

# FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OF RICHMOND

## General Business and Agricultural Conditions in the Fifth Federal Reserve District

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RICHMOND, VIRGINIA, MAY 31, 1922.

### NATIONAL SUMMARY\*

Steady improvement in the indicated yield of the principal agricultural products has been an outstanding feature in the developments of the past month. Improvement in the prices of cotton, grains, and other products is also a noteworthy feature of the month. In appraising the manufacturing situation a distinction must be drawn between basic commodities and those of a more highly finished sort. The marked improvement in the case of iron and steel noted in business surveys of previous months has continued during May, unfilled orders increasing materially and ingot production being the greatest in any one month since November 1920. Much the same may be said with respect to copper and other non ferrous metals. The situation in other important lines of manufacture is less easy to characterize. Due to the continuation of the textile strike the output of cotton goods has been materially lessened, although in the Southern cotton mill districts plants are reported as operating near full capacity. A very pronounced increase in unfilled orders has been noted by representative cotton mills in the Atlantic District which is typical of the general situation. There was a recession of activity of woolen manufacturing during April, especially in the worsted branch of the industry, while the silk industry is suffering from a condition of continued depression and inactivity. A mixed situation confronts manufacturers of boots and shoes. In the St. Louis District, activity has been well maintained but in the Boston, Philadelphia and Chicago Districts some recession has apparently occurred. A portion of this must be ascribed to seasonal reaction. The general index number of wholesale prices compiled by the Federal Reserve Board shows an advance of two points as compared with the preceding month, making it 149, which closely approximates the index number of 146 of the corresponding month a year ago. This advance is due to the advances in the prices of agricultural products and in materials used in certain basic industries. On the whole, the adjustment of prices among commodities and industries is approaching a more normal relationship. Reflecting the improved condition in agriculture and the large disbursement in wages in many basic industries, retail trade exhibits an enhancement of buying power, returns being more favorable than those of recent months. In the wholesale trade, however, the situation is spotty, some lines such as hardware being favorably influenced by the great activity in building. On the whole there appears to have been a decrease in unemployment which has been brought about through the increased seasonal demand for outdoor labor, the enlarged opportunities for employment in the mines, and in other directions. Factory demand has not kept pace with the growth in other branches, but, on the whole, has receded, especially if voluntary unemployment due to strikes in certain sections of the country be considered. Financially the month of May has been a period of comparative stability. Among domestic developments the striking event of the month

### DISTRICT SUMMARY

Signs of a healthy business revival are accumulating daily. The newspapers are filled with stories of constantly increasing permits for construction work of many types, of rising prices for the leading agricultural products, of lowering interest rates and easier credit conditions, of decrease in the number of bankruptcies, of more evenly balanced foreign exchange, and of innumerable other signs that business is surely and steadily, even though slowly, climbing out of the valley of doubt and fear into which it descended a year and a half ago. The general improvement is going on in the Fifth District also, as is shown by the detailed analysis contained in the following pages.

Specifically, reports from member banks show further liquidation of frozen loans and increases in demand and time deposits, and in reserves. Bills held by the Federal Reserve Bank have continued to diminish, cash reserves have increased, and the reserve ratio has correspondingly risen. Debits to individual account in leading trade centers are running higher than a month or a year ago, reflecting unmistakably the growing volume of banking transactions. Labor is better employed than during the earlier months of the year. Textile manufacturers are optimistic, and while few forward orders are being booked, orders for immediate shipment are good and reserve stocks are not heavy. Farmers are benefiting from steadily rising prices for their products, and while the planting season has been rather unfavorable it is not too late to secure fair yields. Though the fruit crop has been severely hurt by late frosts, the outlook is far better than it was a year ago. - Building operations continue to increase. Wholesale and retail trade, while cautious, is improving, and the Easter business was not unsatisfactory. Collections appear to be improving, and bankruptcies are fewer than during recent months. The large number of encouraging factors that can be pointed out, in spite of the deterrent effects of the coal and New England textiles strikes, burdensome freight rates, and uncertainties caused by the bonus and tariff discussions, show how fundamentally sound the general situation is.

has been the announcement of a cut of ten percent in railroad rates by the Interstate Commerce Commission. What effect this will have upon commodity movements is as yet uncertain.

\* This National Summary compiled by the Division of Analysis and Research of the Federal Reserve Board.

