



SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE



WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 16, 1939

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

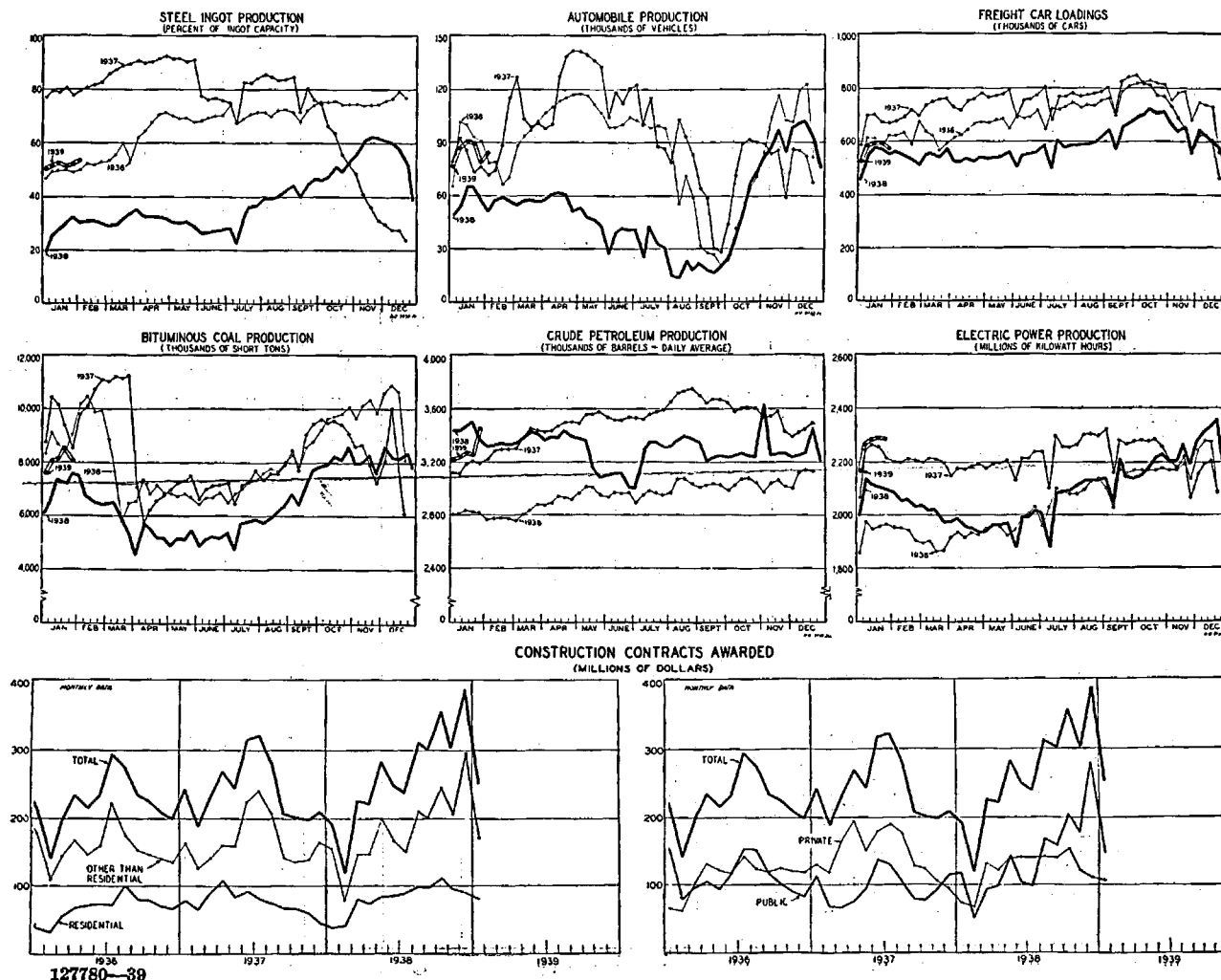
RETAIL trade reports for January indicate that distribution of commodities to consumers was at a higher rate than a year ago. Sales of new passenger cars, according to preliminary reports, were more than one-third larger than in January 1938. Unit volumes of general merchandise sales were moderately larger than a year ago. While measurement of the seasonally adjusted volume of dollar sales in January is made difficult by the magnitude of the normal decline from December, the changes in dollar sales were generally of seasonal proportions. The Federal Reserve adjusted index of department store sales was lowered 1 point from December to 88 (1923-25=100) for January; trade at these stores was slightly below the dollar turnover of last year. Variety store, mail order, and chain shoe store sales were, however, higher than the dollar figures reported for January of last year. The Fairchild index of retail prices of department-store articles was 89.1 (January 1, 1931=100) on February 1, as compared with 92.4 a year earlier.

