

WASHINGTON, D. C., FEBRUARY 19, 1942.

## SUMMARY OF RUSINESS TRENDS

THE general price level continues to advance. For the week ended February 7, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' over-all index of wholesale prices stood at $95.7 \quad(1926=100)$, up about 2 percent since the beginning of the year. From the outbreak of the war in September 1939 to date, wholesale prices have risen 27 percent, while the advance since February 1941 has been nearly 19 percent. The increase in the cost of living, of course, has been somewhat smaller; nevertheless, the 11 percent rise of the past 12 months is very substantial by any standard.

Farm products still lead the general price advance, having climbed an additional 5 percent since the end of December. The Government's farm program sought to raise these prices, and their upward movement-has-been-sustained by-heavy domestic demand and the large requirements for lend-lease shipment. Altogether, domestic agricultural prices stood 42 percent higher in the middle of February than a year earlier, while the wholesale prices of foodstuffs increased an average of 28 percent. Textile prices have risen some 24 percent in the same period, though only a part of this can be attributed to higher raw-material costs, led by a $91-\mathrm{percent}$ increase in the cost of cotton. Of the cost-of-living components affected by the increased agricultural prices, food prices are up 19 percent in the January 1941-January 1942 period, while clothing costs have risen 15 percent. Retail
prices of housefurnishings (influenced by increased excise taxes) have climbed about 18 percent, approximately the same as the wholesale price advance.
Among the various industrial commodities at wholesale, chemical prices rose 23 percent, building materials 10 percent, and metals 6 percent, in the 12 months ending with the middle of February. Chemical prices have continued to increase since the year end. On the other hand, metal prices have remained relatively stable, the Office of Price Administration baving been particularly successful in this regard. However, in an effort to encourage added production, high premium prices were recently granted producers of copper, lead, and zinc for all outputs beyond certain quotas.

Despite recent passage of the Price Control Act, it is clear that the general price advance in all likelihood will only be slowed over coming months. In the absence of a strong and aggressive fiscal check, the tremendous pressure on retail prices is being steadily increased as armament expenditures are stepped up and consumer incomes expand. Many prices will not be controlled by the Administrator. Moreover, agricultural prices have not yet reached permissible ceilings in a number of cases. Finally, upward revision of many existing ceilings will undoubtedly be forthcoming as a result of increased raw-material and wage costs.

SELECTED BUSINESS INDICATORS


## WEEKLY BUSINESS INDICATORS•

[Weekly average, 1935-39=100, except as indicated; data beginning January 1939 for most of the series on a $1935-39$ base and 1939 and 1940 data for the New York Times Index
of business activity, also data beginning September 1939 for the price index of 28 basic commodities, are shown in table 32 , pp. $24-20$ of the November 1941 Survey] of business activity, also data beginning September 1939 for the price index of 28 basic commodities, are shown in table 32, pp. 24-20 of the November 1941 Surver]

