



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

THROUGHOUT the month of October there was a moderate advance in industrial production. In addition to the steel, automobile, and machinery industries, available data indicate substantial increases in cotton, lumber, and paper production. Bituminous coal production, which had declined during the first 3 weeks of October following the establishment of minimum prices, increased at the month-end. Freight carloadings, lagging behind 1939 during October because of small coal movements, rose sharply in the week ended October 26 as coal loadings increased. Electric power output again moved higher. For the first week in November the steel-ingot rate was advanced from 95.7 to 96.0 percent of capacity.

The upward movement in commodity prices was less marked toward the end of the month than in earlier weeks. In the final week of October the index of 28 commodities and the raw industrial classification advanced less than half of 1 percent, while agricultural staples declined. Rubber, tin, silk, and other import staples remained unchanged or decreased fractionally.

In the heaviest trading in recent months on the security exchanges, industrial stock prices advanced moderately. The Dow-Jones index rose from 132.26 to 134.85 in the week. The present level is now 20 percent above the low recorded in June. Railroad and utility stocks likewise moved up in the past week. Bond prices were little changed in October. Stock and bond floatations in the month were reported in substantially higher volume. Compared with recent years, a larger proportion of the new issues represents equity securities and a smaller proportion refunding operations.

Construction awards reported by the F. W. Dodge Corporation disclose a contraseasonal rise in the first half of October. Increased publicly-financed construction in the nonresidential field was an important factor in the situation. Residential construction contracts receded from the 10-year high attained in August and September, but the F. H. A. reported a continuing large volume of home mortgages selected for appraisal.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