## CONDITION OF EIGHTY-ONE REPORTING MEMBER BANKS IN SELECTED CITIES.

ITEMS	May 3, 1922	April 5, 1922	May 4, 1921
1. Total Loans and Discounts (exclusive of rediscounts) .....	\$ 416,439,000	\$ 417,045,000	\$ 420,696,000
2. Total Investments in Bonds and Securities .....	113,073,000	113,096,000	120,596,000
3. Total Loans and Investments .....	529,512,000	530,141,000	541,292,000
4. Reserve Balance with Federal Reserve Bank .....	33,433,000	32,788,000	31,460,000
5. Cash in Vaults .....	13,882,000	13,691,000	16,376,000
6. Demand Deposits .....	311,247,000	305,482,000	306,955,000
7. Time Deposits .....	134,120,000	134,147,000	119,117,000
8. Discounted with Federal Reserve Bank .....	23,430,000	31,032,000	76,528,000

The table above shows the principal items of condition reported by eighty-one identical member banks as of the close of business May 3, 1922, April 5, 1922 and May 4, 1921, thus affording comparisons of the May 3 figures with those reported a month ago and those reported a year ago. All items are comparable for the three dates, but as we explained last month, the figures given are not comparable with those published in previous issues of our Review, one of the banks that reported heretofore having withdrawn from the Reserve System by being absorbed by a non-member bank.

A comparison of the figures reported for May 4, 1921, with those as of May 3, 1922 shows some encouraging developments. It will be noted that between the two dates increases are shown in reserve balances with the Federal Reserve Bank, in demand deposits and in time deposits. Time deposits have been slowly rising for many months, but demand deposits have only recently shown signs of a turn upward after a long decline extending over two years. The upward movement began in October 1921, and has been fairly constant since then. The \$311,247,000 reported as of May 3, 1922 is the highest figure reached by demand deposits in the reporting banks since April 1921, and May 1922 is the first month since October 1920 for which larger deposits were reported than for the corresponding month of the previous year.

The changes in the figures reported for April 5 and May 3, 1922, follow the general trends mentioned in the discussion of the yearly changes, except that between the April and May dates there was a slight increase in Cash in Vaults and a very small decrease in Time Deposits, the latter probably being a mere daily fluctuation. The increase in Demand Deposits between April 5 and May 3 was more striking, amounting to \$5,765,000 in four weeks.

## DEBITS TO INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT IN LEADING TRADE CENTERS.

CITIES	FOR THE WEEK ENDING		
	May 3, 1922	April 5, 1922	May 4, 1921
Asheville, N. C. ....	\$ 4,293,000	\$ 4,058,000	\$ .....
Baltimore, Md. ....	97,343,000	92,773,000	99,716,000
Charleston, S. C. ....	6,599,000	6,480,000	7,120,000
Charleston, W. Va. ....	6,411,000	6,581,000	.....
Charlotte, N. C. ....	8,349,000	6,095,000	6,664,000
Columbia, S. C. ....	5,492,000	7,368,000	5,551,000
Cumberland, Md. ....	2,137,000	1,907,000	.....
Danville, Va. ....	1,831,000	2,230,000	.....
Greensboro, N. C. ....	3,964,000	4,088,000	.....
Greenville, S. C. ....	3,379,000	3,279,000	3,171,000
Hagerstown, Md. ....	1,993,000	2,672,000	.....
Huntington, W. Va. ....	4,287,000	4,523,000	5,234,000
Lynchburg, Va. ....	3,856,000	4,526,000	.....
Newport News, Va. ....	1,651,000	1,712,000	.....
Norfolk, Va. ....	17,840,000	16,688,000	13,199,000
Raleigh, N. C. ....	4,500,000	3,600,000	4,300,000
Richmond, Va. ....	27,169,000	27,898,000	26,312,000
Roanoke, Va. ....	5,067,000	5,272,000	.....
Spartanburg, S. C. ....	1,932,000	1,975,000	.....
Washington, D. C. ....	50,737,000	44,219,000	37,918,000
Wilmington, N. C. ....	5,283,000	6,044,000	6,704,000
Winston-Salem, N. C. ....	11,664,000	5,736,000	.....
Totals for 11 cities .....	\$ 230,978,000	\$ 218,967,000	\$ 215,889,000
Totals for 22 cities .....	275,777,000	259,724,000	.....

