



SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS

WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE



WASHINGTON, D. C., NOVEMBER 14, 1940

SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

CONSUMER purchasing in general was well maintained in October. The decline in department-store sales indicated by the Reserve Board's seasonally adjusted index, from 99 in the 2 preceding months to 92 in October, was not representative of the other areas of trade. Variety stores, for example, showed an increase over September approximating 15 percent in contrast to the usual seasonal rise of less than 3 percent. Combined sales of major chains in this field were more than 8 percent higher than the total in the corresponding period a year earlier, and the highest since 1929 on a seasonally adjusted basis.

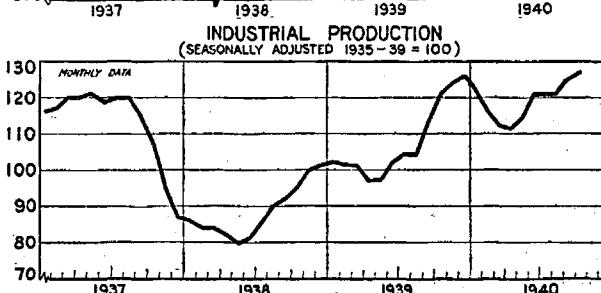
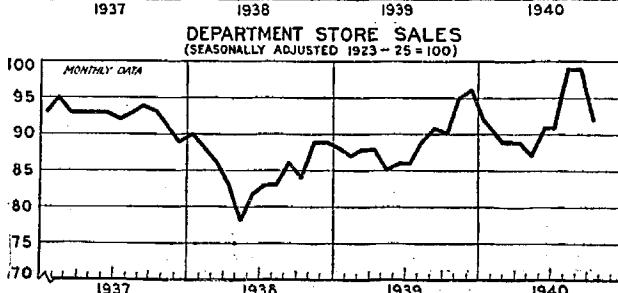
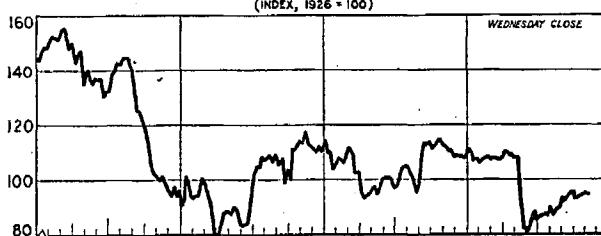
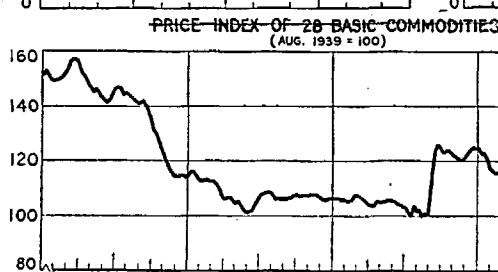
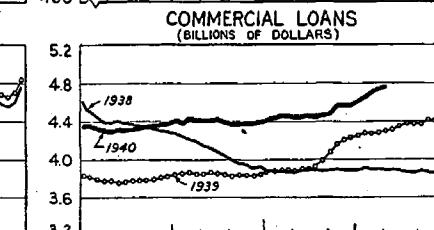
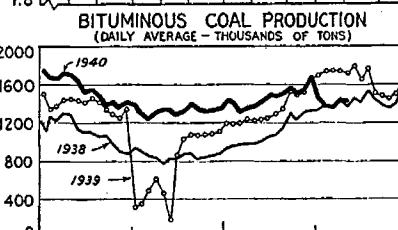
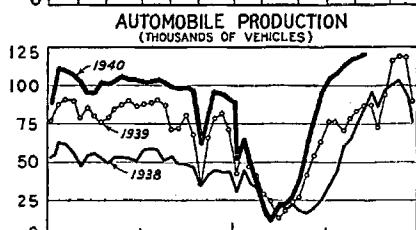
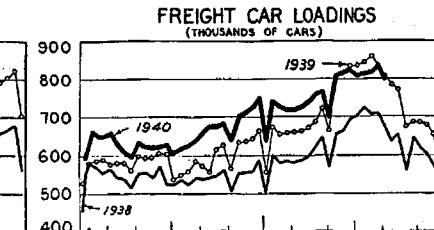
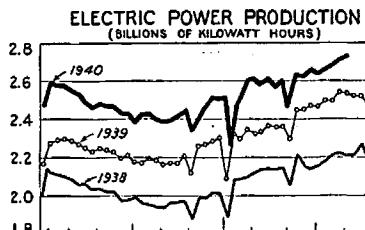
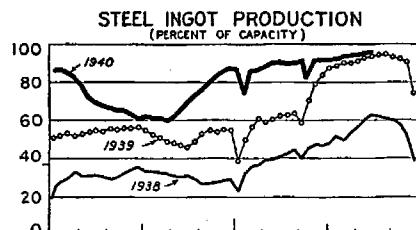
Mail-order companies likewise reported relatively favorable sales. The two major concerns reported an increase of 20 percent in dollar volume over September and 9.5 percent over October a year ago. While their business has shown a definite secular trend upward, it is significant that October sales were second only to December 1939.

The rapidly increased flow of new model cars has also been met by active consumer demand. For October retail sales are estimated at more than 380,000 units against 194,000 in the pre-

ceding month. This is a large volume for the second month of the model year. Sales in the last 10 days of the month were reported at 150,000 units, not much below the rate of production. Dealer stocks increased only moderately in the month to approximately 250,000 units or 6 cars per dealer.

Currently available data covering major industries indicate further gains in industrial production in early November following the estimated rise in the Reserve Board's index from 121 in September to 127 in October. The decline in freight car loadings at the beginning of the month reflects only the usual seasonal decrease in traffic that occurs in November. In the automotive industry output of cars and trucks reached 121,000 units in the week ended November 9, the largest weekly figure since July 1937. Consumption of electric power continued to advance, and is now running 8 percent above the corresponding period a year ago. The steel industry likewise bettered its record daily average of 239,000 short tons of last month as steel ingot production was maintained at 96.1 percent of capacity for the week ended November 16.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



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