| ITEM | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 1940 |  | ITEM | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 1940 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} \mathrm{Feb} \\ 14 \end{gathered}\right.$ | Feb. <br> 7 | $\operatorname{Jan}_{31}$ | $\underset{24}{\operatorname{Jan}}$ | $\overline{J_{17}}$ | $\begin{array}{\|} \text { Feb. } \\ 15 \end{array}$ | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} \mathrm{Feb} . \\ 8 \end{gathered}\right.$ | Feb. | ${ }_{10}^{\text {Feb. }}$ |  | $\begin{gathered} \text { Feb. } \\ 14 \end{gathered}$ | $\left\lvert\, \begin{gathered} \text { Feb. } \\ 7 \end{gathered}\right.$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Jan. } \\ 31 \end{gathered}$ | $\operatorname{Jan}_{24}$ | $\begin{gathered} \text { Jan. } \\ 17 \end{gathered}$ | $\left\|\begin{array}{c} \text { Feb. } \\ 15 \end{array}\right\|$ | Feb | $\underset{\text { Feb. }}{17}$ | $\underset{10}{\mathrm{Feb} .}$ |
| Business activity:耳 <br> New York Timess. |  | 136.4 | 139.4 | 139.6 | 137.2 | 121.4 | 121.4 | 101.9 | 1036 | Employment, Detroit, factory, $1923-25=100$ |  |  | 102.7 |  | 2.6 | 122.4 |  | 111.5 |  |
| Barron's, $1923-25=100$ |  | 142.8 | 144.5 | 1443 | 142.3 | 130.2 | 130.0 | 107.4 | 110.8 | Finance: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Business Weeks, $1923-25=100$ |  | 171.0 | 1704 | 168.8 | 166.9 | 146.8 | 146.4 | 110.2 | 113.6 | Bond yieldst | 82.7 | 82.7 | 82.5 | 82.5 | 82.5 | 83.7 | 83.5 | 88.9 | 89.1 |
| Commodity prices, wholesale: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Stock prices $\ddagger$ | 689 | 71.0 | 71.4 | 70.9 | 72.3 | 80.3 | 82.5 | 100.1 | 99.1 |
| Dept. of Labor: <br> Combined index, $1926=100$.. |  | 957 | 95.9 | 95. 5 | 95.6 | 805 | 805 | 78.3 |  | Banking: ${ }_{\text {Debits, }}$ outside N. Y. C.f.... | 130.1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Farm products...-........- |  | 100.1 | 101.3 | 1003 | 1008 | 70.5 | 707 | 68.6 | 68.9 | Federal Reserve reporting | 130.1 | 150.1 | 142.4 | 151.0 | 137.0 | 93.4 | 123.9 | 100. 4 | 103. 6 |
| Food. |  | 93. 7 | 93.9 | 93.6 | 94.1 | 73.3 | 73.2 | 705 | 709 | member banks: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| All other. |  | 945 | 947 | 945 | 94.4 | 84.6 | 84.6 | 83.3 | 83.5 | Loans, total. | 132.2 | 131. 2 | 131.4 | 1307 | 132.0 | 109.5 | 1090 | 99.4 | 99.3 |
| 28 basic commodities $\bigcirc$ | 1652 | 165.3 | 1648 | 164.2 | 164.0 | 120.8 | 119.9 | 115.6 | 116.4 | Currency in circulation $\ddagger$ - .-.--- | 178.3 | 177.2 | 175. 5 | 174 | 174.5 | 1367 | 1361 | 116.9 | 116.8 |
| Fisher's index, $1926=100:$ Combined index |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Failures, commerctal, $1939=100$ - | 74.2 | 85.2 | 87.6 | 85.2 | 91.9 | 95.8 | 100.4 | 103.2 | 88.7 |
| Copper, electrolytic $\ddagger$ | 102.6 | 102.4 | 1026 | 102.5 | 102.6 | 85. 41 | 112.9 | 84 105 7 | 84.6 <br> 107.2 | Production <br> Automobiles. | 387 |  | 950 | 103.6 |  |  | 1655 | 1232 | 124.4 |
| Cotton, average, 10 markets | 176.6 | 175.4 | 181.2 | 177.4 | 172.9 | 927 | 92.9 | 994 | 98.9 | Bituminous coalf |  | 1380 | 1436 | 144.5 | 145.3 | 133. 3 | 1296 | 116.6 | 127.4 |
| Construction contractst........- |  |  |  | 95.4 | 77.2 | 1228 |  | 85.9 |  | Cotton manufacturing |  |  | 1607 | 158.1 | 155.2 | 1430 | 1426 |  |  |
| Distribution: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Electric power. |  | 163.1 | 1628 | 161.5 | 162.0 | 1397 | 140.3 | 120.4 | 1228 |
| Carloadings. |  | 120.2 | 125.1 | 125 | 1244 | 110.6 | 1089 | 93.3 | 962 | Petroleum $\ddagger$ |  | 137.0 | 122.3 | 1362 | 127.8 | 1149 | 1143 | 117.4 | 1165 |
| Department store sales. |  | 114 | 121 | 119 | 131 | 97 | 05 | 82 | 80 | Steel ${ }^{\text {a }}$ | 181.7 | 180.8 | 180.0 | 1808 | 181.0 | 175.6 | 175.2 | 1203 | 125.4 |

- Dita do not cover calendar weeks in all cases Seasonally adjusted. indaly aversace. $\oplus$ Index for week ended Feb 21 is 183.1 . resuiting New York Trmes index, computed normal = 100 , this and the Business Week indes bavo been revised beginning Januay 1911 to take account of changing conditions