Debits to accounts of individuals, firms and corporations reported to us by the banks in twenty-two of the leading trade centers of the Fifth Reserve District show a steady growth in transactions through the reporting banks. The table presented herewith shows total debits in the twenty-two cities during the weeks ending May 3 and April 5, 1922, and also shows comparative figures for eleven of the cities during the week ending May 4, 1921.

A comparison of the debits reported by the eleven cities for which last year's figures are available shows an increase from \$215,889,000 during the week ending May 4, 1921 to \$230,978,000 during the week ending May 3, 1922, a gain of \$15,089,000, or 7%. The fluctuations in debits figures outline changes in business volume with a degree of accuracy probably not equaled by any other index, and the increase shown in the figures given above is therefore significant and shows clearly the quickening of the pulse of trade. Increases during the 1922 week are reported from Charlotte, N. C., Greenville, S. C., Norfolk, Va., Raleigh, N. C., Richmond, Va., and Washington, D. C.

In comparison with the week ending April 5, 1922, the figures from twenty-two cities for the week ending May 3, 1922, show an increase of \$16,053,000, or 6.2%. This increase is particularly striking in view of the fact that the week ending April 5, 1922, witnessed a considerable volume of quarterly payments that were not included in the figures for the week ending May 3. The payment of bills incurred for Easter merchandise probably helped swell the May 3 totals, however. Of the twenty-two reporting cities, ten showed increases and twelve showed decreases during the May week, but the increases more than counterbalanced the declines. Even in the cities reporting lower figures the comparisons with the April week were not unsatisfactory, if it be remembered that the April week contained a quarterly payment date.

### FEDERAL RESERVE BANK OPERATIONS.

Between April 12, 1922 and May 10, 1922, Cash Reserves held by the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond rose from \$89,187,283.53 to \$95,728,071.68. Between the same two dates, Total Member Bank Reserve Deposits rose from \$53,648,262.26 to \$54,281,565.37. Total Bills on hand fell from \$65,822,315.56 to \$55,980,205.74, and Federal Reserve Notes in Actual Circulation declined from \$92,189,450 to \$88,122,155. The ratio of total reserves to Deposit and Federal Reserve Note Liabilities combined was 60.13% on April 12, 1922, but rose to 66.40% on May 10, 1922. On May 11, 1921, this ratio was 41.87%.

### BUSINESS FAILURES IN THE TWELVE FEDERAL RESERVE DISTRICTS APRIL, 1922 AND 1921.

City and District	Number		Per Cent Increase or Decrease	Liabilities		Per Cent of Increase or Decrease
	1922	1921		1922	1921	
Boston, First.....	165	145	13.8	\$ 2,403,840	\$ 1,746,699	37.6
New York, Second.....	420	268	56.7	33,677,526	11,123,088	202.8
Philadelphia Third.....	78	65	20.0	1,468,343	1,575,775	— 6.8
Cleveland, Fourth.....	156	118	32.2	2,840,844	4,366,788	— 34.9
Richmond, Fifth.....	148	154	— 3.9	3,277,906	3,334,591	— 1.7
Atlanta, Sixth.....	264	136	94.1	6,557,398	1,997,350	228.3
Chicago, Seventh.....	284	178	59.6	10,909,837	3,949,115	176.3
St. Louis, Eighth.....	120	115	4.3	2,244,444	2,427,872	— 7.6
Minneapolis, Ninth.....	116	39	197.4	2,268,658	593,718	282.1
Kansas City, Tenth.....	66	50	32.0	1,937,395	1,966,778	— 1.5
Dallas, Eleventh.....	167	98	70.4	3,865,301	2,905,847	33.0
San Francisco, Twelfth.....	183	121	51.2	1,607,145	2,580,148	37.7
Totals.....	2,167	1,487	45.7%	\$ 73,058,637	\$ 38,567,769	89.4%

The summary of business failures for April furnished to us by Dun's Review, reproduced herewith in tabular form, shows that although April was less disastrous than March, the number of failures was still abnormally large. Total bankruptcies in the United States numbered 2,167 compared with 1,487 in April 1921, an increase this year of 45.7%. Total liabilities involved increased 89.4%, however, although six of the twelve Reserve districts reported lower liabilities than last year. In the Fifth District, April 1922 witnessed 148 failures compared with 154 in April 1921, a decrease of 3.9%, and total liabilities involved also showed a decrease from \$3,334,591 reported for April 1921 to \$3,277,906 for April 1922, a decline of 1.7%. The Fifth District is the only one of the twelve districts in which fewer failures were reported for the 1922 month, and the 148 bankruptcies during that month were the lowest number reported since November 1921, when 143 were listed. The April 1922 liabilities were the lowest reported since October 1921. The average liability per failure during April 1922 was \$33,714 for the nation and \$22,148 for the Fifth District, compared with averages of \$25,937 for the nation and \$21,653 for the Fifth District in April 1921.