Industrial activity continues at a relatively even pace. Steel ingot production has increased somewhat in the past fortnight.

Automobile production last week recovered to 84,500 units after declining to 78,400 in the preceding week when adverse weather retarded shipments from some assembly plants. The Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System has placed its seasonally adjusted index of industrial production at a preliminary figure of 101 (1923-25=100) for January as compared with 104 in December and 80 in January 1938. The decline from December reflected the absence of seasonal expansion as output in January was about on a par with the daily rate in December.

Awards of construction contracts in January were much below the dollar total for December according to the F. W. Dodge data for 37 Eastern States. This drop reflected mainly the lower volume of public projects which for the month were little more than half as large as the record volume placed in December. Seasonal influences were partly reflected in the moderate decline in contracts for private residential buildings; awards of this type were, however, 90 percent larger than a year ago and were 14 percent above the dollar volume in January 1937.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



WEEKLY BUSINESS INDICATORS

[Weekly average 1923-25=100]

1939										1938		1937		1939										1938		1937			
ITEM	Feb. 11	Feb. 4	Jan. 28	Jan. 21	Jan. 14	Feb. 12	Feb. 5	Feb. 13	Feb. 6	ITEM	Feb. 11	Feb. 4	Jan. 28	Jan. 21	Jan. 14	Feb. 12	Feb. 5	Feb. 13	Feb. 6	Finance—Continued.	Feb. 11	Feb. 4	Jan. 28	Jan. 21	Jan. 14	Feb. 12	Feb. 5	Feb. 13	Feb. 6
Business activity:†										Finance—Continued.																			
New York Times§		90.5	92.3	91.6	90.7	79.7	81.3	102.4	101.2	Banking:																			
Barron's§		98.0	99.6	98.7	97.5	76.3	77.2	105.2	102.7	Debits, outside N. Y. C.†	81.8	87.6	83.2	92.5	90.8	72.7	89.0	86.3	102.6										
Business week			103.6	104.3	103.2	82.2	82.3	110.4	109.4	Federal Reserve reporting member banks:																			
Commodity prices, wholesale:										Loans, total	65.4	65.9	66.3	66.3	66.9	71.4	71.9	71.7	71.5										
Dept. of Labor, 1926=100:										Interest rates:																			
Combined index (813)		76.6	76.7	76.6	76.8	79.6	80.1	85.6	85.4	Call loans†	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2	24.2										
Farm products (67)		67.1	67.3	66.9	67.3	70.1	70.9	91.6	90.5	Time loans†	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6	28.6										
Food (122)		71.0	71.2	71.3	71.3	73.2	74.5	86.6	86.7	Currency in circulation†	137.6	137.5	136.6	137.3	138.3	130.0	130.3	131.1	130.9										
All other (624)		80.4	80.4	80.4	80.5	83.1	83.2	83.6	83.5	Production:																			
Fisher's index, 1926=100:										Automobiles	110.8	102.8	116.9	118.2	113.9	75.8	67.4	95.0	94.8										
Combined index (120)	79.5	79.8	79.8	79.8	79.7	82.4	82.6	90.7	90.4	Bituminous coal†		79.0	83.8	80.0	78.6	67.2	75.5	99.6	96.9										
Copper, electrolytic	79.7	79.7	79.7	79.7	79.7	71.0	71.0	92.8	92.8	Cotton consumption†			108.4	109.3	112.5	84.0	83.1	127.7	129.1										
Cotton middling, spot	33.1	33.1	33.1	33.5	32.4	32.4	31.6	48.5	48.5	Electric power†		137.3	137.6	137.5	136.3	123.2	125.0	132.1	132.1										
Construction contracts†		76.2	56.9	62.9	34.3		48.5			Lumber		42.7	44.3	49.2	44.9	31.0	34.2	41.6	37.1										
Distribution: Carloadings	60.2	62.0	61.6	61.2	56.6	58.9	71.8	70.0		Petroleum†		165.2	155.9	156.7	155.7	159.6	159.2	157.8	154.6										
Employment: Detroit, factory		100.8		101.8	79.8		128.4			Steel ingots†	91.7	90.7	87.9	90.5	88.8	51.8	51.5	132.4	130.7										
Finance:										Receipts, primary markets:																			
Failures, commercial	64.1	62.7	74.0	71.7	73.7	79.6	67.3	44.2	48.6	Cattle and calves		58.4	62.8	61.4	59.6	60.1	62.7	63.2	58.2										
Bond yields†	66.2	66.9	66.9	66.4	66.9	74.0	74.5	64.6	64.3	Hogs		36.0	41.6	48.4	49.4	41.9	48.5	52.9	44.1										
Stock prices†	104.8	103.9	101.2	107.3	107.1	90.4	88.5	143.8	142.9	Cotton		45.4	44.6	42.3	46.2	44.2	75.4	58.6	56.2										
										Wheat		30.4	38.9	36.1	34.7	38.8	23.6	23.1	15.8										

