



SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT

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



WASHINGTON, D. C., AUGUST 17, 1939

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

THE most recent weekly data indicate but slight variation in the volume of business activity. Steel ingot production in the first half of August was around 60 percent of capacity, as in the latter part of July. The rate so far this month, is about 3 points above the average for July, a gain of about the usual seasonal proportions.

Automobile production was at approximately the low point of the season last week. According to Ward's Automotive Reports only one small producer is turning out 1940 models on a volume basis. Preliminary data indicate that deliveries in July were maintained at about the May-June rate, after allowance for the usual seasonal decline.

Freight traffic volumes have shown little change in the last several weeks, the margin of gain over a year ago being maintained at about one-eighth as in July. Electric power production has held up well, and on a seasonally adjusted basis, it is currently the largest ever recorded.

In July the index of machine tool orders recorded a moderate increase to 230.9 (1926 shipments=100). This was the highest

figure recorded by this index since 1920, except for a few months in 1936-37. Operations in the aircraft industry have been well sustained, and bolstered by heavy military orders last week which lifted backlogs far above those ever before recorded, activity in this industry will continue at a high rate for many months. The rayon yarn industry recorded a further gain in operations last month, and according to a survey of the National Rayon Weavers' Association, loom activity in the first part of August was maintained close to the July rate of 85 percent of capacity.

Stock prices declined irregularly last week with the Dow-Jones average of industrial stocks off about 4 points for the 6-day period to 138.42. Since late last month more than one-third of the gain recorded during the July rise has been canceled. Commodity prices have shown little change on the average. In the week ended August 5 the Bureau of Labor Statistics index recorded a small gain due mainly to increased prices for certain farm products and foods during that week. These increases, however, were later canceled.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