**LABOR**—All reports received at the end of April indicate that unemployment has greatly lessened in comparison with several months ago, and actual shortages of good labor are beginning to develop in scattered localities and in certain trades. Construction work continues to grow, with consequent demand for carpenters, brick layers, masons, roofers, etc., and in at least one large city in the Fifth District contractors have been so anxious for workmen that they have shown a willingness to pay higher wages than for the past year. The Public Employment Bureau in Richmond reports that during April more positions were open in the men's division than during any month since October 1920. The Bureau's bulletin, after speaking of the demand for skilled labor in the building trades, goes on to say that practically all colored laborers that applied for work were placed. The only surplus labor appeared to be among the colored women seeking jobs as day workers. The report finally sums up the situation as follows: "Conditions have improved to such an extent that practically every person is able to secure employment of some kind, although it may not be just the kind of work or the rate of pay to which he has been accustomed." A number of counties and cities are undertaking public improvements in roads, streets, sidewalks, sewers, etc., and as county and municipal bonds are finding a ready sale at fairly satisfactory interest rates there appears ground for the growing belief that involuntary unemployment may soon come to an end. That this is already a fact in certain sections is indicated by the following quotation from a manufacturer operating plants in Virginia and both Carolinas: "We find labor getting scarce in our district. The best men are going north where they find ready employment in certain industrial plants that seem to be peculiarly adapted to the negroes. We are beginning to feel already the scarcity of labor."

**COAL**—The coal strike which began April 1 showed no signs of weakening previous to the middle of May, the date of this Review's compilation, but on the other hand has tended to spread slowly into some of the non-union fields. The public has taken surprisingly little interest in the strike, and as yet there does not appear to be any alarm over the situation. The consumers are so little concerned that orders received by non-union mines which are operating have been insufficient to take their capacity output. Consumers have been supplying their needs from storage, and something like three and a half million to four million tons have been withdrawn from these reserve stocks each week since the beginning of the strike. It begins to appear now that consumers are realizing that their coal piles will be exhausted in a few more weeks and therefore the operating mines have received more orders during the past two weeks than during the earlier weeks of the strike. According to the U. S. Geological Survey reports, issued weekly by the Department of the Interior, the weekly production of bituminous coal by non-union mines has increased to approximately 4,500,000 tons, nearly a million tons above the production during the first two or three weeks of April. The number of unbilled cars of bituminous coal at the mines has meanwhile fallen from 30,730 cars on hand April 8 to 13,959 cars on hand May 6, and the number of unbilled cars of anthracite has fallen between the same dates from 2,815 cars to 779 cars.

The effects of the strike on business in the Fifth District have been varied. Outside of West Virginia the walk-out has had comparatively little influence except on those wholesalers that sell to retailers in the union areas of that state. In West Virginia itself the strike has unsettled and restricted business in union territory, but has quickened the pulse of trade in the non-union fields. These two developments are naturally becoming more marked as the strike progresses, the organized fields feeling more and more the decreased purchasing power of the idle miners and the unorganized fields benefitting from the large volume of orders and the consequent increased earnings of the miners as they work more nearly full time.

**TEXTILES**—The situation in the textile industry of the Fifth District at the end of April is a peculiar one. Practically all mills are running full time, and are receiving a considerable volume of orders for immediate shipment, but neither jobbers nor mills are anxious to sign any appreciable volume of future contracts. The jobbers are afraid to buy until they can better judge the cotton crop possibilities for this year, and until they can see whether the improvement in labor circles is going to increase the demand for textiles from the retailers, and the mills are equally as reluctant to sell for future delivery in the face of an advancing cotton market and an unfavorable planting season. It is clear, therefore, that both buyers and sellers are justified in their cautious attitudes until it becomes possible to estimate this year's supply of cotton and demand for finished goods more accurately than is now possible. The outlook for the future of the textile industry is thought by the mill authorities to be good, however, and all reports received by us this month agree in the expression of a belief in the fundamental soundness of the industry. Opinion has become considerably more optimistic than it was at the end of March, and our correspondents state that they are reasonably confident that business will be good for them a little later in the year, when it becomes possible to estimate the supply of cotton that will be available this year and next. Some of the factors giving rise to this optimistic view of the future are the increases in prices for farm products which will increase the purchasing power of the farmers, improvement in foreign demand as a result of better rates of exchange, the absence of serious labor troubles in the South, and the fact that a considerable number of the Southern mills are electrically driven by power generated by water, thus greatly lessening the danger to them of a possible continuation of the coal strike.