WEEKLY BUSINESS STATISTICS•

| ITEM | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 1940 |  | 1939 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | Feb. 14 | Feb. 7 | Jan. 31 | Jan. 24 | Jan. 17 | Feb. 15 | Feb. 8 | Feb. 17 | Feb. 10 | Feb. 18 | Feb. 11 |
| COMMODITY PRICES, WHOLESALE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Copper, electrolytic, New Yorkt. .-.....-dol. per lb.- | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.110 | 0.112 | 0.110 | 0.110 |
|  | - ${ }^{192} 5$ | $\begin{array}{r}191 \\ \\ \hline\end{array}$ | $\stackrel{.197}{ } \mathbf{3} 51$ | $\stackrel{.193}{ } \mathbf{3} 47$ | $\stackrel{.188}{ } \mathbf{3} 4$ | - 2101 | $\dot{+101}$ | - 108 | . 108 | 2.31 | 2. 30 |
| Iron and steel, composite ...................-dol per ton.- |  | 38.15 | 38.15 | 38.15 | 38.15 | 38.23 | 38. 20 | 37.00 | 37.01 | 36.38 | 36.36 |
| Wheat, No. 2, Hard Winter (Kansas City) dol. per bu.. | 1.22 | 123 | 1. 26 | 1. 26 | 1.26 | . 76 | . 79 | . 98 | . 98 | . 68 | . 68 |
| Banking. FINANCE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debits, New York City $\qquad$ mil. of dol | 3,134 | 4,116 | 4,135 | 3,914 | 3,626 | 2,365 | 3,850 | 2,604 | 3,185 |  | 3,385 |
| Debits, outside New Yory City (i40 cities).....do.--- | 5,448 | 6, 286 | 5,964 | 6,325 | 5,735 | 3,908 | ${ }_{5}{ }_{5}, 190$ | 3,713 | 4,335 | 3,659 | 3 3,813 |
| Federal Reserve banks: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| U. S. Government securities..--...............do...-- | 2,243 | 2,243 | 2,243 | 2,249 | 2,254 | 2,184 | 2, 184 | 2,477 | 2,477 | 2, 564 | 2.564 |
| Member bank reserve balances-.--......----- do.-.. | 12, 055 | 12, 840 | 13, 075 | 13, 145 | 12,992 | 13, 871 | 13,842 | 12, 151 | 12,097 | 8 8,707 | 9, 018 |
| Exicess reserves, estumated--- | 3,357 | 3, 326 | 3,479 | 3,584 | 3,561 | 6, 331 | 6,306 | 5,580 | 5,523 | 3,166 | 3,459 |
| Deposits, demand, adjusted...................do. | 24,731 | 24, 457 | 24, 747 | Federal Reserve reporting member banks: |  | 22,981 | 22,798 | 19,062 | 19, 108 | 15,951 | 16,077 |
| Deposits, time.......-..............................do | 5, 197 | 5, 214 | 5,241 | 5,254 | 5,281 | 5,452 | 5,452 | 5.260 | 5,256 | 5,181 | 5,185 |
| Investments, total | 19, 130 | 19,114 | 19,087 | 19,012 | 18,925 | 16.871 | 16,847 | 14,686 | 14,692 | 13, 403 | 13, 280 |
| U. S. Government direct obligations--......do | 12,717 | 12, 721 | 12,689 | 12,630 | 12,281 | 10,382 | 10,378 | 8.855 | 8. 910 | 8, 182 | 8,171 |
| Obligations guaranteed by U. S. Govt.-.-. do | 2,716 | 2710 | 2,709 | 2,709 | 2,978 | 2,765 | 2,746 | 2.420 | 2.411 | 1,975 | 1,807 |
|  | 11,322 6862 | 11,241 6,785 | 11,255 6,778 | 11,199 6,721 | 11,308 6,728 | 9, ${ }_{5}^{\text {9, }} 173$ | 9, 337 5,124 | 8,516 4,309 | 8,507 4,314 | 8,205 3,761 | 8,179 3,745 |
| Interest rates, call loans $\ddagger$....................-percent.- | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
|  | 1.25 | 125 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 125 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1. 25 |
| Currency in circulation $\ddagger$ - | 11,315 | 11,241 | 11, 133 | 11,083 | 11,074 | 8,675 | 8,636 | 7,420 | 7,412 | 6,697 | 6,681 |
|  | -4.035 | -4.035 | - 4.0248 | $\begin{array}{r} 4.035 \\ \hline 241 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r}\text { - } 4.035 \\ \hline 260 \\ \hline\end{array}$ | - 4.028 | - 4.031 | 3.958 |  | 4. 688 | 4. ${ }_{318}$ |
| Failures, commercial.................................................. Securtty markets. | 210 | 241 | 248 | $241$ | 260 | 271 | 284 | 292 | 251 | 293 | 318 |
| Bond sales (N. Y. S. E.) - thous. of dol. par value- | 33, 660 | 38,510 | 48,270 | 61,310 | 45, ${ }^{4} 10$ | 28, 210 | 33,270 | 27,070 | 33,510 | 25,320 | 30,530 |