*Data do not cover calendar weeks in all cases. †Computed normal=100. ‡Daily average. †Weekly average, 1928-30=100. ‡Seasonally adjusted.

‡Index for week ended Feb. 18 is 94.1.

‡For description of these indexes, see p. 4 of the Dec. 16, 1937 issue.

WEEKLY BUSINESS STATISTICS*

ITEM	1939						1938		1937		1936
	Feb. 11	Feb. 4	Jan. 28	Jan. 21	Jan. 14	Jan. 7	Feb. 12	Feb. 5	Feb. 13	Feb. 6	Feb. 15
COMMODITY PRICES, WHOLESALE											
Copper, electrolytic, New York†.....	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.110	0.098	0.098	0.128	0.128	0.090
Cotton, middling, spot, New York.....		.090	.090	.091	.088	.089	.088	.086	.132	.132	.118
Food index (Bradstreet's).....		2.30	2.31	2.30	2.31	2.33	2.43	2.46	2.96	2.93	2.68
Iron and steel, composite.....	36.36	36.35	36.35	36.37	36.37	36.36	38.94	38.94	36.67	36.64	33.45
Wheat, No. 2 hard winter (Kansas City).....	.68	.70	.72	.70	.71	.72	1.03	1.01	1.44	1.36	1.07
FINANCE											
Banking:											
Debits, New York City.....	3,385	3,362	3,094	3,391	3,429	4,620	2,491	3,381	3,970	5,241	3,111
Debits, outside of New York City.....	3,793	4,063	3,860	4,289	4,210	5,153	3,371	4,130	4,001	4,756	3,138
Federal Reserve banks:											
Reserve bank credit, total.....	2,584	2,582	2,583	2,588	2,592	2,604	2,594	2,594	2,477	2,463	2,508
U. S. Government securities.....	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,564	2,430	2,430	2,430
Member bank reserve balances.....	9,018	9,047	9,166	9,130	9,135	8,819	7,205	7,249	6,771	6,768	5,784
Excess reserves, estimated.....	3,459	3,478	3,597	3,559	3,436	3,298	1,412	1,385	2,184	2,150	3,007
Federal Reserve reporting member banks:											
Deposits, demand, adjusted.....	16,077	16,048	16,152	16,124	16,050	15,888	14,511	14,464	15,552	15,493	14,061
Deposits, time.....	5,185	5,183	5,179	5,174	5,177	5,161	5,223	5,225	5,095	5,077	4,889
Investments, total.....	13,290	13,209	13,147	13,150	13,110	13,114	12,301	12,253	13,691	13,638	13,087
U. S. Government direct obligations.....	8,171	8,173	8,186	8,182	8,206	8,189	8,202	8,165	9,121	9,149	8,717
Obligations fully guaranteed by U. S. Government.....	1,807	1,789	1,733	1,732	1,715	1,732	1,146	1,141	1,216	1,214	1,197
Loans, total.....	8,179	8,233	8,281	8,290	8,367	8,412	8,925	8,981	8,964	8,941	7,995
Commercial, industrial, and agricultural loans.....	3,745	3,767	3,765	3,789	3,818	3,826	4,402	4,394			
Interest rates, call loans†.....	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	.75
Interest rates, time loans†.....	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.00
Exchange rates:											
French franc†.....	2.647	2.643	2.641	2.640	2.636	2.628	3.288	3.280	4.558	4.558	6.677
Pound sterling†.....	4.686	4.678	4.675	4.678	4.672	4.646	5.013	5.011	4.895	4.895	5.000