**TOBACCO**—April is not an active month in the tobacco trade, the growers disposing of practically their entire crop previous to that month. Production figures for the 1921-1922 season are now available, and show that Virginia produced 96,717,000 pounds of all types of tobacco, compared with 179,580,000 pounds in 1920-1921. The tremendous decrease in production during the past season amounting to 46% under the record crop of 1920-1921, was caused by a heavy cut in acreage and by a very low yield per acre as a result of the extremely unfavorable weather during the growing season. The average price for the 1921-1922 season was \$20.14 per hundred pounds for bright tobacco, compared with \$23.11 in 1920-1921, and \$18.66 per hundred for dark, against \$9.88 the previous year. The five leading markets of Virginia in number of pounds sold for producers were: Danville, 25,613,074 pounds; South Boston, 13,229,823 pounds; Lynchburg, 7,767,453 pounds; Chase City, 5,773,242 pounds; and South Hill, 5,457,950 pounds. All of the Virginia figures were supplied by the State Department of Agriculture and the Bureau of Markets and Crop Estimates of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, the two agencies co-operating in the Tobacco Sales Report.

The U. S. and N. C. Departments of Agriculture have announced a 42% reduction in the amount of tobacco sold by growers in North Carolina during the 1921-1922 season, in comparison with the total sold the previous year, but the average price realized this year was 13% higher than the average gotten last year. The joint report issued by the two departments mentioned above states that a total of 251,682,000 pounds of farmers' tobacco was estimated to have been produced in North Carolina last year, of which 241,682,000 pounds were sold on markets in that state, the other 10,000,000 pounds going out of the state for sale in border markets in other states. The average prices realized for the 1921-1922 crop were \$24.57 for all sales and over \$25.00 per hundred pounds for the producers' sales. The 1920-1921 average price was \$21.28 per hundred. The five leading markets in North Carolina in the number of pounds sold for producers were: Wilson, 34,069,200 pounds; Winston-Salem, 25,941,602; Greenville, 20,516,895; Kinston, 15,923,888; and Rocky Mount, 14,110,459.

The leaf dealers report that the past month or two has witnessed distinct improvement in the leaf business. The rise in foreign exchange has increased inquiries and orders from abroad, and domestic consumers are placing orders in fair volume. The dealers state that their stocks are not heavy, and they believe that this year's crop will be largely taken up by foreign and domestic manufacturers within the next ninety days.

**COTTON**—The bullish tendency in the cotton market during the past three weeks has carried the average weekly price of spot cotton in the Carolinas up from 16.37 cents per pound for the weeks ending April 15th and 22nd to an average of 18.32 cents for the week ending May 13, the highest average since the week ending October 15, 1921. The average price on May 13 this year was approximately 8c. a pound higher than on the same date a year ago. The recent rise appears to be the result of a widespread belief in a very strong statistical position of cotton, this belief being based upon a steadily increased consumption in comparison with 1921, the strength of the English demand with the improvement in sterling exchange, and the uncertainty regarding this year's production as a result of delayed planting and an exceptionally dangerous boll weevil situation.

In spite of the widespread strike of textile operatives in New England, the Census Bureau has announced that April consumption of cotton totaled 446,843 bales of lint in comparison with 409,247 consumed in April 1921, an increase for April 1922 of 37,596 bales. The number of spindles active in the United States during April numbered 31,389,256 compared with 32,597,453 in April last year, but in the cotton growing states the active spindles numbered 15,504,463 compared with 14,835,274 in April 1921, the loss for the country as a whole resulting from the New England strikes. Cotton held in all consuming establishments on April 30 totaled 1,458,219 bales of lint compared with 1,315,706 bales a year ago, but cotton in public storage and at compress totaled only 3,214,386 bales against 5,026,894 bales so held on April 30, 1921. A combination of cotton held in consuming establishments and in public storage shows 1,669,995 fewer bales available on April 30, 1922, than were available April 30, 1921.

