City	Construction contracts, all types, value, adjusted ²	Income payments ³		Wholesale price index, 813 commodities
	Unadjusted ¹			Adjusted ²			Number of employees, adjusted ²	Amount of pay rolls, unadjusted	Total	Merchandise, l. c. l.	Department stores	Rural, general merchandise	Exports	Imports			Unadjusted	Adjusted ³	
	Total	Manufactures	Minerals	Total	Manufactures	Minerals													
Monthly average, 1923-25=100												1929-31=100	Monthly average, 1923-25=100				Monthly average, 1929=100		Monthly average, 1926=100
1929: August	122	122	121	121	122	115	107.0	112.0	110	105	111	129.0	109	119	143.5	122	96.4	103.0	96.3
1933: August	90	89	95	91	91	91	79.4	57.7	64	69	75	75.2	38	50	62.7	24	54.5	58.4	69.5
1934: August	73	71	83	73	72	80	83.0	63.2	61	64	77	79.2	49	39	68.0	27	61.7	65.9	76.4
1935: August	87	87	86	88	89	83	86.1	71.0	63	64	78	92.8	49	54	78.8	38	66.8	70.4	80.5
1936: August	106	106	104	108	110	99	93.4	83.5	76	67	87	111.9	51	62	86.7	62	74.5	80.5	81.6
1937:																			
August	115	114	121	117	117	113	102.4	103.8	79	68	93	115.1	79	79	93.4	62	82.7	88.6	87.5
September	109	106	125	111	110	116	100.7	100.1	78	67	94	131.7	74	76	94.6	56	90.6	87.2	87.4
October	102	99	123	102	101	113	98.4	100.1	76	66	93	131.3	72	68	101.0	52	90.8	86.4	85.4
November	90	86	112	88	85	109	94.1	89.5	71	64	91	118.6	72	69	92.1	56	81.3	85.1	83.3
December	89	75	108	84	79	115	89.0	80.9	67	62	89	126.4	79	65	105.6	61	96.9	84.0	81.7
1938:																			
January	79	75	103	80	76	108	84.2	71.7	65	61	90	104.3	75	52	89.3	52	81.0	81.7	80.9
February	79	76	98	79	75	103	83.0	73.2	62	62	88	99.9	76	51	74.2	51	74.4	80.7	79.8
March	80	77	95	79	75	103	81.6	73.3	60	61	86	105.8	72	48	88.1	46	79.3	80.6	79.7
April	78	76	91	77	73	101	79.2	70.7	57	60	83	112.3	76	46	84.1	52	79.7	79.6	78.7
May	77	75	90	76	73	91	77.5	69.2	58	60	78	110.1	72	45	81.2	51	75.0	78.6	78.1
June	77	75	91	77	74	92	76.3	67.2	58	59	82	112.4	69	47	87.0	54	80.8	78.3	78.3
July	81	79	92	83	82	93	76.8	67.2	61	60	83	110.2	68	47	84.5	59	78.8	79.1	78.8
August	86	85	96	88	87	93	78.9	72.8	62	60	83	114.2	66	53	81.2	70	(²)	(²)	78.1
Monthly average, January through August	122	124	113	113	113	113	104.6	109.9	106	104	96	110.0	112	116	127.5	127	98.9	103.0	95.7
1929.....	76	76	79	79	79	79	67.7	45.0	55	66	57	55.5	31	34	53.1	19	55.7	55.7	63.4
1933.....	82	81	86	86	86	86	83.2	63.5	62	66	65	69.2	45	43	69.4	34	64.3	64.3	74.0
1934.....	88	88	89	89	89	89	84.7	69.1	61	64	67	84.8	45	52	77.9	31	68.2	68.2	79.7
1935.....	101	101	100	100	100	100	89.4	78.8	70	64	74	95.8	50	60	88.9	55	76.4	76.4	80.1
1936.....	117	117	114	114	114	114	100.7	100.6	79	68	81	105.5	69	85	99.9	63	85.1	85.1	87.3
1937.....	80	77	95	95	95	95	94.4	70.7	59	60	73	97.0	68	49	83.7	57	(²)	(²)	79.1

¹ Adjusted for number of working days.

² Adjusted for seasonal variations.

³ For revised data, see pp. 15-19 of this issue.

⁴ Average of 7 months—January, February, April through August.

* Estimated.

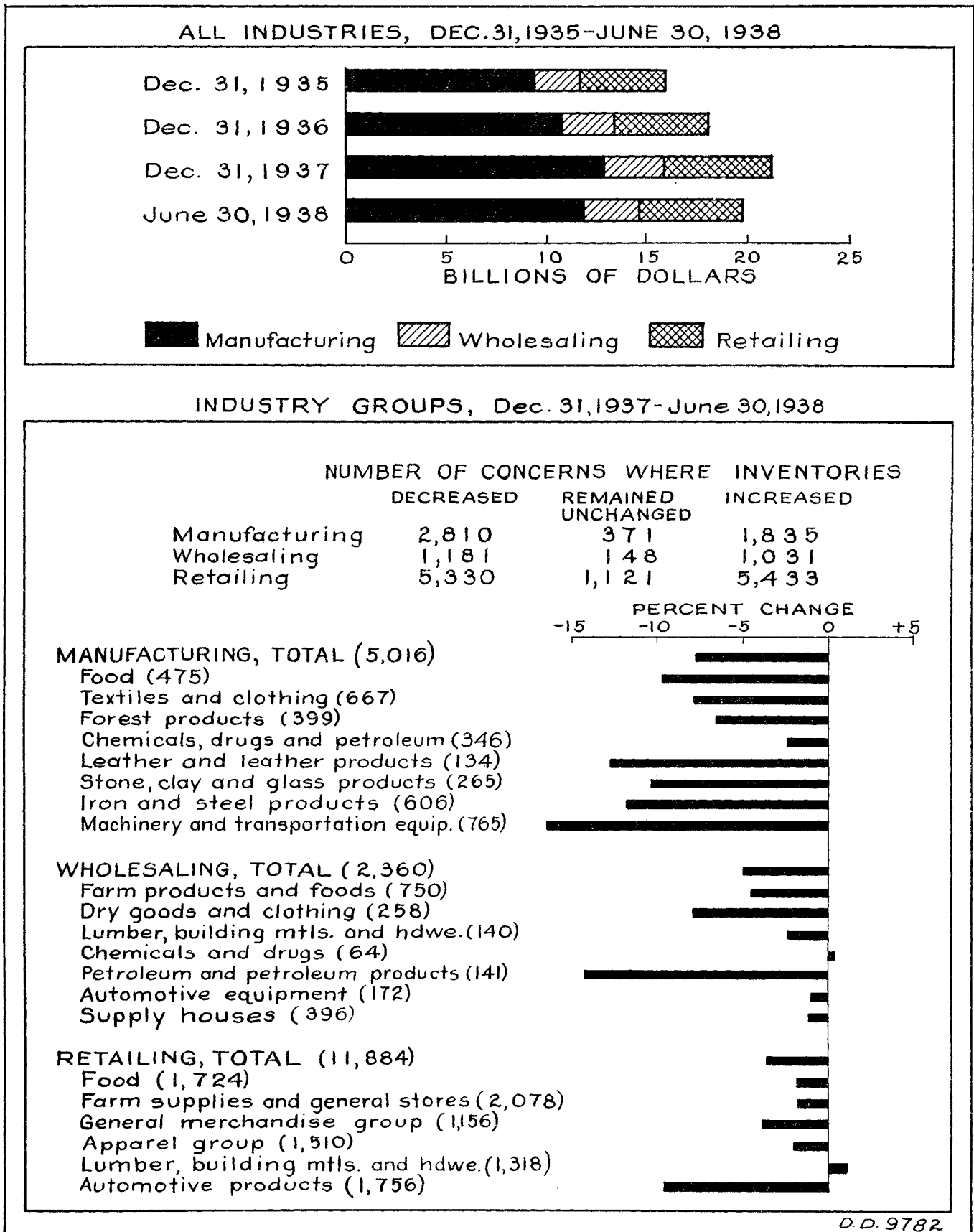


Figure 3.—Trend of Dollar Inventories of Manufacturing, Wholesaling and Retailing Establishments (Dun and Bradstreet, Inc.)

NOTE.—Figures in parenthesis represent the number of establishments reporting. Wholesale supply houses include plumbing and heating supplies, machinery and equipment, and other miscellaneous supplies; retail lumber, building materials and hardware includes farm implements. Other industries classified as miscellaneous by the compilers are here included in each of the group totals.

Commodity Prices

COMMODITY prices generally moved within a limited range during September. European developments affected the movement of prices of some sensitive commodities, but Moody's index of 15 important commodities has fluctuated narrowly. Grain quotations reacted to war threats, but showed little net improvement from the August lows. Nonferrous metal quotations were advanced by small amounts, and purchases increased. The downward movement of prices of farm products was checked and for the week ended September 24 the average wholesale price of farm products was more than 4 percent above the 1938 low reached in the third week of August.

The general average of wholesale prices, reflecting largely higher quotations for farm products and foods, has advanced slightly during the past month. During the past 3 months the general level of wholesale prices has been firm, the fluctuation in the index resulting mostly from changes in the prices of farm products and foods. As compared with September 1937, the index of 813 wholesale price series is off about 10 percent; the varying rates of decline in the various groups are shown in the table below.

