## SURVEY OF CURRENT BUSINESS WEEKLY SUPPLEMENT

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



## WASHINGTON, D. C., MAY 7, 1942

## SUMMARY OF BUSINESS TRENDS

OF SWEEPING importance to practically all business was the program to combat inflation set forth by the President in a message to Congress last week. The 7 point program recommended: (1) heavy taxes upon profits and personal incomes, including an income limit of $\$ 25,000$ after taxes, (2) a general price ceiling upon commodities and services, (3) stabilization of wage rates, (4) stabilization of farm prices at parity levels, (5) increased war bond purchases, (6) rationing essential commodities which are scarce, and (7) discouragement of credit and installment buying.

Following the announcement of this program, the second provision was immediately placed into effect by the Price Administrator. The General Maximum Price Regulation freezes the prices of most goods and many services at the highest levels reached during March 1942. Special emphasis was placed upon cost-of-living commodities, and many items were specifically designated as such. Prices of the cost-of-living items must be posted plainly for the consumers' benefit, and the consumer is expected to cooperate with the regional offices of O.P.A. in the difficult administrative task of enforcing retail ceilings. Each seller of a commodity or service whose price is controlled is automatically licensed by the order. Violators will be subjected to proceedings for revoking their licenses.

A number of important commodities are exempted from the regulation. Among them are many farm products, newspapers and books, used automobiles, and securities. Services to which the regulation does not apply are labor, personal services, professional services, restaurants, entertainments, and public utilities.

The regulation further provides for adjustment where for special reasons March prices subject a seller to unusual hardship. The Price Administrator, however, has announced that important increases in prices of commodities will not be allowed and that the March general price level will be maintained. Wholesale prices or manufacturers' prices may be reduced to ease pressure on retailers.

During the period August 1939 to March 1942, the general wholesale price index of the Bureau of Labor Statistics increased by almost one-third while the cost-of-living index rose 16 percent, practically all of the advance in the latter coming during the past year.

The general price regulation order thus came at a time when living costs were rising steadily month after month. It represents a more advanced step in the Government's swiftly unfolding program to prevent inflation while all economic resources are being mobilized for war.

## SELECTED 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

| ITEM | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 1940 |  | ITEM |  | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 184U |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | $\overline{\mathrm{May}_{2}}$ | Apr. | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{Apr} \\ \mathbf{1 8} \end{gathered}$ | Apr. | $\mathrm{Apr}_{4} .$ | $\underset{3}{\operatorname{May}}$ | $\left.\begin{array}{\|c\|} \text { Apr. } \\ 26 \end{array} \right\rvert\,$ | $\overline{M a y}$ | $\underset{27}{ }{ }_{27}$ |  |  | $\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline \mathrm{May}_{2} \end{array}$ | $\left\|\begin{array}{c} \text { Apr. } \\ 25 \end{array}\right\|$ | $\left.\begin{array}{\|c\|} \hline 1 \mathrm{pr} . \\ 18 \end{array} \right\rvert\,$ | Apr. | Apr. | $\begin{gathered} \text { May } \\ 3 \end{gathered}$ | $\overline{\mathrm{Apr}} \mid$ | $\begin{gathered} \mathrm{May}_{4} \end{gathered}$ | Apr. |
| Buslness activity: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| New York Times <br> Barron's, $1923-25=100$ |  | $\left\|\begin{array}{l\|l\|} 133.2 \\ 147.5 \end{array}\right\|$ | $\begin{aligned} & 132.61 \\ & 146.5 \end{aligned}$ | 138.5 | 136.0. | 133.7 | 120.4 | $\begin{aligned} & 101.5 \\ & 101.0 \end{aligned}$ | 100.1 <br> 99.8 |  | Employment, Detroit, factory, |  |  |  |  |  | 120.3 |  |  | 108.8 |
| Business Week $8,1923-25=100$. |  | 178.8 | 179.6 | 178.5 | 179.6 | 148.7 | 145.8 | 108.9 | 105.4 |  | Finance: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Commodity prices, wholesale: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Bond yieldst. | 83.0 |  |  | 82. | 82.7 | 83.5 | 83.7 | 86.9 | $87.4$ |
| Dept. of Labor: <br> Combined index, $1926=100 \ldots$ |  | 98.6 |  |  | 97.9 | 83.2 | 83.0 | 78.9 |  |  | Stock prices $\ddagger$ |  | 61.2 |  |  | 63.5 | $77.6$ | 77.8 |  | $100.3$ |
| Farm products... |  | 104.8 | 105. 2 | 104.6 | 104.2 | 74.4 | 74.3 | 71.3 | 71.6 |  | Debits, outside N. Y. C.t | 150.9 | 150.1 | 145.4 | 130.2 | 160.3 | 130.1 | 129. | 12.2 | 101.0 |
| Food |  | 99.6 | 98.6 | 97.0 | 97.2 | 78. | 78.1 | 72.5 | 72.8 |  | Federal Reserve reporting |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ${ }_{28}$ All other......- | 166.7 | 95.6 | 95. ${ }^{968.9}$ | ${ }^{95.6} 16$ | 95.6. | ${ }_{\text {8 }}^{137.4} 7$ | 86.1 <br> 136.8 | 115.6 1 | 82.5 |  | member banks: <br> Loans, total |  | 131.2 | 132.3 | 132.8 |  |  |  | 01.1 | 101.0 |
| Fisher's index, $1926=100$ : |  | 16. |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Currency in circulation | 185.2 | 183.7 | 183.4 | 183.1 | 183.0 | 43.3 | 141.8 | 119.5 | 118.7 |
| Combined index- | 106.5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | 84.6 |  | Failures, commercial, 1939 ${ }^{\text {a }}$ 100- | 70.3 | 82.3 | 79.2 | 76.0 | 85.9 |  | 96.1 | 103. | 109.9 |
| Copper, electrolyticf.-..... | 112.9 | 112.9 ${ }^{185}$ | 118.9 | 112.9 | 186.8 | 112.9 | 112.9 | 105.3 | ${ }^{106.2}{ }_{88} 1$ |  | Production: ${ }^{\text {Bitutninous coalt }}$ |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Construction contractt.------ |  |  | 188.4 |  |  | 207. 6 |  |  | 155.2 |  | Electric power.-- |  | 154.9 | 155.3 | 155.8 | 157.2 | 138.3 | 138.5 | 117.6 | 117.3 |
| Distribution: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  | Petroleum $\ddagger$ |  | 113. 1 | 112.0 | 111.9 | 108.0 | 110. 8 | 117.7 | 116.2 | 121.4 |
| Carlosdings - ${ }^{\text {Department }}$ store salos |  | ${ }_{129}^{1321}$ | (129,8 135 | $\begin{gathered} 124.9 \\ 120 \end{gathered}$ | $\left[\begin{array}{r} 127.1 \\ 160 \end{array}\right]$ | $\begin{array}{\|l\|l\|} \hline 121.8 \\ 124 \end{array}$ | $\begin{array}{r} 110.7 \\ \quad 114 \end{array}$ | $\begin{gathered} 102,1 \\ 108 \\ \hline \end{gathered}$ | 98.9 <br> 98 |  | Steel $\oplus$-- | 188.2 | 185. 7 | 185.0 | 187.6 | 188.0 | 170.5 | 173.6 | 108. | 104.9 |