**AGRICULTURAL NOTES**—The outstanding occurrence in agricultural matters since our March Review was written was the severe frosts throughout Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia on the nights of April 21, 22, 23, 24 and 25, seriously damaging fruit and other farm crops. Reports as to the actual damage are conflicting, and it appears that even in the same orchards the damage done was not always uniform. It is thought by the majority of authorities that the apple crop has been cut fully 50%, but it is certain that the average damage was not nearly as great as that done last year by the frost of March 29 and 30, 1921.

The Federal Bureau of Markets has announced that the strawberry crop of Virginia will probably set a new record. The berries have ripened fast, though the crop is a little later this year than last. The quality of the fruit is said to be excellent and prices are fairly good. Most of the crop raised in Virginia goes to Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York.

The acreage in truck crops in South Carolina has been increased, and the crops are doing well. Lettuce and asparagus crops have been harvested and sold for good prices, and potatoes, cabbage, watermelons, etc., are making steady progress. Virginia's potatoes have been damaged by frosts, but not disastrously. Maryland truck farms suffered severely from the April frosts.

Wheat has, on the whole, declined in condition since March. The frosts in April damaged the crop in

Virginia, Maryland and West Virginia, and in South Carolina rust has practically destroyed many fields. Taking the District average, however, the prospects for a satisfactory yield are still good.

Tobacco has been transplanted in South Carolina and the plants are doing well. Virginia beds are good, and land has been prepared for resetting. In North Carolina the official reports indicate increased acreage in tobacco, and a more liberal use of fertilizer than last year.

The cotton crop has been planted in most of South Carolina, and is being planted in North Carolina as fast as the weather permits. The weather in April was fitful, and further delayed planting in many counties in the cotton belt. In addition to rain the frequent changes in temperature were unfavorable to germination of the seed.

The co-operative marketing associations appear to be making steady headway among tobacco and cotton growers. The tobacco association is rapidly getting its organization perfected, and announces that it has leased 150 warehouses, 44 of them in Virginia, 68 in North Carolina and 38 in South Carolina. The cotton association has not yet organized fully, but contracts have been signed by growers to sell a sufficient number of bales through the association to warrant its trial. South Carolina farmers have signed up something over 400,000 bales, provided the signers raise as large crops as last year. It appears now that a larger tonnage of fertilizer has been sold than was expected two months ago, and a larger portion of it than usual has been sold for cash. Business men are wondering where the large volume of cash came from, and they have concluded that many farmers have been hoarding money outside of banks.

