



SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS

WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT



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

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SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

SIGNIFICANT changes in industrial volumes have not occurred in recent weeks though the seasonally adjusted rate of activity has continued to drift slightly lower. Production in the steel and automobile industries has fluctuated narrowly, with labor disputes causing a small recession in automobile assemblies in the final week of February. Railway freight traffic recorded a small contraseasonal decline in the 3 weeks ended February 18; daily loadings of miscellaneous freight were 4 percent below those in January but were 7 percent larger than a year ago.

Industrial share quotations recorded a small advance last week, though representative market averages have continued around 5 to 10 percent below the best levels reached in the recovery which started in the second quarter of 1938. Corporate bond prices have been stable, with flotations of new securities quite low. However, there has been an announcement of a large new capital issue for a petroleum corporation.

More complete data now available for January confirm the pause in the forward movement of business activity indicated by

weekly reports. The seasonally adjusted index of income payments was off slightly from December to 84.2 (1929=100) for January, but was higher than a year earlier for the first time since November 1937. Total compensation of employees receded slightly more than seasonally from December; wage and salary payments were nevertheless 4 percent higher than a year ago. As is usual, there was a substantial seasonal curtailment in employment between mid-December and the middle of January. The decline in factory employment was of seasonal proportions. The aggregate number at work in nonagricultural pursuits in January was about the same as a year ago, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The rate of manufacturing production in January was unchanged from December. As a rise in activity is the usual experience for this period, the Federal Reserve adjusted index of manufacturing output was off 4 points to 100 (1923-25=100) in January. The more-than-seasonal decline in export trade in January reduced the value of exports to a level about one-fourth smaller than a year ago. Imports were slightly higher in value than in January 1938.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