Wholesale prices in leading foreign countries generally moved lower during the first 8 months of 1938 extending the trend of the latter part of 1937. There were, however, several exceptions resulting from economic controls, business or financial unsettlement, and other factors. Only fractional changes have occurred in the German index; prices of products of which there is a relative scarcity, such as certain foodstuffs and raw materials, have tended to rise, while prices of finished goods have weakened somewhat. Successive periods of currency depreciation have raised French prices. The wholesale price index reached a peak in June and though subsequently declining was still more than 70 percent higher than in the first half of 1936. The trend of Japanese prices is still upward despite occasional temporary declines. In Italy wholesale prices rose through January and have since been relatively stable. In countries where the price trend has been undisturbed by exceptional developments, there has been no interruption of the downward movement; the decline between January and August 1938 for such countries approximated 5 percent.

INDEXES OF COMMODITY PRICES

Year and month	Wholesale Prices (U. S. Department of Labor)																	Cost of living (National Industrial Conference Board)	Farm prices, combined index (U. S. Department of Agriculture)	Retail prices	
	Combined index, 813 commodities	Economic classes			Groups and subgroups															Foods (U. S. Department of Labor) ¹	Department-store articles (Fairchild's) ²
		Finished products	Raw materials	Semimanufactures	Farm products	Grains	Foods	Meats	Other than farm products and foods	Building materials	Chemicals and drugs	Fuel and lighting	Hides and leather	House-furnishing goods	Metals and metal products	Textile products	Miscellaneous				
Monthly average, 1926=100																	Mo. average, 1923=100	Mo. average, 1909-14=100	Mo. average, 1923-25=100	Dec. 1930 (Jan. 1, 1931)=100	
1929: August	96.3	95.2	99.2	93.5	107.5	99.3	103.5	116.0	91.4	95.2	93.6	82.2	109.5	94.3	100.5	89.8	82.8	101.1	152	108.1	-----
1933: August	69.5	73.4	60.6	71.7	57.6	64.6	64.8	51.0	74.1	81.3	73.1	65.5	91.7	77.6	81.2	74.6	65.4	77.3	79	72.1	82.5
1934: August	76.4	79.2	71.6	72.6	69.8	86.0	73.9	69.4	78.3	85.8	75.7	74.6	83.8	81.8	86.7	70.8	70.2	79.7	96	74.4	87.7
1935: August	80.5	83.0	77.1	73.2	79.3	79.3	84.9	102.0	77.9	85.4	78.6	74.1	89.6	80.5	86.6	70.9	67.3	82.4	106	79.6	85.7
1936: August	81.6	82.4	81.5	75.6	83.8	102.4	83.1	86.4	79.7	86.9	79.8	76.3	93.6	81.4	87.1	70.9	71.5	85.6	124	84.0	88.5
1937:																					
August	87.5	89.0	84.8	86.6	86.4	92.0	86.7	112.1	86.1	96.3	82.2	78.4	108.1	91.1	97.0	77.1	77.3	89.0	123	85.5	96.6
September	87.4	89.1	84.4	85.3	85.9	91.9	88.0	113.4	85.9	96.2	81.4	78.7	107.6	91.1	97.1	75.3	77.0	89.4	118	85.8	96.3
October	85.4	88.1	80.7	82.5	80.4	77.0	85.5	107.4	85.1	95.4	81.2	78.5	106.7	91.0	96.4	73.5	76.2	89.5	112	84.9	95.7
November	83.3	86.7	77.2	79.8	75.7	69.2	83.1	98.3	84.3	93.7	80.2	78.2	101.4	90.4	96.8	71.2	75.4	89.0	107	83.6	94.5
December	81.7	85.3	75.4	77.7	72.8	71.5	79.8	88.8	83.6	92.5	79.5	78.4	97.7	89.7	96.3	70.1	75.0	88.6	104	82.6	93.2
1938:																					
January	80.9	84.3	74.9	76.9	71.6	75.0	76.3	82.6	83.5	91.8	79.6	78.3	96.7	88.3	96.6	69.7	75.2	87.5	102	80.3	92.4
February	79.8	83.3	73.6	76.1	69.8	73.0	73.5	78.4	83.0	91.1	79.1	78.5	94.7	88.0	96.0	68.6	74.8	86.7	97	78.4	91.2
March	79.7	83.4	73.2	75.6	70.3	69.0	73.5	81.6	82.6	91.5	78.7	77.7	93.6	87.7	96.0	68.2	74.4	86.7	96	78.6	90.6
April	78.7	82.7	71.3	75.3	68.4	66.0	72.3	82.2	82.0	91.2	77.5	76.8	92.1	87.3	96.3	67.2	73.4	86.8	94	79.4	90.2
May	78.1	82.1	70.7	75.4	67.5	62.3	72.1	82.1	81.6	90.4	76.8	76.2	91.3	87.2	96.7	66.1	73.1	86.5	92	79.1	89.5
June	78.3	82.2	71.4	74.1	68.7	62.7	73.1	84.5	81.3	89.7	76.3	76.4	90.1	87.1	96.1	65.5	72.9	86.7	92	80.2	89.2
July	78.8	82.5	72.3	74.3	69.4	58.3	74.3	89.7	81.4	89.2	77.7	76.8	91.5	86.4	95.2	66.1	72.7	86.5	95	80.0	89.0
August	78.1	81.8	71.4	74.4	67.3	53.4	73.0	86.0	81.4	89.4	77.7	76.8	91.9	86.4	95.4	65.9	72.4	85.9	92	78.4	89.0
Monthly average, January through August:																					
1929.....	95.7	94.9	97.9	94.1	105.5	96.8	99.6	110.5	91.8	95.7	94.5	83.0	108.9	94.1	101.2	91.1	82.5	99.7	146	103.5	-----
1933.....	63.4	68.2	53.8	61.9	49.0	49.3	58.9	50.9	68.3	73.4	72.3	63.3	76.5	73.3	78.6	58.3	60.8	73.5	66	64.1	72.7
1934.....	74.0	77.6	66.7	73.4	62.3	68.1	68.2	58.9	78.5	86.7	75.4	72.8	87.7	81.5	87.2	74.2	69.4	78.9	85	72.9	88.7
1935.....	79.7	82.0	76.9	72.6	78.8	83.1	82.9	92.8	77.6	85.0	80.2	73.4	87.5	80.7	86.2	70.0	68.9	82.3	107	80.2	86.1
1936.....	80.1	81.6	78.3	74.6	78.7	80.2	81.2	88.7	79.1	85.9	79.2	76.1	94.7	81.4	86.6	70.6	69.3	84.2	110	81.7	88.2
1937.....	87.3	87.1	87.5	87.2	90.4	109.2	86.1	97.5	85.5	95.5	85.5	77.2	105.4	88.9	95.0	78.1	78.8	88.2	127	85.5	95.1
1938.....	79.1	82.8	72.4	75.3	69.1	65.0	73.5	83.4	82.1	90.5	77.9	77.2	92.7	87.3	96.0	67.2	73.6	86.7	95	79.3	90.1

¹ Middle of month.² Index is as of the 1st of the following month.

Domestic Trade

RETAIL buying has shown only moderate variations in the last several months, after allowance for the usual seasonal changes, though the tendency has been toward higher levels. In the early part of September, as in August, sales increased sharply, but the available data indicate that the gains were not much greater than those which usually occur at this season. Some improvement, however, has occurred in comparisons with last year; thus, for a large group of department stores, sales in the first half of September were about 9 percent below those of a year ago, while for August the loss was 11 percent. Automobile sales in September were at a seasonal low, with dealers clearing stocks before presentation of the new models. Stocks of this year's models are generally believed to have been worked off, and a test of the new car market awaits volume deliveries of the 1939 models.

In August the adjusted index of department store sales remained unchanged at 83 (1923-25=100) on the basis of final figures. Variety-store sales, which usually are in about the same dollar volume in August as in July, showed a small decline over the month interval. Rural sales of general merchandise, however, recorded a more-than-seasonal advance.

A gain of 8 percent in August as compared with July was recorded for the Bureau's sample of 18,000 independent retail stores located in 27 States. Dollar

sales for this list of stores were about 14 percent below August 1937. In these comparisons, no allowance is made for variations in the number of working days. August had two more trading days than July and one more than in August 1937, and when adjustment is made for this factor, sales show practically no change in August as compared with July and the decline from August a year ago becomes approximately 17 percent. An indeterminate proportion of the decline is accounted for by reduced prices.

The improvement in general business conditions since early in the summer has been more clearly reflected in the data for primary distribution than in the retail trade figures. Thus, sales of 2,400 wholesalers reporting to the Bureau were 13 percent larger in August than in July; and even after allowance for the variations in trading days and the usual seasonal gain, an increase was recorded. Exhibiting the same tendency as in retail stores, the decline from a year ago for daily average wholesalers' sales has narrowed slightly; in August it amounted to 14 percent, in July to 15 percent, and in June to 16 percent.

For a list of nearly 1,300 manufacturers, daily average sales in August increased 8 percent over July. In both July and August, daily average sales were about 21 percent below a year ago; in June, the decline amounted to 23 percent.