Failures, commercial.....	261	255	301	292	300	254	324	274	180	198	208
Currency in circulation†.....	6,681	6,676	6,635	6,669	6,718	6,823	6,314	6,329	6,366	6,358	5,775
Security markets:											
Bond sales (N. Y. S. E.).....	30,530	32,550	38,180	34,430	35,870	39,410	29,590	35,950	59,480	72,720	85,690
Bond yields (Money's) (120 bonds)†.....	3.82	3.86	3.86	3.83	3.86	3.88	4.27	4.30	3.73	3.71	3.95
Stock sales (N. Y. S. E.).....	3,636	4,224	7,657	4,402	5,405	5,808	3,052	4,374	12,800	14,401	12,719
Stock prices (N. Y. Times)†.....	101.73	100.88	98.29	104.16	103.99	107.33	87.75	85.99	139.63	138.77	120.27
Stock prices (Standard Statistics) (420).....	91.1	89.0	87.4	92.6	91.5	95.6	79.6	78.9	130.1	129.8	107.6
Industrials (348).....	107.4	105.3	103.5	110.0	109.2	114.5	94.6	93.0	152.4	151.9	122.2
Public utilities (40).....	85.2	81.8	80.9	82.8	80.3	80.8	79.6	71.5	111.4	112.9	106.2
Railroads (32).....	28.5	27.7	27.0	30.0	29.6	32.5	27.6	27.5	58.2	56.7	49.2
PRODUCTION, CONSTRUCTION, AND DISTRIBUTION											
Production:											
Automobiles.....	84,500	78,410	89,200	90,205	86,925	76,685	57,810	51,443	72,492	72,295	74,720
Bituminous coal.....	1,346	1,427	1,362	1,338	1,500	1,500	1,144	1,285	1,696	1,651	1,760
Electric power.....	2,287	2,293	2,290	2,270	2,169	2,052	2,052	2,082	2,200	2,201	1,950
Petroleum†.....	3,442	3,248	3,248	3,244	3,215	3,325	3,325	3,316	3,286	3,221	2,774
Steel ingots.....	53.4	52.5	51.2	52.7	51.7	50.7	30.7	30.5	80.6	79.6	52.0
Construction-contract awards.....			12,241	9,139	10,105		5,806		7,784		4,996
Distribution:											
Freight-car loadings, total.....		576,790	594,379	590,359	586,877	530,849	542,991	564,740	688,523	671,227	631,095
Coal and coke.....		140,779	148,511	139,046	130,636	126,917	113,380	135,853	167,465	167,672	203,820
Forest products.....		25,538	27,935	27,240	26,416	21,793	26,553	28,257	35,091	32,595	26,469
Grains and grain products.....		32,202	33,029	33,029	34,056	29,324	32,256	32,282	29,598	28,211	28,085
Livestock.....		11,971	12,866	13,839	13,152	12,819	11,015	11,450	11,613	10,689	9,969
Merchandise, l. c. l.....		146,138	146,428	146,586	145,469	122,302	146,887	145,002	162,813	158,258	144,078
Ore.....		9,062	7,640	8,964	7,849	8,982	7,136	6,447	11,071	9,598	5,615
Miscellaneous.....		214,358	218,397	221,655	229,299	208,772	205,454	204,449	270,872	264,204	213,049
Receipts:											
Cattle and calves.....		185	198	194	188	177	190	198	200	184	188
Hogs.....		234	270	314	321	293	272	315	343	286	226
Cotton into sight.....		118	110	120	115	47	196	152	146	136	131
Wheat, at primary markets.....	2,416	3,093	2,871	2,763	3,090	2,145	1,874	1,838	1,259	1,321	1,052

*Data do not cover calendar weeks in all cases.

†Daily average.

‡Rate for week ended Feb. 18 is 54.8.

