



# SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS

## WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
BUREAU OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC COMMERCE



WASHINGTON, D. C., APRIL 17, 1941

### SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

INDUSTRIAL disputes in the bituminous coal and automobile industries contributed to some slackening in the rate of industrial expansion during the first half of April. The practically complete tie-up in coal dropped daily average output to nominal tonnages after April 1, while the Ford shutdown was mainly responsible for the decline in automobile assemblies to less than 100,000 units in the week ending April 12. Carloadings declined because of the importance of the coal component in the total though the basic expansion in activity is reflected in the continued upward movement in the volume of traffic reported in the important miscellaneous group. Loadings of 683,402 cars in the most recent week were 108,723 cars less than in the preceding week, the drop in the coal component being sufficiently large to account for the entire decline.

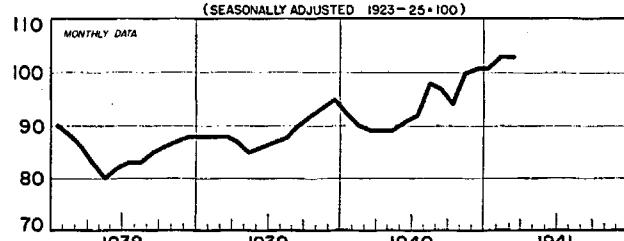
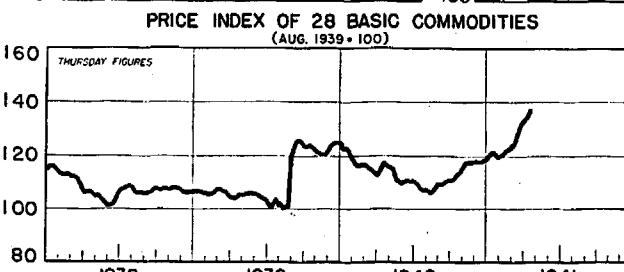
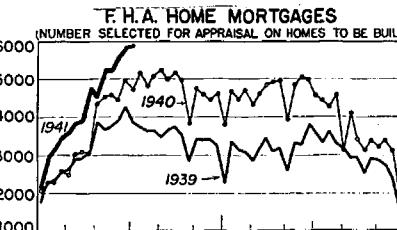
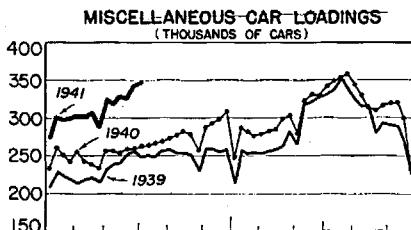
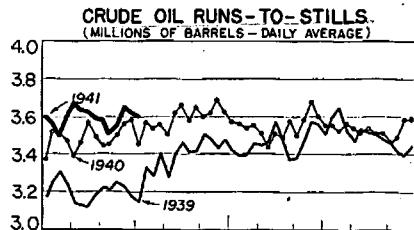
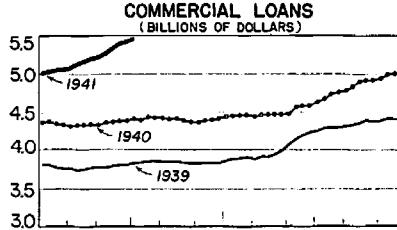
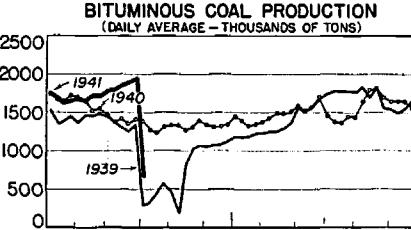
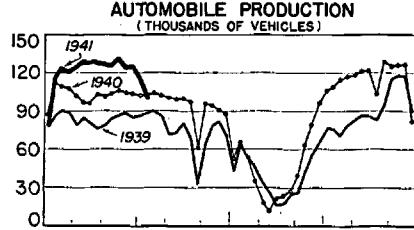
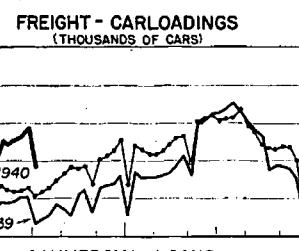
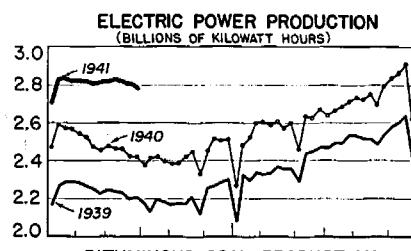
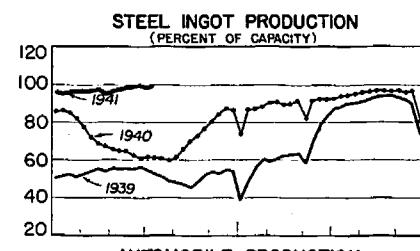
Other industries for which weekly data are available continue to produce in large volume although a slight reduction from the peak output achieved in March is noticeable in some instances. In the steel industry, ingot production averaged above 99 percent of capacity through April 12 with operations scheduled at 98.3 percent for the current week. Lumber and petroleum production both showed moderate but not significant declines. On

the other hand, recent reports show textile-mill activity to be moving into new high ground.

The stimulus of Easter buying expanded retail trade in recent weeks after gains were limited to the usual seasonal amount during March. Income tax collections of \$1,208 million in March, more than 80 percent above a year ago, were a factor moderating March purchasing, the Federal reserve adjusted index of department store sales remaining unchanged from the revised 103 (1923-25=100) established in February. Preliminary figures indicate a rise in the adjusted index of variety store sales from 116.2 (1935-39=100) in February to 119.9 in March, while the adjusted index of sales of general merchandise in rural areas declined from 150.8 (1929-31=100) to 148.9 over the period.

Sensitive commodity prices continued their recent rise during the first 10 days of April, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 28-commodity index (August 1939=100) moving from 134.4 on April 1 to 137.4 on April 10. In contrast to earlier rises, the advance was led by the index of domestic commodities which rose from 128.7 to 133.1 over the period, while that of import commodities moved up less than a point.

### SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS



307317-41