DOMESTIC TRADE STATISTICS

Year and month	Retail trade												Wholesale trade		Commercial failures		
	Department stores				Combined index (Chain Store Age)	Chain-store sales				Rural sales of general merchandise		New passenger-car sales		Employment	Pay rolls	Failures	Liabilities
	Sales		Stocks ¹			Grocery stores		Variety stores		Unad-just-ed ²		Unad-just-ed ³					
	Unad-just-ed ²	Ad-just-ed ³	Unad-just-ed	Ad-just-ed ³		Unad-just-ed ²	Ad-just-ed ³	Unad-just-ed ²	Ad-just-ed ³	Unad-just-ed ²	Ad-just-ed ³	Unad-just-ed ²	Ad-just-ed ³				
	Monthly average, 1923-25=100					Avg. same mo. 1929-31=100	Monthly average, 1929-31=100								Monthly average, 1929=100		Number
1929: August.....	84	111	96	100	87.0	98.2	102.3	96.9	107.9	111.0	129.0	167.0	148.5	301.3	100.0	---	---
1933: August.....	59	75	62	65	93.0	78.7	82.0	76.7	86.7	64.7	75.2	58.3	52.0	77.9	57.2	1,427	37,287
1934: August.....	60	77	61	65	93.0	80.6	84.0	79.9	90.3	68.1	79.2	63.1	56.0	82.5	62.7	872	15,703
1935: August.....	61	78	60	63	97.7	83.9	87.3	79.3	89.6	79.8	92.8	80.2	75.0	82.7	64.8	884	13,266
1936: August.....	68	87	65	67	109.0	92.1	95.9	86.5	97.7	96.2	111.9	92.9	92.0	86.3	69.7	655	8,271
1937:																	
August.....	72	93	74	78	113.2	89.6	93.3	90.6	102.4	99.0	115.1	112.6	120.5	91.8	79.0	707	11,916
September.....	100	94	80	77	117.0	94.7	96.6	99.8	104.5	130.4	131.7	73.2	105.0	93.0	78.3	564	8,393
October.....	103	93	85	76	114.8	94.9	94.4	101.5	100.0	160.2	131.3	82.6	127.0	94.0	79.3	768	9,335
November.....	101	91	86	75	109.0	94.9	94.9	102.7	101.2	145.8	118.6	90.8	89.0	93.5	78.3	786	10,078
December.....	156	89	68	72	111.5	97.0	94.2	203.5	110.3	179.5	126.4	70.1	78.0	93.3	77.8	932	13,291
1938:																	
January.....	70	90	63	71	106.7	93.3	96.2	71.6	96.1	86.6	104.3	50.8	65.0	91.0	75.4	1,320	15,035
February.....	70	88	67	70	106.4	94.1	93.6	78.6	94.1	90.4	99.9	53.6	74.0	90.4	75.3	1,071	13,359
March.....	77	86	71	70	103.3	95.6	94.7	81.7	97.2	98.4	105.8	76.0	61.0	89.1	74.7	1,088	15,567
April.....	86	83	71	69	105.0	94.4	91.7	95.2	92.9	107.9	112.3	80.5	60.0	88.5	74.6	1,116	20,106
May.....	80	78	71	69	103.3	95.0	93.6	90.7	90.7	103.5	110.1	75.5	57.0	87.3	75.1	1,053	14,559
June.....	79	82	65	68	106.3	93.6	92.2	90.9	95.7	106.2	112.4	65.0	50.5	87.2	73.6	1,018	12,236
July.....	58	83	61	67	108.1	89.2	91.0	88.0	99.0	84.8	110.2	61.4	56.5	86.8	73.6	995	10,793
August.....	65	83	65	67	106.4	87.5	91.0	85.8	97.0	98.2	114.2	49.2	54.5	88.1	73.9	974	11,692
Monthly average, January through August:																	
1929.....	96	---	97	---	---	100.6	---	94.6	---	110.0	---	165.9	---	98.7	98.4	---	---
1933.....	57	---	49	---	81.7	79.0	---	72.2	---	55.5	---	46.9	---	73.5	54.9	1,914	46,315
1934.....	65	---	64	---	91.3	83.0	---	81.1	---	69.2	---	65.6	---	81.9	62.3	1,012	20,790
1935.....	67	---	62	---	95.1	88.4	---	80.9	---	84.8	---	89.2	---	83.2	64.6	982	14,845
1936.....	74	---	64	---	103.6	94.1	---	87.1	---	95.8	---	110.4	---	85.4	68.2	826	13,169
1937.....	81	---	74	---	111.1	107.7	---	90.5	---	105.5	---	122.2	---	91.3	75.7	746	9,312
1938.....	73	---	67	---	105.7	92.8	---	85.3	---	97.0	---	64.0	---	88.6	74.5	1,079	14,168

¹ End of month.² Adjusted for number of working days.³ Adjusted for seasonal variations.

Employment

WIDESPREAD gains in employment and pay rolls were recorded in August according to the monthly data of the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In mid-August the number at work in nonagricultural occupations was nearly a quarter of a million larger than a month earlier, an unusually large increase for this season of the year. This gain resulted in some improvement in the year-to-year comparisons; in August, employment in all industries, exclusive of agriculture, was about 3,000,000 below a year ago, whereas in both June and July the loss amounted to 3,300,000 workers.

About 320,000 additional factory workers were engaged in August. This increase of 4.9 percent in the employment index was several times the usual seasonal rise. The rise in pay rolls amounted to almost 9 percent; the usual seasonal increase is about 3 percent.

The nondurable-goods industries again accounted for the larger part of the August gain in factory employment. The number of employees in these industries increased about 7 percent, with more than seasonal gains in men's and women's clothing, cotton goods, and knit and woolen goods. In durable-goods lines, the rise in employment amounted to about 2 percent and it was the first improvement in the heavy industries in nearly a year.

Wage rate decreases were reported in 18 manufacturing industries during August. These reductions affected about 32,000 workers out of a total of 3,400,000 engaged by firms reporting to the Bureau.

Among the 16 nonmanufacturing industries reporting, changes in employment and pay rolls were generally small except in anthracite mines where a sharp reduction in workers reflected in part the strikes which occurred in the early part of August. In wholesale trade lines, employment increased 1.5 percent, the first gain since last October. Retail trade establishments reported a decline of 1.3 percent which is slightly less than that usually experienced.

In accordance with its usual procedure, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has adjusted its indexes of factory employment and pay rolls to the latest census data, i. e., those for 1935. The revised data, which extend back to January 1933, will be presented in the November issue of the Survey; the same issue will include special tables for several series that have been revised historically to adjust for changes in census classifications. The November issue will also include the seasonally adjusted figures for the past year, and data beginning 1933 will be shown in a subsequent Survey. In this issue of the Survey the unrevised indexes are presented for the last time; data without adjustment for seasonal variation are given for August 1938, but the seasonally adjusted figures are not available on the old basis.

As an indication of the extent of the revisions, the index for total factory employment (1923-25=100) for August is 7.9 percent higher on the revised basis, and the index for pay rolls is 5.6 percent higher.