MONTHLY BUSINESS STATISTICS

Monthly statistics through December 1937, together with explanatory notes and references to the sources of the data may be found in the 1938 Supplement to the Survey	1938											
	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
COMMODITY PRICES												
Page 12												
Retail prices:												
Fairchild's index:												
Combined index.....Dec. 31, 1930=100..	89.1	92.4	91.2	90.6	90.2	89.5	89.2	89.0	89.0	89.0	88.9	88.9
Apparel:												
Infants' wear.....do.....	96.3	97.2	97.1	97.1	97.0	96.9	96.8	96.6	96.5	96.4	96.4	96.3
Men's.....do.....	88.7	90.9	90.7	90.2	89.9	89.6	89.4	88.9	88.7	88.7	88.7	88.7
Women's.....do.....	89.0	92.9	92.2	91.4	90.8	89.9	89.3	89.0	89.4	89.4	89.2	89.0
Home furnishings.....do.....	90.5	95.3	94.6	94.2	93.5	92.7	91.9	91.5	91.3	91.1	90.9	90.4
Piece goods.....do.....	84.3	87.0	86.1	85.6	85.4	84.9	84.9	84.8	84.5	84.5	84.4	84.3
DOMESTIC TRADE												
Pages 27, 28, 29												
Retail trade:												
Chain store sales:												
Variety store sales:												
Combined sales of 7 chains:												
Unadjusted.....1929-31=100..	73.6	71.6	78.6	81.7	95.2	90.7	90.9	88.0	85.2	94.1	98.2	102.2
Adjusted.....do.....	98.7	96.1	94.1	97.2	92.9	90.7	95.7	98.9	96.3	98.5	96.7	100.2
H. L. Green Co., Inc.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	1,098	1,790	1,780	2,156	2,787	2,383	2,496	2,366	2,315	2,513	2,833	2,819
S. S. Kresge Co.:												
Sales.....do.....	8,801	8,607	8,914	10,653	11,965	10,253	10,643	10,004	10,179	11,253	12,353	11,972
Stores operated.....number.....	680	687	681	681	681	681	680	681	682	685	685	686
S. H. Kress & Co.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	5,055	5,159	5,358	6,054	6,671	6,507	6,235	5,822	6,336	6,179	6,827	6,613
Stores operated.....number.....	238	233	234	236	236	239	239	239	238	238	238	238
McCrory Stores Corp.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	2,535	2,476	2,641	3,005	3,493	2,909	3,200	2,946	2,980	2,955	3,294	3,186
Stores operated.....number.....	202	200	201	201	201	201	200	199	200	200	200	200
G. C. Murphy Co.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	2,684	2,490	2,489	2,782	3,652	3,160	3,294	3,301	3,087	3,308	3,811	3,594
Stores operated.....number.....	201	200	201	200	201	201	201	201	201	201	201	201
F. W. Woolworth Co.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	19,653	19,157	20,054	22,055	25,926	22,714	23,149	22,733	22,566	23,491	26,774	25,295
Stores operated.....number.....	2,014	2,005	2,007	2,012	2,012	2,011	2,010	2,010	2,011	2,013	2,017	2,018
Other chains:												
W. T. Grant & Co.:												
Sales.....thous. of dol.....	5,531	5,328	5,523	6,530	8,061	7,214	7,608	6,971	6,834	7,653	8,970	8,635
Stores operated.....number.....	489	480	481	481	481	480	483	484	484	484	487	489
Department stores:												
Sales, total U. S., unadjusted 1923-25=100..	69	70	70	77	86	80	79	58	65	91	92	99
Atlanta.....do.....	92	86	99	101	110	107	94	79	100	120	126	126
Boston.....do.....	65	66	54	67	78	67	74	46	55	73	86	86
Chicago.....do.....	69	70	68	86	87	80	82	60	72	96	91	96
Cleveland.....do.....	66	67	70	78	89	79	75	59	65	89	87	93
Dallas.....do.....	86	87	91	97	100	103	90	72	83	117	113	118
Kansas City.....do.....	67	67	66	86	84	79	72	61	74	88	92	89
Minneapolis.....do.....	74	72	64	93	97	85	92	68	81	107	109	96
New York.....do.....	67	74	74	77	88	81	85	62	64	94	98	106
Philadelphia.....do.....	49	51	55	59	66	61	63	46	48	67	75	82
Richmond.....do.....	78	79	76	97	110	99	103	72	81	110	127	118
St. Louis.....do.....	71	69	69	78	85	77	69	58	63	93	92	95