### BUILDING OPERATIONS FOR THE MONTHS OF APRIL, 1922 AND 1921.

No.	CITIES	Permits Issued				New Construction		Alterations		Increase or Decrease Total Valuation	Per Cent of Increase or Decrease	No.
		New		Repairs		1922	1921	1922	1921			
		1922	1921	1922	1921							
<b>MARYLAND</b>												
1	Baltimore.....	368	51	1,422	1,624	\$ 2,298,600	\$ 8,205,200	\$ 695,040	\$ 761,040	\$-5,972,600	- 66.6%	1
2	Cumberland.....	38	23	27	36	94,008	70,700	14,525	21,260	16,573	18.0	2
3	Frederick.....	9	6	4	10	61,500	8,430	3,120	13,040	43,150	201.0	3
<b>VIRGINIA</b>												
4	Lynchburg.....	28	13	13	27	56,915	28,150	3,950	10,600	22,115	57.1	4
5	Norfolk.....	36	39	77	72	596,190	154,657	51,115	49,354	443,294	217.3	5
6	Richmond.....	215	116	95	138	1,677,913	619,672	96,638	141,275	1,013,604	133.2	6
7	Roanoke.....	129	*135	79		325,775	*217,700	18,907		126,982	58.3	7
<b>WEST VIRGINIA</b>												
8	Charleston.....	51	115	31	32	287,231	272,582	14,695	27,250	2,094	.7	8
9	Clarksburg**	38		51		107,610		21,170				9
10	Huntington.....	*153	*194			*305,530	*460,545			- 155,015	- 33.7	10
11	Parkersburg.....					100,000	40,000	50,000	30,000	80,000	114.3	11
<b>NORTH CAROLINA</b>												
12	Asheville.....	66	37	46	64	304,111	114,550	12,684	32,516	169,729	115.4	12
13	Charlotte.....	62	37	13	15	472,000	138,900	117,000	15,227	434,873	282.2	13
14	Durham.....	23	11	12	12	87,800	20,075	52,950	10,200	110,475	364.9	14
15	Greensboro.....	46	25	23	11	160,525	329,850	11,345	12,175	- 170,155	- 49.7	15
16	High Point.....	31	16	7	13	473,210	59,525	2,750	10,145	406,290	583.2	16
17	Wilmington.....	16	10	1	6	79,300	30,700	15,000	6,000	57,600	156.9	17
18	Winston-Salem.....	44	53	91	110	228,520	128,530	34,410	48,620	85,780	48.4	18
<b>SOUTH CAROLINA</b>												
19	Charleston.....	24	22	21	15	230,520	70,495	7,960	18,420	149,565	168.2	19
20	Columbia.....	25	25	95	78	199,700	370,749	27,566	16,706	- 160,189	- 41.3	20
21	Greenville.....	35	25	31	31	82,480	75,065	10,170	12,390	5,195	5.9	21
22	Spartanburg.....	33	21	48	25	57,595	243,375	7,083	8,985	- 187,682	- 74.4	22
<b>DIST. OF COLUMBIA</b>												
23	Washington.....	432	240	606	628	3,307,640	1,929,700	332,528	363,242	1,347,226	58.8	23
	Totals.....	1,864	1,681	2,742	2,947	\$11,487,063	\$13,589,150	\$1,579,436	\$1,608,445	\$-2,131,096	- 14.0%	

\*Includes both new work and repairs.

\*\*Clarksburg, W. Va., not included in totals.

—Denotes Decrease.

More permits for new buildings were issued in the Fifth District during April than in any other month since June 1919. Twenty-two reporting cities for which 1921 figures are available for comparison show 1,864 permits for new work issued in April 1922, compared with 1,681 issued in April 1921, an increase during the current month of 183 permits. Figures for total valuation of new work in April 1922 totaled \$11,487,063 in comparison with \$13,589,150 for April of last year, a decrease this year of \$2,102,087. This decrease is due to the fact that the April 1921 figures included an enormous sugar refinery in Baltimore, costing \$6,000,000, a total seldom equaled in a single permit in the Fifth District. A large number of residences are

being built in the cities, and while most of them are either built for owners or for sale the construction will relieve the housing shortage to a considerable extent. That the shortage is being overcome is evidenced by the fact that rent reductions are beginning to be made on many pieces of property. A few of the agents are opposing reductions but some of the leaders are frankly acknowledging the necessity for lower rentals if the houses and apartments are to be filled. The first half of May indicates that there is no immediate slackening in construction activity in sight. Business buildings are beginning to be erected in considerable numbers, and architects and engineers report that this class of work is just now getting under way.

As a result of the activity outlined above, dealers in all kinds of building materials are busy, and are receiving many orders for immediate shipment. In spite of the increased demands for materials of all kinds price changes have as yet been relatively slight, but many dealers expect prices to advance materially if the demand continues.

**FIGURES ON RETAIL TRADE**  
**As Indicated By Reports from Twenty-five Representative Department Stores**  
**for the Month of April, 1922.**

	Baltimore	Richmond	Washington	Other Cities	District
Percentage increase in net sales during April, compared with April, 1921.....	2.9	— 1.7	— 4.2	— 8.0	— 1.3
Percentage increase in net sales from January 1, through April 30, compared with sales during the same four months of 1921.....	— 12.6	— 9.7	— 10.8	— 18.6	— 12.6
Percentage increase in net sales during April, 1922, over sales in March, 1922.....	17.6	— 0.4	2.4	14.2	10.3
Percentage increase in stocks on hand at the end of April, 1922, over stocks on hand at the end of April, 1921.....	0.7	1.8	8.8	2.9	3.6
Percentage increase in stocks on hand at the end of April, 1922, over stocks on hand at the end of March, 1922.....	— 2.1	— 0.1	— 0.8	— 0.1	— 1.2
Percentage of average stocks on hand at the end of each month since January 1, to average net sales each month during the same period, four months.....	405.0	412.6	427.5	556.0	433.1
Percentage of outstanding orders at the end of April, 1922, to total purchases of merchandise during the year 1921.....	4.5	4.8	2.9	4.0	4.2

—Denotes decrease.