STATISTICS OF EMPLOYMENT, PAY ROLLS, AND WAGES

Year and month	Factory employment and pay rolls			Nonmanufacturing employment and pay rolls, unadjusted (U. S. Department of Labor)										Trade-union members employed	Wages		
	Employment		Pay rolls	Anthracite mining ¹		Bituminous coal mining ¹		Electric light and power and manu- factured gas		Telephone and tele- graph		Retail trade			Factory (National Indus- trial Conference Board)		Common labor rates road building)
															Average weekly earnings	Average hourly earnings	
	Unad-justed	Ad-justed ²	Unad-justed	Em-employment	Pay rolls	Em-employment	Pay rolls	Em-employment	Pay rolls	Em-employment	Pay rolls	Em-employment	Pay rolls		Percent of total members	Dollars	
	Monthly average, 1923-25=100			Monthly average, 1929=100													
1929: August.....	107.7	107.0	112.0	91.1	78.4	95.8	92.8	105.4	103.8	103.7	101.8	98.7	99.2	91	28.49	0.590	40
1933: August.....	79.6	79.4	57.7	55.7	49.9	80.9	51.2	78.1	70.9	68.1	66.1	75.4	54.9	69	19.34	.507	36
1934: August.....	83.6	83.0	63.2	59.5	43.8	92.9	60.8	85.6	79.9	71.0	74.0	77.8	58.4	72	19.58	.588	41
1935: August.....	86.3	86.1	71.0	50.4	33.1	91.8	57.7	86.8	82.8	70.5	75.5	78.0	59.3	77	22.46	.603	42
1936: August.....	93.5	93.4	83.5	49.6	34.1	94.9	76.3	93.1	89.8	73.5	81.2	82.4	64.4	86	24.76	.617	39
1937:																	
August.....	102.3	102.4	103.8	49.7	29.6	97.4	86.3	98.3	102.6	79.8	92.1	86.2	72.3	88	27.76	.713	42
September.....	102.1	100.7	100.1	58.1	34.2	99.4	90.9	98.6	104.0	79.8	92.3	90.7	74.4	88	27.39	.716	43
October.....	100.5	98.4	100.1	61.5	55.4	102.4	100.7	98.5	105.3	79.6	94.9	92.1	75.9	88	27.12	.716	43
November.....	94.7	94.1	89.5	60.9	49.0	101.4	91.1	97.3	103.8	78.9	91.4	91.7	75.3	86	25.59	.717	41
December.....	88.6	89.0	80.9	61.4	51.3	99.4	95.1	96.1	102.4	78.0	94.7	100.4	80.6	83	24.36	.715	38
1938:																	
January.....	82.2	84.2	71.7	59.6	46.5	96.9	70.4	93.8	98.9	77.8	93.7	84.1	70.1	80	22.98	.710	34
February.....	82.3	83.0	73.2	60.0	46.1	95.5	74.0	92.6	98.5	75.7	89.9	82.4	68.4	79	23.53	.710	33
March.....	81.7	81.6	73.3	59.3	47.3	93.2	68.4	92.0	96.6	74.9	92.6	83.0	68.6	79	23.63	.714	33
April.....	79.6	79.2	70.7	57.0	39.0	85.8	56.3	91.8	97.6	74.8	91.6	88.7	72.2	80	23.53	.717	35
May.....	77.4	77.5	69.2	52.8	38.3	82.2	55.5	91.7	97.4	75.0	91.3	83.8	70.0	81	23.38	.718	40
June.....	75.9	76.3	67.2	56.0	49.7	80.1	57.1	92.2	98.7	74.8	90.9	83.6	69.5	81	23.74	.719	41
July.....	76.1	76.8	67.2	44.6	20.2	78.5	56.8	92.4	98.4	74.9	90.9	81.1	68.1	82	23.93	.713	-----
August.....	79.6	78.9	72.8	37.6	20.1	80.4	64.6	93.1	99.0	74.8	92.6	80.0	67.0	83	24.83	.710	-----
Monthly average, January through August:																	
1929.....	104.6	-----	109.9	97.5	90.5	99.9	97.4	97.7	97.3	99.0	98.7	97.7	97.7	88	28.69	.588	-----
1933.....	67.7	-----	45.0	56.4	45.0	77.0	40.3	77.3	70.8	71.2	68.9	72.1	52.1	67	17.07	.464	-----
1934.....	83.2	-----	63.5	69.1	62.9	90.7	62.6	83.2	77.1	70.4	70.6	80.7	60.0	74	20.13	.575	-----
1935.....	84.7	-----	69.1	65.1	53.6	94.8	60.0	83.6	79.8	70.1	74.3	80.5	60.8	77	21.88	.598	-----
1936.....	89.4	-----	78.8	63.1	50.1	96.0	77.9	88.9	87.0	71.4	77.7	82.9	64.3	82	24.05	.613	-----
1937.....	100.7	-----	100.6	60.0	46.6	98.6	85.5	94.6	97.4	77.1	87.7	87.8	71.4	88	27.58	.682	-----
1938.....	79.4	-----	70.7	53.4	38.4	86.6	62.9	92.5	98.4	75.3	91.7	83.3	69.2	81	23.69	.714	-----

¹ See footnote marked "†" on p. 29.² Adjusted for seasonal variations.

• Estimated.

Finance

FOREIGN exchange markets showed nervousness during September as the political crisis in Europe reached an acute stage. The seriousness of the situation at times demoralized the market; and the flight of foreign capital to the United States, coupled with the continued heavy demand for dollars growing out of the large merchandise export balance of the country, brought quotations for the major foreign currencies below their lowest levels of recent years. The pound sterling continued to fall after breaking through its former parity with the dollar, while currencies linked to sterling, the Scandinavian units, and the Indian rupee, touched new lows, as did also the French and Swiss francs, the Czech crown, and the guilder. The Far Eastern exchanges were also depressed, with the Japanese yen reaching its low for recent years. The South American currencies were only mildly affected by the crisis and remained generally firm. In response to the cheapening of the pound sterling, the price of gold in London rose to 145 shillings on September 24, the highest level since 1935. Exchange rates recovered sharply after the Munich agreement.

The Secretary of the Treasury reported that the European situation was resulting in an influx of foreign funds in unprecedented volume. Additions to monetary gold stock in excess of half a billion dollars during September reflected the extraordinary size of the movement. Insurance underwriters in this country, fearful of the consequences of the threatened conflict, canceled all "open-cover" marine insurance contracts with shippers and advanced the rates of "war-risk" insurance.

Security prices were also dominated by the European crisis, but to a lesser extent than the foreign exchange

market. At the end of the first week in September, stock prices were at about their August high points. They showed a generally declining tendency during the remainder of the month. Bond prices followed the pattern of stock prices, with railroad obligations, among the corporate bonds, showing the widest fluctuations.

Reflecting the attractiveness of the offer and the dearth of new corporate capital issues, the Treasury's September 15 financing program met with the accustomed success. Offerings at par consisted of an issue of \$400,000,000 of 12-to-14-year Treasury bonds, paying 2½ percent interest and of \$300,000,000 of 1½ percent Treasury notes due June 15, 1943. At the same time, an offer was made to the holders of \$433,460,900 of 1½ percent Treasury notes, series E, 1938, maturing on December 15, to exchange these notes either for the new Treasury bonds or notes, the exchange to be made par-for-par with an adjustment of accrued interest as of September 15. The Treasury allotted \$803,800,000, or about \$104,000,000 more than had been offered.

As a result of the transfer of funds following the Treasury financing, the increase in monetary gold stock during September was offset chiefly by increases in Treasury cash and deposits with Federal Reserve banks. Member bank reserve balances and excess reserves continued to rise up to the time of the financing and then decreased. There was a further increase during the month in the total loans and investments of the reporting member banks, with additional investments in Government obligations and in other securities accounting for most of the change. Loans to commerce, industry, and agriculture showed only a slight increase during the period.

FINANCIAL STATISTICS

Year and month	Federal Reserve bank credit outstanding, end of month	Monetary gold stock	Currency in circulation	Excess reserves of member banks, end of month	Reporting member banks, Wednesday closest to end of month					Stock prices (Standard Statistics)	All listed bonds, domestic, average price (N. Y. S. E.)	Capital flotations, corporate		Dividend rate, average per share (600 companies)	Interest rates, commercial paper (4-6 months)
					Loans		Investments	Deposits				New capital	Refunding		
					Total	Com'l, industrial, and agricultural ¹		Demand, adjusted	Time						
Millions of dollars										1926=100	Dollars	Thous. of dollars		Dollars	Percent
1929: August.....		4,064	4,490		16,950		5,456		6,766	218.1	96.19	763,177	25,045	2.94	6-6½
1933: August.....	2,297	4,036	5,329	595	9,053		8,467		4,941	74.4	87.91	14,050	0	1.05	1½
1934: August.....	2,464	7,971	5,355	1,867	8,276		10,644		5,030	67.5	91.13	8,019	10,000	1.23	¾-1
1935: August.....	2,485	9,180	5,576	2,708	7,817		12,022	13,263	4,839	83.0	93.07	29,795	180,067	1.33	¾
1936: August.....	2,471	10,674	6,191	1,950	8,454		13,809	14,867	5,032	113.0	98.81	170,799	61,639	1.64	¾
1937:															
August.....	2,577	12,512	6,500	773	10,027	4,638	12,292	14,924	5,268	120.5	95.64	50,673	56,136	2.13	1
September.....	2,579	12,653	6,558	1,038	10,004	4,807	12,022	14,864	5,290	106.4	94.54	112,757	39,386	2.13	1
October.....	2,580	12,782	6,566	1,055	9,625	4,761	12,029	14,610	5,278	91.4	93.17	66,647	69,653	2.13	1
November.....	2,606	12,788	6,558	1,169	9,441	4,637	11,940	14,612	5,284	82.9	92.36	26,942	10,120	2.19	1
December.....	2,612	12,765	6,618	1,212	9,387	4,601	12,015	14,431	5,205	82.2	92.75	42,767	14,463	2.18	1
1938:															
January.....	2,593	12,756	6,397	1,383	8,981	4,394	12,253	14,464	5,225	81.6	91.64	45,533	3,773	1.93	1
February.....	2,590	12,768	6,319	1,415	8,933	4,357	12,298	14,381	5,260	80.7	92.44	40,802	62,225	1.63	1
March.....	2,611	12,778	6,338	1,546	8,771	4,299	12,039	14,268	5,221	77.9	88.71	23,995	57,643	1.57	¾-1
April.....	2,594	12,829	6,337	2,548	8,587	4,187	12,257	14,598	5,230	70.7	90.84	12,313	66,500	1.55	¾-1
May.....	2,582	12,891	6,415	2,568	8,334	3,992	12,202	14,589	5,216	73.9	90.81	35,935	25,692	1.43	¾-1
June.....	2,596	12,946	6,433	2,875	8,321	3,936	12,240	15,036	5,239	73.1	91.97	198,866	95,034	1.39	¾-1
July.....	2,589	12,985	6,464	3,022	8,165	3,865	12,395	14,951	5,193	88.0	93.32	129,061	51,545	1.39	¾
August.....	2,585	13,057	6,482	2,941	8,270	3,886	12,591	15,388	5,210	89.5	92.53	124,696	211,141	1.39	¾

¹ This item was first reported by the Federal Reserve in May 1937; see footnote marked "⊕" on p. 32 of this issue.

Foreign Trade

IMPROVEMENT in domestic business activity in recent months led to an increase of 17 percent in the value of goods imported into the United States from July to August. This was the first major advance in over a year, and most of the gain represented the larger quantities of goods received. The rise in prices of some leading commodities affected the total value of imports only slightly. While the volume of imports in August remained much lower than a year ago, the August decline was about one-fifth, compared with a drop of one-third in the first 7 months of this year.