|  | 3.35 | 3. 35 | 3.34 | 3.34 | 3.34 | 3. 39 | 3.38 | 3.60 | 361 | 3.81 | 382 |
|  | 1,916 | 2,301 7683 | 2,637 | 2,653 | 2.972 | 2,689 86,90 | 2, 276 | 3,073 | 3, 38 | 2,860 | 3,536 10173 |
| Stnek prices (Siand. and Poor's) (402) 9. 1935-39=100-- | 69.6 | 72.6 | 72.4 | 71.6 | 733 | 81.0 | 819 | 970 | 904 | 9596 | 06.2 |
| Industrials (354) --......--...... .-...---...-do--- | 71.0 | 71.0 | 74.0 | 732 | 750 | 80.3 | \$1. 3 | 97.4 | 96.7 | 966 | 97.0 |
| Public utilities (28) | 640 67.0 | 660 711 | ${ }_{7}^{65} 6$ | 650 68.8 | 665 69.5 | 883 70.6 | 887 72 | 103.5 76.9 | 102.1 761 | 98.4 74 | ${ }_{75}^{60.5}$ |
| PRODUCTION, CONSTRUCTION, AND |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 93, 050 |  | 79.860 | 84.500 |
| Bituminous coalt | 29,830 | 1,793 | 1,865 | 1,877 | 10,685 1.858 | 12,731 | 1,683 | 1,510 | 1.,655 | 1,445 | 84,504 1,464 |
|  |  | 3,475 | 3,468 | 3,440 | 3,450 | 2,976 | 2,959 | 2,565 | $2{ }_{2} 616$ | 2,297 | 2,315 |
| Petroleum $\ddagger$.-.-.-.-.-...-.........-. thous of bbl- |  | 4.337 | 3,871 | 4,311 | 4,016 | 3,638 | 3,618 | 3,718 | 3.688 | 3,321 | 3,284 |
|  | 95.5 | 95.0 | 94.6 | 850 | 95.1 | 97.1 | 96.9 | 685 | 71.7 | 548 | 534 |
| Distribution ${ }^{\text {c }}$ |  |  |  |  |  | 11,544 |  | 8,074 |  | 8, 567 |  |
| Freight carloadings, total_ ....-...................cars.. |  | 784,060 | 815,567 | 817, 804 | 811, 196 | 721, 176 | 710, 196 | 608, 237 | 627, 429 | 576,645 |  |
| Coal and coke...................................-do. |  | 167, 115 | 170, 179 | 176, 984 | 189,019 | 167, 147 | 163, 767 | 142,410 | 157, 516 | 133, 634 | 138, 820 |
|  |  | 47, 146 | 48, 764 | 47,343 | 43, 993 | 39,328 | 38,512 | 30,532 | 29. 263 | 24. 403 | 23, 539 |
| Grains and grain products-..-..................- do |  | 41,315 | 47,629 | 47, 148 | 49,488 | 29,297 | 28, 730 | 30, 897 | 20,174 | 28, 582 | 28,809 |
|  |  | 10,414 | 11, 117 | 12,327 | 13,825 | 10, 220 | 10, 290 | 11,083 | 10,540 | 11, 120 | 9,700 |
|  |  | 151,718 | 151,786 | 149,455 | 146, 688 | 153,049 | 153,324 | 142, 887 | 147, 442 | 148, 244 | 148,406 |
| Ore--ili...... |  | -13,405 | - $\begin{array}{r}13,342 \\ 372,350\end{array}$ | 14,103 370,444 | - ${ }^{12,8596}$ | 13,478 308,157 | -12, 818 | 9,821 240,507 | 9,812 243,682 | 8,944 221,718 | 88,429 218,649 |
| Receipts: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Cattle and calvest...----..............- thousands.- |  | 186 | 192 | 211 | 258 | 173 | 150 | 156 | 157 |  |  |
| Wheat, at primary markets .-............thous. of bu.. | 4,169 | 5,828 | 5,949 | 5,612 | $\begin{array}{r}\text { 3, } \\ \text { 344 } \\ \hline\end{array}$ | 2, 107 | 2,274 | 2,138 | 1,939 | 1,898 | 2,416 |

$\ddagger$ Daily average. - Data do not cover calendar weeks in all cases. a Free rate.
\&Revised Series. See table 32, pp. 24-26 of the Nov. 1941 Survey for stock prices beginning Jan. 1939 and cotton prices beginning Aur. 1939.
QRate for week ended Feb. 21 is 96.2 , data beginning with January 1942 are based on estimated capacity as of December 31, 1041, of $88,570,000$ tons of steel ingots and steel for castings.

1 Comparable data are not available prior to 1940 because of a change in the markets included in the data beginning with that year.
$\triangle$ Data for 1941 revised; revisions for all weeks of 1941 and carliet revisions referred to in the Weekis Supplement of Jan. 8 , 1942 , are available on request.


Revised. Prellminary. "New šerles. See note on corresponding ftem in the January 1932 Surver.
$\dagger$ Revised series. See note on corresponding item in the January 1942 SURvex.

$r$ Reviserl.
, Preliminary
${ }^{\text {3 Preliminary. }}$ Nee ies. See note on corresponding item in the January 1942 Surver.