Net sales in April reported by twenty-five department stores in the Fifth District were 1.3% less than sales in the same stores in April 1921, but were 10.3% greater than sales in March of this year. The increase in April sales over those of March is contrary to the seasonal trend, but is due to the very late date of Easter this year. Among the twenty-five reporting stores, twelve reported larger sales in dollars than in April last year, these stores being located in Baltimore, Richmond, Washington, Asheville, N. C., and Columbia, S. C. Cumulative sales from January 1 through April 30 were 12.6% less than sales during the same four months of 1921. Only one store out of the twenty-five has sold more dollars worth of goods since the first of the year than was sold during the same period in 1921.

Stocks on hand in the reporting stores show comparatively little change from stocks on hand a year or a month ago. April 30th stocks this year were 3.6% greater in selling value than stocks on April 30, 1921, but were 1.2% less than March 31st, 1922, stocks. Due to seasonally increased sales, while stocks remain nearly constant, the percentage of stocks on hand at the end of each month since January 1 to average monthly net sales during the same four months has fallen to 433.1%, reflecting a more rapid turnover. This figure varies more widely in the individual stores than any other figure calculated from the reports, the percentage for the larger city stores generally running smaller than for the stores located in the smaller places.

Outstanding orders for merchandise at the end of April amounted to only 4.2% of total purchases of goods during the calendar year 1921.

## WHOLESALE TRADE

### Percentage Increase (or Decrease) in Net Sales During April, 1922, as Compared With March, 1922 and April, 1921.

	Groceries	Dry Goods	Shoes	Hardware	Furniture
Number of reporting firms in each line.....	45	15	18	18	9
Net sales (selling price) during April, 1922, compared with March, 1922.....	-10.0	-16.1	- 3.4	6.7	1.0
Net sales (selling price) during April, 1922, compared with April, 1921.....	- 9.2	-17.7	- 9.2	- 9.2	43.4

—Denotes Decrease.

For the month of April we received confidential reports from one hundred and five wholesale firms. These reports show that net sales during that month were less in groceries, dry goods and shoes than sales in March 1922, but were greater in hardware and furniture. April 1922 sales were less than April 1921 sales in all lines reported upon except furniture. The decreases in April under March are seasonal developments, most of the retailers having placed their orders for spring and summer stocks earlier in the season. The increase in hardware sales is doubtless due to the great activity in building, and to advancing prices of farm products which have stimulated sales of agricultural implements to some extent. The amount of construction work getting under way has also doubtless had a helpful effect upon furniture sales. In commenting on general conditions and influences that have affected their sales a number of wholesalers state that the unsettled and unseasonable weather prevailing for the past two months has seriously cut their trade. Others write that the coal strike has restricted their sales, this complaint coming chiefly from the dealers supplying the retailers of West Virginia. A large majority of the reporters state that they expect a gradual, though slow, improvement in business until another crop is gathered, after which good trade is confidently expected if the crops bring average and fair returns to the growers. Several correspondents tell us that one of the chief obstacles in the wholesaler's path at present is the difficulty of securing first class credit data. They say that many retailers are unaware of their real financial status, and therefore applications for credit must be examined with great care.

Data on collections show that conditions in that line are improving. One hundred and six wholesalers classified their collections for April as Good, Fair, Slow or Poor, and of these 72.6% classed them as either Good or Fair. In March 70.1% of the reporting firms gave collections as Good or Fair, and in February the number so reporting was 56.9% of the total. The January figure was 61.1%. We give below the classified reports from one hundred and six firms for April, and for comparative purposes we have added the totals for January, February and March:

<i>Lines Sold</i>	<i>Collections Reported As</i>				<i>Total</i>
	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Slow</i>	<i>Poor</i>	
Groceries .....	5	31	7	1	44
Dry Goods .....	1	7	6	1	15
Boots and Shoes .....	0	13	6	0	19
Hardware .....	1	12	4	1	18
Furniture .....	0	7	3	0	10
April Totals .....	7	70	26	3	106
March Totals .....	7	75	30	5	117
February Totals .....	9	57	43	7	116
January Totals .....	8	61	33	11	113

(Compiled May 15, 1922.)