Imports of merchandise were curtailed substantially during the first 7 months of the year. Our purchases in foreign countries of all classes of products declined almost without interruption from the second quarter of 1937 to the middle of 1938. Especially sharp decreases in industrial demands for imported raw materials and in the need for foreign farm products reduced the value of total imports in July to the lowest level since 1934. With the abundant supplies of domestic wheat and corn available in 1938, importations of these grains were unnecessary, and imports of meats and oils were greatly reduced; whereas in 1937 such imports reached high levels under the stimuli of rising prices and the drought-shortened supplies in this country.

While the increase in consumption of certain raw materials and other imports was noticeable in the large amount of goods withdrawn from warehouses in several other recent months, it was not until August that a considerable increase was apparent in imported goods received. The shifts, on a quarterly basis, in the indexes of quantity, price, and value of imports and exports, as compiled by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, are shown in figure 1.

Export Trade by Classes.

After showing a moderate decline in the period from May through July, export trade rose slightly in value in August, although by less than the usual seasonal amount. The increase was due chiefly to the volume of shipments of agricultural products, which have been running relatively high since the fall of 1937. Exports of semimanufactured and manufactured goods, which had ranged in value from \$172,000,000 to \$188,000,000 monthly during the first 4 months of the year, dropped off to less than \$150,000,000 in August; and as a result, the export total fell below that of the corresponding month in 1937 for the fourth consecutive month. The total quantity of merchandise exported in August 1938 was about 6 percent smaller than that of a year ago.

Export trade was maintained at a relatively high rate during the first 8 months of 1938. Agricultural exports, reflecting the good harvest in 1937 and the

drought shortage in 1936, were up 30 percent to a value of \$527,294,000. Shipments of corn to foreign countries in the first 8 months of 1938 were heavier than in any corresponding period since the early 1920's, and those of wheat were the largest since 1927.

Demand from foreign countries for certain of our raw materials and finished manufactures were also sustained

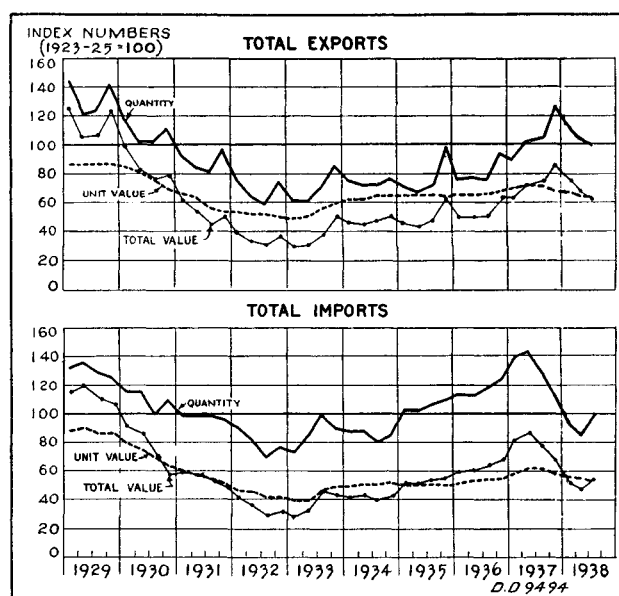


Figure 1.—Changes in Quantity, Unit Value (Prices), and Total Value of Exports and Imports, by Quarters, 1929-38 (Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce). Third Quarter of 1938 Partly Estimated.

in large value. Exports of a number of manufactured articles, particularly aircraft, metal-working machinery, gasoline, and agricultural implements, were much larger than a year ago; exports of cotton manufactures increased slightly, and other exports, especially electrical apparatus, advanced manufactures of iron and steel, paper manufactures, and rubber manufactures, decreased only moderately.

While some leading exports—automobiles, motor-trucks, lubricants, scrap iron, and heavy new iron and steel products, for example—dropped much lower in volume in the past 2 or 3 months than during 1937 and the early part of 1938, the value of total nonagricultural exports of \$1,495,668,000 in the 8-month period ended with August was down only 9 percent from the relatively large total of a year before. The changes in the value of leading export commodities (both agricultural and nonagricultural) in the first 8 months of 1938, as compared with the same period of 1937, may be seen in figure 2.

In some industries, advances have been made this year in the relative importance of export trade. This was especially true in the first half of the year, owing

to the curtailment in domestic demand as compared with the relatively steady volume of shipments to foreign buyers. So far this year, half of the orders for machine tools have been from foreign sources, as compared with about one-fourth of a much larger total volume last year; 9 percent of the total output of steel products was exported, or double the percentage a year ago.

Exports by Regions.

Europe was, as usual, our leading foreign market for all classes of exports in the first 8 months of 1938. Nearly two-thirds of our foodstuffs exports, over 50 percent of our crude materials, 45 percent of our semi-manufactures, and 30 percent of our exports of finished manufactures were taken by Europe—larger shares than by any other continent. In addition to the increased shipments of grain to Europe, those of leaf tobacco increased in both quantity and value and manufactured articles were slightly larger in value than in the first 8 months of 1937. Total European purchases represented 42 percent of all merchandise exported from the United States in the first 8 months of 1938, as compared with 37 percent in the corresponding period of 1937.

Latin America was our second most important export market in the first 8 months of 1938, having taken 18½ percent of our total exports. Although shipments to Southern North America, particularly Mexico, declined, exports to the South American countries, con-

sisting principally of manufactured articles, were larger in value than in the corresponding period of 1937. Exports to Oceania increased slightly and the purchases of Canada were maintained in nearly as large value as in the first 8 months of 1937.

Our export trade with the Far East this year has shown the effect of the greatly disturbed condition in China and the import-control regulations enforced by Japan. Shipments of United States cotton to Japan were one-fifth smaller in the first 8 months of 1938 than in the corresponding period of 1937, and those of wood pulp, pig iron, and steel scrap decreased by larger percentages. Metal-working machinery, aircraft, and crude petroleum were the principal exports to Japan that registered increases in 1938.

Imports by Regions.

The decrease in imports in the first 8 months of 1938 was extremely sharp for those areas which furnished large amounts of farm products last year. For example, imports from Argentina, which included large quantities of corn and wool last year, were hardly one-fourth as large in value in the first 8 months of 1938; and imports from Australia (mainly wool) were reduced almost nine-tenths. Imports from China were down by three-fifths, while the decrease in imports from other leading countries ranged from less than 5 percent to 55 percent.

EXPORTS AND IMPORTS

Year and month	Indexes		Exports of United States merchandise										Imports ¹				
	Value of total exports, adjusted ²	Value of total imports, adjusted ²	Exports, including reexports	Total	Crude materials		Foodstuffs, total	Semi-manufactures	Finished manufactures			Total	Crude materials	Foodstuffs	Semi-manufactures	Finished manufactures	
					Total	Un-manufactured cotton			Total	Machinery	Auto-mobiles, parts, and accessories						
				Monthly average, 1923-25=100		Millions of dollars											
1929: August.....	109	119	380.6	374.5	50.9	23.9	65.5	57.1	201.0	50.6	36.0	369.4	125.8	74.9	79.7	88.9	
1933: August.....	38	50	131.5	129.3	42.0	28.2	16.9	20.5	50.0	11.1	8.1	154.9	50.8	35.4	35.1	33.7	
1934: August.....	49	39	172.0	169.9	39.7	17.8	22.1	29.4	78.7	20.2	15.3	117.3	34.2	30.8	23.0	29.2	
1935: August.....	49	54	172.1	169.7	40.9	16.6	15.6	30.9	82.2	23.8	15.7	180.4	50.2	63.6	31.2	35.4	
1936: August.....	51	62	179.0	175.8	38.1	12.0	19.7	32.3	85.7	25.2	12.3	200.8	61.8	56.8	40.8	41.4	
1937:																	
August.....	79	79	277.7	274.2	46.0	15.9	27.4	67.2	133.6	40.8	23.1	249.0	79.6	66.9	54.8	47.7	
September.....	74	76	296.7	293.5	80.9	39.0	26.8	55.4	130.4	39.0	23.3	234.1	76.0	56.9	52.6	48.6	
October.....	72	68	333.1	329.8	88.3	45.0	38.8	59.0	143.7	44.6	25.4	226.5	71.7	53.0	51.9	50.0	
November.....	72	69	314.7	311.2	84.9	43.7	32.9	57.0	136.4	37.7	29.8	212.4	67.5	51.5	46.4	47.0	
December.....	79	65	319.3	315.3	75.9	39.9	34.0	53.5	151.9	44.7	39.7	203.7	68.5	50.4	43.6	41.3	
1938:																	
January.....	75	52	289.4	286.1	67.9	34.6	40.3	44.1	133.9	39.7	34.4	163.5	51.8	44.1	32.9	34.6	
February.....	76	51	262.7	260.0	48.2	21.2	39.4	41.7	130.6	41.4	28.1	155.9	46.7	47.1	29.7	32.5	
March.....	72	48	275.7	270.8	47.0	23.1	35.5	46.2	142.1	46.1	28.8	173.3	51.2	55.5	32.1	34.5	
April.....	76	46	274.5	271.5	44.5	20.1	38.6	40.3	142.2	45.6	26.4	155.5	43.8	49.5	28.6	33.6	
May.....	72	45	257.2	253.6	34.8	10.4	48.2	42.6	128.0	42.4	20.6	147.2	40.2	45.7	27.8	33.4	
June.....	69	47	232.7	229.5	34.5	9.4	34.6	37.0	123.4	41.5	17.2	147.9	38.0	47.1	30.4	32.4	
July.....	68	47	227.8	225.1	32.8	10.5	38.0	37.3	117.0	39.7	17.5	147.8	43.2	44.1	29.6	30.9	
August.....	66	53	230.6	228.1	43.8	10.7	35.8	35.6	112.9	39.5	12.3	171.1	49.5	49.5	35.0	37.0	
Cumulative, January through August:																	
1929.....	112	116	3,406.5	3,346.8	585.1	368.1	486.1	500.5	1,775.2	409.2	423.6	3,008.7	1,072.9	672.0	608.2	655.6	
1933.....	131	134	944.9	927.8	300.8	205.6	112.4	138.6	378.0	75.5	57.1	890.0	249.4	278.1	170.3	192.2	
1934.....	145	143	1,369.7	1,347.1	377.5	222.9	150.9	222.6	596.1	141.1	140.4	1,072.5	317.9	318.0	208.4	228.2	
1935.....	145	152	1,369.5	1,340.7	356.3	181.4	123.4	223.9	657.1	173.1	158.3	1,337.8	375.5	456.3	253.4	252.6	
1936.....	170	160	1,514.3	1,488.3	345.4	172.8	126.8	258.2	757.9	218.6	162.0	1,551.6	464.1	477.7	319.2	290.6	
1937.....	185	169	2,080.8	2,044.5	391.9	201.1	146.6	452.3	1,053.6	313.5	228.6	2,136.6	689.8	642.1	440.2	364.6	
1938.....	168	149	2,050.6	2,024.8	353.5	140.0	310.4	330.8	1,030.1	335.9	185.2	2,126.3	364.5	382.6	246.2	269.0	