San Francisco.....do.....	78	77	76	81	90	87	80	73	86	82	91	102
Sales, total U. S., adjusted.....do.....	88	90	88	86	83	78	82	83	83	86	84	89
Atlanta.....do.....	116	109	112	109	105	106	104	113	128	127	106	111
Chicago.....do.....	87	88	85	85	79	79	84	83	87	93	82	88
Cleveland.....do.....	86	88	85	88	79	74	78	78	86	82	89	92
Dallas.....do.....	113	114	107	104	99	103	101	103	108	105	100	105
Minneapolis.....do.....	90	87	87	95	88	82	93	96	93	98	92	96
New York.....do.....	66	94	91	90	89	84	89	88	86	90	85	89
Philadelphia.....do.....	68	71	72	69	61	61	63	65	62	68	65	68
St. Louis.....do.....	89	86	81	84	82	77	75	85	83	87	81	82
San Francisco.....do.....	95	94	90	89	91	90	90	89	90	79	88	96
FINANCE												
Pages 53, 57, 58, 70, 71, 72, 74, 75, 77												
Banking:												
Bank debits, total.....mil. of dol.....	32,340	32,084	25,547	32,120	31,169	28,841	32,797	30,505	28,270	29,525	33,286	39,930
New York City.....do.....	14,533	14,477	10,915	14,746	14,572	12,828	15,637	13,828	12,247	13,085	15,140	18,879
Outside New York City.....do.....	17,806	17,607	14,633	17,373	16,597	16,013	17,160	16,677	16,023	16,440	18,096	21,050
Commercial failures:†												
Grand total.....number.....	1,263	1,377	1,149	1,167	1,172	1,123	1,073	1,038	1,015	866	997	875
Liabilities, grand total.....thous. of dol.....	19,122	21,415	21,028	40,325	21,147	19,139	15,918	14,761	16,382	14,341	13,219	36,528
Capital flotations:												
Securities issued by type of security, total (new capital and refunding).....thous. of dol.....	276,216	121,444	199,188	245,178	352,020	216,724	505,517	464,920	415,474	166,697	762,948	388,588
New capital, total.....do.....	219,658	92,387	82,072	126,260	197,448	156,640	345,257	389,896	180,228	120,362	164,682	218,907
Refunding, total.....do.....	56,559	29,056	117,116	118,918	154,572	60,084	160,260	75,024	235,247	76,335	598,266	169,680
Securities issued by type of corporate borrower, total.....thous. of dol.....	15,563	49,306	103,027	81,638	78,813	61,626	293,900	180,606	335,837	110,023	337,159	145,439
New capital, total.....do.....	5,427	45,533	40,802	23,995	12,313	35,935	198,866	129,061	124,696	60,887	63,922	45,071
Industrial.....do.....	1,027	5,177	105	8,660	6,139	18,405	141,761	119,250	67,232	56,838	40,561	17,300
Public utilities.....do.....	770	38,527	40,170	12,300	2,250	16,505	50,775	9,604	49,905	2,662	20,441	21,819
Refunding, total.....do.....	10,136	3,773	62,225	57,643	66,500	25,692	95,034	51,545	211,141	49,136	273,237	102,368
Industrial.....do.....	3,986	1,003	215	45,211	6,000	2,002	750	1,500	41,659	180	14,458	44,658
Public utilities.....do.....	300	774	61,830	1,265	60,500	23,670	94,284	46,045	169,382	41,824	258,659	57,712
Security markets:												
Bonds:												
Value, issues listed on N. Y. S. E.:												
Par value, all issues.....mil. of dol.....	51,587	47,910	47,895	48,360	48,279	48,244	49,177	49,409	49,424	50,331	50,225	50,301
Market value, all issues.....do.....	46,958	42,486	42,855	41,450	42,399	42,347	42,757	44,561	44,183	44,837	45,539	45,442
Domestic issues.....do.....	44,223	39,508	39,862	38,677	39,571	39,548	40,919	41,674	41,330	42,041	42,675	42,597
Foreign issues.....do.....	2,725	2,978	2,992	2,773	2,828	2,799	2,838	2,887	2,844	2,796	2,864	2,844

* Revised.

* Preliminary.

† Revised series. Data revised beginning June 1934; see table 3, pp. 17-18 of the December 1938 monthly survey.

† Revised series. Petroleum and products revised for 1937. Revisions not shown on p. 45 of the December 1938 monthly issue will appear in a subsequent survey.