¹ General imports through December 1933; imports for consumption thereafter.

² Adjusted for seasonal variations.

³ Monthly average.

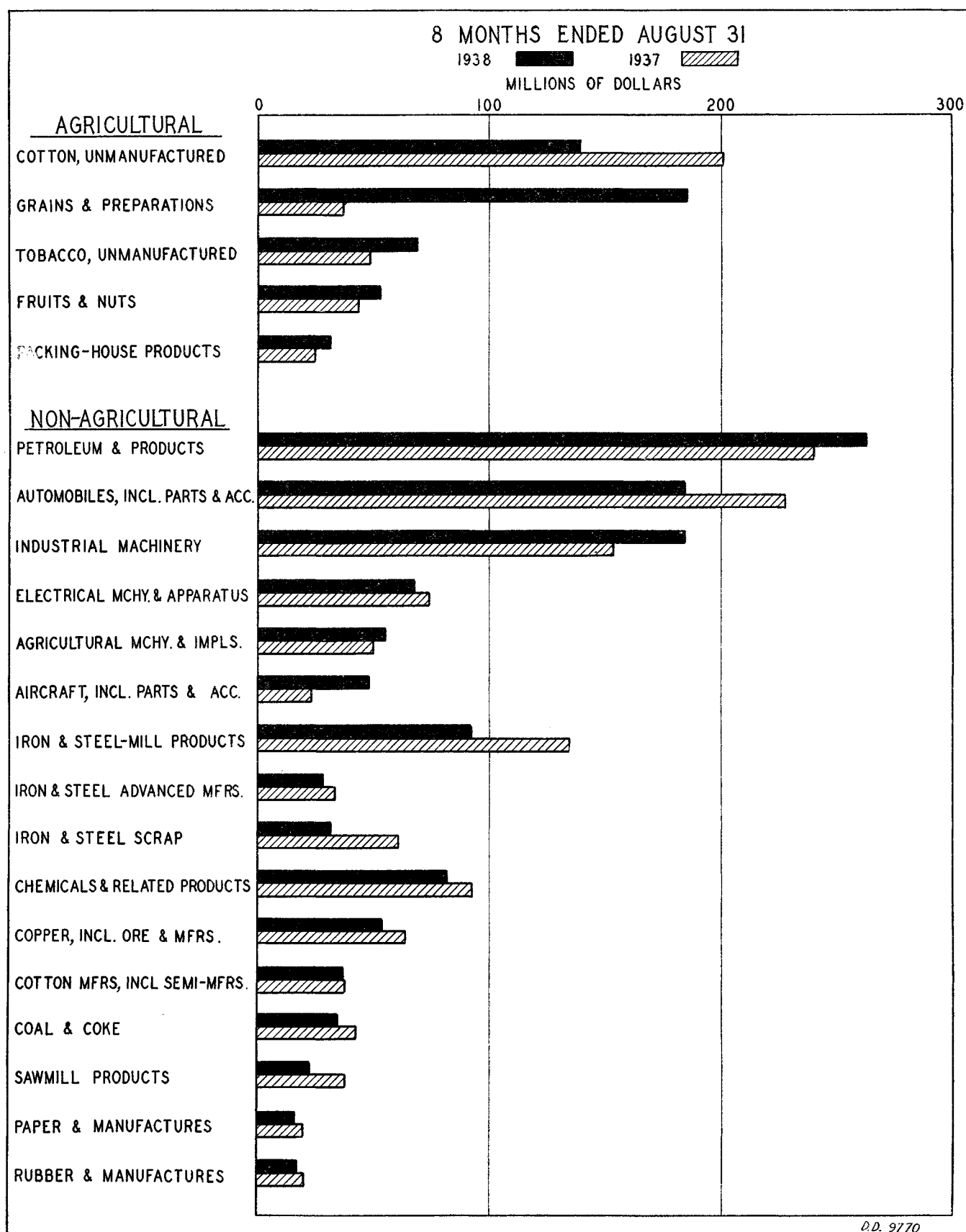


Figure 2—Exports of Leading Commodities (Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce).

Construction and Real Estate

FLUCTUATIONS in the aggregate dollar volume of contract awards in the first half of September, as in August, were largely the result of sharp changes in publicly financed awards, according to the F. W. Dodge Corporation statistics. Thus, on a daily average basis, publicly financed awards increased 62 percent from July to August but decreased 30 percent in the first 2 weeks of September. In August such awards were the largest for any month on record except December 1935. Private awards, showing the usual seasonal tendency, decreased 7 percent in August, and 5 percent more in the first half of September. So far this year, public awards have been about 14 percent higher than in the corresponding period a year ago, while private awards have been about one-fourth lower.

Daily average residential awards were about 20 percent lower in the first half of September than in August. The other Dodge classifications also showed declines for this comparison, but with the exception of nonresidential construction, gains over a year ago were well maintained. The relatively large volume of residential building during early summer was almost entirely financed from private funds. In August, however, several large public housing developments were contracted for and these were mainly responsible for a further sharp advance in residential awards. Never-

theless, private residential awards recorded a small increase over July and were above those of a year ago for the third consecutive month.

Quarterly reports received for August by the Federal Home Loan Bank Board on the cost of building a standard six-room house indicated an upward movement in residential construction costs for the first time since August 1937. Ten cities out of the 23 reporting revealed increases in the cost of construction in the August period compared with May of this year.

The slum clearance and low-rent housing program of the United States Housing Authority will cost close to \$889,000,000, according to estimates released by the Authority recently. The Federal agency is authorized to lend 90 percent of this amount and the remaining 10 percent will be supplied by the local housing authorities. Approximately 77 percent of the total amount will be spent for construction; 15 percent will go for land acquisition and demolition cost; and architectural services, interest, and all other costs will absorb the balance. Contracts have already been awarded for part of the work on two projects in New York City and before the end of the year contracts will probably be let for low-rent units in Buffalo, Syracuse, Youngstown, Austin, Jacksonville, Louisville, Allentown, Pittsburgh, Utica, and Charleston, S. C.

CONSTRUCTION, BUILDING MATERIALS, AND REAL ESTATE

Year and month	Construction contracts awarded						Building-material shipments				Construction costs (Engr. News-Record) ³	Loans outstanding		Real-estate foreclosures (non-farm) ⁴
	Federal Reserve Index, adjusted	All types of construction ²		Residential building ²	Nonresidential building ²	Public utilities ²	Public works ²	Common brick	Lumber	Oak flooring	Cement	Home Loan Bank	Home Owners' Loan Corp. ⁴	
	Monthly average, 1923-25=100	Number of projects	Millions of dollars	Millions of square feet	Millions of dollars			Thousands	Millions of ft. b. m.	Thousands of ft. b. m.	Thousands of barrels	Thousands of dollars		Monthly average, 1926=100
1929: August.....	122	16,053	488.9	29.5	146.1	199.9	44.1	98.7			23,052	205.9		
1933: August.....	24	8,186	106.0	6.4	21.9	32.7	19.4	32.0			5,994	167.0	59,797	
1934: August.....	27	7,617	119.6	5.0	18.6	50.4	8.7	41.9	68,083	1,600	9,419	198.4	84,911	330
1935: August.....	38	10,655	168.6	11.8	40.5	58.5	4.4	65.1	95,940	1,882	17,864	197.5	86,021	327
1936: August.....	62	12,912	275.3	24.4	100.5	80.4	17.9	76.4	172,748	2,101	30,408	208.5	125,211	266
1937:														
August.....	62	15,454	281.2	18.9	73.4	118.1	26.1	63.5	157,839	2,076	33,166	240.7	175,604	196
September.....	56	14,947	207.1	17.0	65.6	76.2	12.2	53.1	154,424	2,061	30,101	241.6	179,508	214
October.....	52	14,506	202.1	16.3	65.5	75.3	13.3	48.0	149,672	1,818	24,608	241.9	184,038	195
November.....	56	12,512	198.4	15.2	59.9	79.3	14.9	44.3	128,118	1,443	19,310	241.4	187,333	192
December.....	61	9,152	209.5	10.9	43.5	101.2	17.7	47.1	95,882	1,301	19,442	241.1	200,092	194
1938:														
January.....	52	8,502	192.2	9.4	36.2	57.4	48.5	50.1	68,794	1,387	22,159	239.6	190,535	179
February.....	51	9,261	118.9	10.4	40.0	48.4	5.1	25.3	74,978	1,389	24,490	239.0	187,498	172
March.....	46	14,533	226.9	20.1	79.4	87.8	10.7	49.0	114,909	1,748	35,655	238.8	183,105	195
April.....	52	15,058	222.0	18.7	74.6	80.4	9.4	57.6	129,509	1,490	26,984	238.0	183,747	191
May.....	51	17,565	283.2	20.6	83.2	77.8	43.7	78.5	130,728	1,531	28,286	236.8	186,507	194
June.....	54	18,194	251.0	21.3	85.7	81.8	8.7	74.8	145,476	1,684	30,233	236.9	196,222	189
July.....	59	17,648	239.8	21.6	88.0	72.6	13.4	65.8	128,882	1,775	35,089	232.3	191,889	161
August.....	70	18,770	313.1	23.6	99.7	87.3	38.0	88.1	2,033	41,511	11,823	232.4	189,415	167
Monthly average, January through August:														
1929.....	127	15,631	519.2	36.8	179.1	204.5	48.3	87.3			14,202	206.6		
1933.....	19	7,030	77.6	5.9	10.8	32.1	6.5	19.1			5,327	162.1		
1934.....	34	7,698	136.7	5.4	21.3	48.7	10.7	56.0	55,267	1,286	9,052	196.6		330
1935.....	31	9,328	128.0	10.3	37.1	46.8	7.4	36.7	71,894	1,595	14,951	196.0		354
1936.....	55	11,426	225.9	17.6	63.4	83.3	17.4	61.8	131,564	1,977	27,771	203.7		275
1937.....	63	15,293	262.0	22.0	83.9	103.0	25.6	49.5	159,679	2,127	32,780	231.3		237
1938.....	57	11,941	230.9	18.2	73.3	74.2	22.2	61.2	113,325	1,629	30,663	261.7		181

¹ Based on 3-month moving average of values and adjusted for seasonal variations.
² See note marked "†" on p. 24.

³ Index is as of 1st of month; index for Sept. 1, 1938, is 232.7.
⁴ See footnote marked "†" on p. 25.

Revised Estimates of Monthly Income Payments in the United States, 1929-38

By Frederick M. Cone, National Income Section, Division of Economic Research

THE monthly series of income payments presented in this article, and to be carried forward in subsequent issues of the *Survey of Current Business*, differs in several important respects from the series formerly appearing in the *Survey* and from the annual estimates of national income published by the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce. The Bureau has for several years been publishing estimates of national income, and it was in response to the demand for a current measure of the flow of income that a preliminary study of income paid out by months since 1929 was released in February of this year.¹ Although estimates of income paid out are useful for measuring compensation paid by producing units to the various factors of production, they are defective in several respects as measures of consumer purchasing power. Therefore, in revising the monthly series to accord with the annual-income estimates for 1937, it was considered advisable to depart from the concept of income paid out, which includes many accruals and excludes many payments, and to construct a series that would more closely approximate the actual payment of income to individuals. The series presented in this article is, therefore, intended as an index of the current flow of income to individuals.

The chief points of departure from the concept of national income, which will continue to be estimated by the Bureau on an annual basis, will be discussed briefly in this article. In common with the earlier monthly estimates and the annual estimates of income paid out, the present series excludes business savings of both corporations and individual entrepreneurs. An entirely new and important difference lies in the inclusion in the present series of direct relief disbursements and of the adjusted service payments to veterans (soldiers' bonus). Direct relief disbursements have always been excluded from the national income estimates because they are regarded as transfers of income rather than income payments for services rendered. The adjusted service payments have likewise been excluded from national income, on the ground that the services for which they were intended to compensate were rendered before the period covered by the Bureau's national income estimates.

The inauguration of the Social Security programs in 1936 has resulted in further marked divergences between national income and monthly income payments. The national income estimates presented in the June 1938

issue of the *Survey of Current Business*² included the contributions of both employers and employees to the unemployment compensation and old-age insurance plans. Both of these items are excluded from the present series, but benefit payments under the Social Security program, chiefly in the form of unemployment compensation, are included in the monthly estimates. Actually, such benefit payments were of little importance before 1938.

In the national income estimates, private and governmental pensions should always be measured as they flow into, rather than as they flow out of, the pension funds maintained by the corporation or governmental body, whereas in estimating income payments the latter is considered the proper point at which to measure such payments. Actually, it was deemed feasible at this time to attempt this refinement only for the Federal Government, and the changes resulting from the substitution of actual flow from the reserve fund for contributions to the fund are not of very great importance.

The relative importance of the several corrections noted above may be best illustrated by the following table for the years 1936 and 1937.

[In millions of dollars]

Item	1936	1937
National income.....	63,466	69,775
Less business savings.....	880	487
Income paid out.....	62,586	69,288
Less:		
Employer contributions to Social Security.....	292	923
Employee contributions to Social Security.....		320
Contributions to Federal retirement.....	78	80
Employee contributions to railroad retirement fund.....		61
Plus:		
Direct relief ¹	664	877
Veterans' compensation (soldiers' bonus).....	1,427	129
Annuities and refunds to Federal employees.....	58	61
Income payments to individuals.....	64,365	68,971

¹ Social Security benefits were very small prior to 1938 and were included in direct relief. Pensions paid to railroad employees are included in Income Paid Out, along with salaries and wages, through 1937. Thereafter, they are included with Social Security benefits.

Limitations of the Estimates

Despite the adjustments described above, the series presented in this article is subject to several limitations of major importance when considered as an index of the flow of income to consumers. The most serious deficiency results from the diversion of a portion of the flow of dividends and interest into the hands of institutional investors, such as savings banks and

¹ Monthly Income Payments in the United States, 1929-37, in *Survey of Current Business* for February 1938.

² National income in 1937 largest since 1929.

insurance companies. In estimating the national income, such institutions are treated as aggregates of individuals, since dividends and interest received by such agencies accrue to the credit of individuals. Consistent with this procedure, the estimates of income paid out do not include funds which individuals actually receive, in the form of a return on investment, from these institutional savings organizations. In measuring income payments to individuals, it is obviously a matter of some importance that a large portion of the income payments (perhaps as much as one-third of dividend and interest payments and about 4 percent of total income payments) are not disbursed directly to individuals during the month—or even during the year—in which they are paid out. To correct for this factor it would be necessary to deduct the amount of dividends and interest paid out to institutional investors and to add that proportion of withdrawals by investors from such institutions which represents the interest on invested capital rather than the return of that capital. Available data do not as yet permit a satisfactory adjustment for this item; therefore, the monthly estimates of income payments include a rather substantial accrual item which may vary considerably in movement from the actual payments. In particular, the substitution of receipts for accruals could be expected to reduce the monthly fluctuations in property income payments.

Another serious defect arises from the difficulty of obtaining satisfactory current estimates of the changes in entrepreneurial income in many fields. It should be pointed out that the income-payment series includes not the net income of the entrepreneur but his withdrawals—that is, the amount that he withdraws from his business as compensation for his own efforts. This item varies much less from year to year than does the net income of the entrepreneur. For agriculture, annual entrepreneurial withdrawals are apportioned by months and estimated currently on the basis of monthly data on cash farm income. For the other industries, no evidence is available on the seasonal movement of entrepreneurial income, and the seasonally adjusted index is derived by a simple smoothing process.

Estimates of monthly income from rents and royalties must also be based upon scanty information and rather broad assumptions. The only available series reflecting changes in net rents and royalties are the indexes of rental rates compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the National Industrial Conference Board. By assuming that these indices measure changes in gross rents and by the aid of certain assumptions as to changing costs, it has been possible to construct an index that accords fairly well with the annual estimates of net rents and royalties. But, when it is remembered that both these series reflect only changes in residential rental rates, that residential rent in 1929 represented but 57 percent of gross rents and royalties, and that

there are no reliable indices even of residential vacancies, it is too much to expect that an index based on such limited data will measure very accurately current changes in this source of income.

From several points of view it might be desirable to eliminate from monthly income payments the return for services that are paid for in kind rather than in cash. Such payments are of some importance in water transportation, in domestic service, and in the military and naval services of the Federal Government, but are particularly important in agriculture, where the annual item is apportioned in accordance with the fluctuations in the monthly cash farm income payments. Income in kind represented roughly 7 to 8 percent of the national income in 1929. Since payments in kind represent a nonmonetary but nonetheless effective command over goods and services, they are included in the monthly estimates of income payments.

Sources and Methods

A short discussion of the sources and methods employed in estimating income on a monthly basis was included in the article which appeared in the February 1938 issue of the *Survey of Current Business*, and a more detailed account will be given in a bulletin to be prepared on this subject in the near future. It will suffice here to give a short explanation of the more important changes involved in the recent revisions. Since more satisfactory data are available on an annual than on a monthly basis, many of the monthly estimates have had to be revised as a result of the recent completion of the annual estimates of national income for 1937 which appeared in the June 1938 *Survey*. In several instances the annual estimates were revised for the whole period 1929–37. In other instances the accession of better information for recent years suggested minor modifications in the method of estimating, and resulted in changes in the whole series.

The estimates of direct relief for the period since January 1933 are those of the Division of Public Assistance Research of the Social Security Board. Included in direct and other relief are general relief, payments to recipients of old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, aid to the blind, and emergency subsistence payments to farmers. Work-relief projects under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration have, however, been deducted from general relief and included in work-relief payments. For the years 1929 to 1933, the trend of relief has been estimated by applying an index of public relief in 120 urban areas³ to an estimate of all outdoor public relief for the year 1932. Work relief is included with other relief for the period 1929–32.

Prior to June 1936, payments to veterans on their adjusted service certificates represented merely cash

³ Emma A. Winslow, *Trends in Different Types of Public and Private Relief in Urban Areas, 1929–35*. 1937. Publication No. 237, U. S. Department of Labor, Children's Bureau.

loans on the security of such certificates. Income arising from the sale of assets or from borrowing has always been excluded from the national income estimates by definition, and are also excluded from the income payments series. However, owing to the large scale of the loans to veterans during the early months of 1931 and to the fact that the funds represented initial receipts to the veterans and that the loan feature of the transaction was subsequently canceled, loans to veterans have been incorporated in the present series. Subsequent to December 1937, cash payments to veterans have been relatively small and are, therefore, included with direct relief. The estimates of loans to veterans are those of the United States Veterans' Administration. Estimates of cash payments after June 1936 are taken from the Daily Statement of the United States Treasury; they are, of course, net figures, prior loans having been deducted from the compensation paid to each veteran.

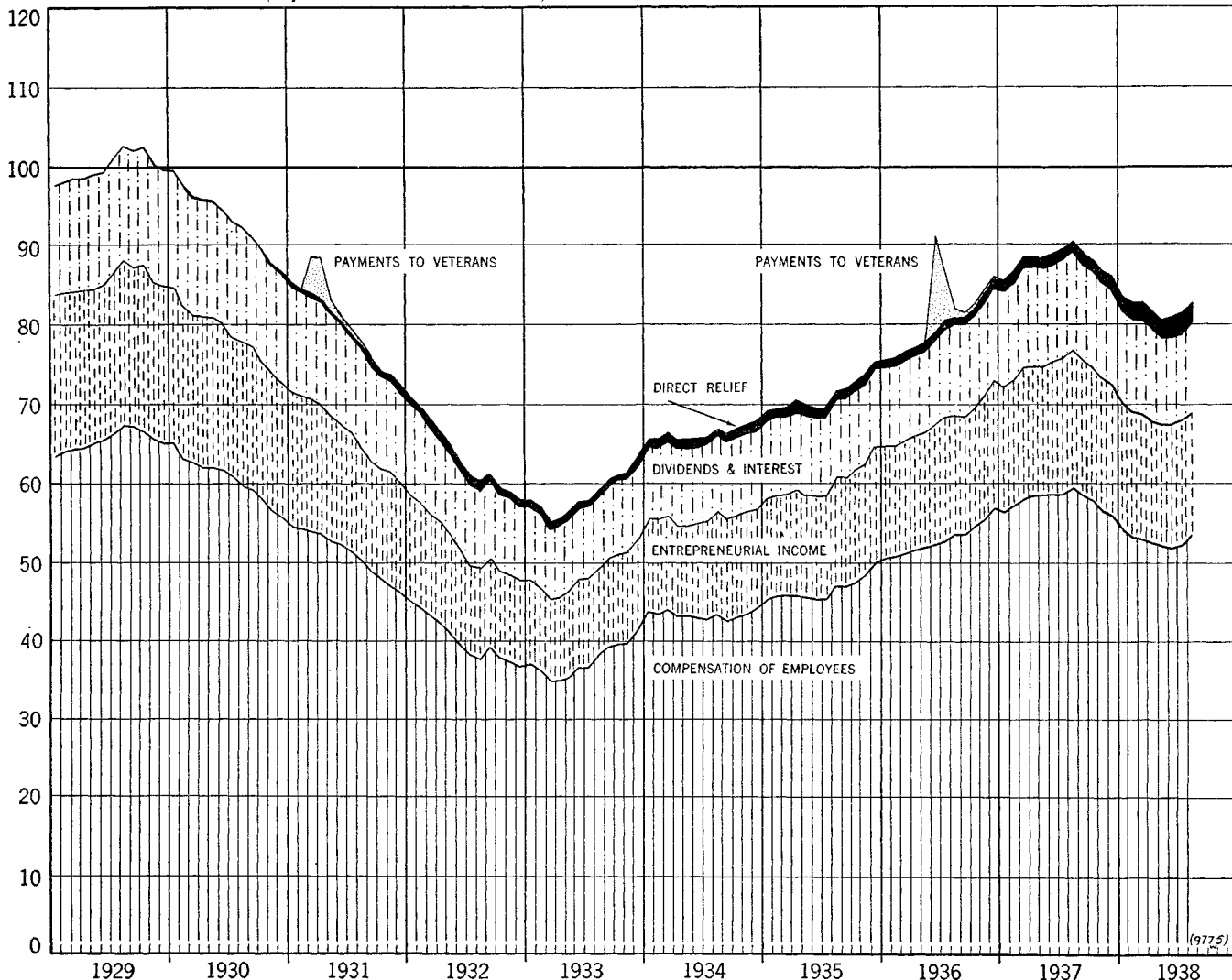
Employee contributions to Social Security during the year 1937 had to be deducted from the estimates of wages and salaries, and the totals were apportioned to each major industrial group on the basis of the pay rolls of covered industries included in each group.

The series on benefits paid under the Social Security programs includes unemployment compensation, benefits paid to retired railroad employees under the Railroad Retirement Act, and lump-sum payments under title II (old-age insurance) of the Social Security Act. Unemployment benefits were not payable outside of Wisconsin before January of 1938, and prior to that date benefit payments have been included in direct relief.

Recent Movements in Income Payments

Income payments to individuals in the United States turned upward during the third quarter of 1938, after recording a 2-year low during the second quarter. The Bureau's seasonally adjusted index of income payments

INDEX NUMBER 1929=100 (Adjusted for Seasonal Variation)



Monthly Income by Type of Payment, 1929-1938.

96551-38-3

advanced to 82.5 (1929=100) for August, as compared with a low of 80.4 for May. The index had previously experienced a sharp drop from its recovery high of 90.2 for last August to 83.5 for January, and declined moderately thereafter through May of this year. About one-fifth of the loss had been recovered by August. The decline in income payments by business units and by the regular governmental agencies was partly mitigated by the marked increase in work-relief payments and the inauguration of Social Security benefit payments during the early months of this year. In recent months, however, relief and benefit payments have shown no marked expansion, and such payments have had no direct influence upon the current rise in the index.

Income payments are still 9 percent below the recovery high of last August, although the percentage decline has been reduced in the past 2 months. During the first 8 months of 1938, income payments totaled 41.8 billion dollars, a decline of 7 percent from the total of 45.1 billion dollars during the corresponding period of 1937.

Employees' compensation, after allowance for seasonal factors, rose to 81.5 in August from a low of 79.4 in June, with all major industrial groups sharing in the advance. The increases in employees' income have

generally been largest in those industries most severely affected by the sharp recession in industrial activity that began in the late summer of 1937. After correction for seasonal variation, employees' compensation in the commodity-producing groups advanced to 66.5 in August from a low of 62.9 for June; but salaries and wages in these important industries are still running 25 percent below the recovery high of 87.9 for August of 1937. Labor income in the trade and transportation industries advanced moderately to 74.8 for August, as compared with 73.6 for June and 81.9 for last August. Employees' compensation in the service industries (including government) has advanced only fractionally in recent months, but is still only 2 percent below August of last year.

Interest payments are being well maintained, but dividends have declined sharply since the first of the year and for the first 8 months of this year average 16 percent below the corresponding period of 1937. Income paid to property holders during the first 8 months of 1938 was 9 percent below aggregate dividend and interest payments in the same months of last year. Entrepreneurial withdrawals during the first 8 months of 1938 were 5 percent lower than for the same period a year ago.

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The West Coast of South America may be considered as a unit from the standpoint of transportation and communication facilities. All necessary information concerning the requirements for entry into and departure from each of the countries covered, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Panama, and Peru, transportation and communication facilities, requirements concerning entry of samples and advertising literature, sales territories, and other information required by commercial travelers, is included in the text of the guide. Owing to its strategic position as a junction point, Panama has been included in this survey; there is also a brief mention of travel routes in Colombia.

NOTE: It is expected that Part II: East Coast of South America: Trade Promotion Series No. 187: Price 20 cents, will be ready for distribution about November 15, 1938.

Copies of the above publications, at the prices quoted, may be obtained from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., or from any district office of the Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce located in commercial centers of the United States.