- Data do not cover calendar weeks in all cases. $\quad$ Seasonaly adjusted. $\ddagger$ Daijy average. $\oplus$ Index for week ended May 9 is 187.6.
\& For New York Times index, computed normal $=100$, this index has been revised back to

For New York Times index, computed normal=100; this index has been revised back to January $1941 ; 1941$ and 1942 data are shown on the revised basis beginning with the Jan. 15, 1942, and Feb. 26, 1942, issues, respectively. The Business Week index has also been revised for 1941 and 1942; 1941 data are correct as published only beginning with the issue of
OThursday prices; August $1939=100$.

## WEEKLY BUSINESS STATISTICS•

| ITEM | 1942 |  |  |  |  | 1941 |  | 1940 |  | 1989 |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
|  | May 2 | Apr. 25 | Apr. 18 | Apr. 11 | Apr. 4 | May 3 | Apr. 26 | May 4 | Apr. 27 | May 6 | Apr. 29 |
| COMMODITY PRICES, WHOLESALE |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Copper, electrolytic, New York $\ddagger$ - | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.118 | 0.110 | 0.111 | 0.100 | 0.099 |
| Cotton, middling, ${ }^{15} / \mathrm{e}^{\prime \prime}$ average, 10 markets $\ddagger$-... do | . 208 | ${ }_{3}{ }^{202}$ | ${ }_{4}^{203}$ | ${ }_{3} 204$ | ${ }^{203}$ | ${ }_{2} 114$ | .$^{110}$ | . 107 | . 107 |  |  |
| Finished steel, composite* ${ }^{*}$ | 66. 73 | 56.73 | 56.73 | 56.73 | 56. 73 | 56. 73 | 56.73 | 56.60 | 55.50 | 56.50 | 56. 50 |
| Wheat, No. 2, Hard Winter (Kansas City) ..dol. per bu.FINANCE | 1.15 | 1. 13 | 1. 14 | 1. 16 | 1. 18 | . 87 | . 86 | 1.05 | 1.08 | . 75 | . 71 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Debits, New York City-- ${ }_{\text {Debits, }}$ | 3,887 6,318 | 3,715 6,285 | 3,807 6,091 | 3,143 5,455 | 3,999 | ${ }^{3.691}$ | 3,752 | 3,489 | 3.639 | 4,136 | 2,831 |
| Federal Reserve banks: <br>  <br> Member bank reserve balances. |  |  |  |  |  | 6,445 | 5,405 | 4,697 | 4,228 | 4,465 |  |
|  | 2,443 | 2, 400 | 2,415 | 2,384 | 2;399 | 2, 234 | 2, 239 | 2,500 | 2, 2,401 2,467 | 2,572 2,564 | 2,580 2,564 |
|  | 12,662 | 12,470 | 12.502 |  |  | - | 13, 506 | 12, 878 | 12,483 | $\stackrel{\text { 9, }}{\text { 972 }}$ |  |
|  | 2,815 | 2,752 | 2.886 | 3,169 | 2,999 | 5,771 | 8,760 | 6,107 | 6,116 | 4,084 | 4,124 |
| Federal Reserve reporting member banks: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Deposits, demand, adJusted...........------ do | 25, 368 | 25,145 5,115 | 24,725 5,118 | 24,7993 | 24,197 5,120 | 23,712 5,452 | 23,762 5,443 | 19,696 5,305 | 19,764 <br> 8,313 | 16,660 | 16, 742 |
|  | 20,111 | 20,151 | 20,170 | 19,502 | 19,100 | 17,680 | 17, 715 | 14,881 | 14,934 | 13,714 | 13, 675 |
| Inver S. Government direct obigations | 13,730 | 13,768 | 13,764 | 13,080 | 12,705 | 10, 812 | 10,810 | 8,960 | 8,975 | 8,341 | 8, 270 |
|  | 2,675 | 2,667 | 2,632 | 2,696 | 2,684 | 3,115 | 3,101 | 2,427 | 2,427 | 2,026 | 2,030 |
| Obligations guaranteed by U. S. Govt.......do Loans, total | 11, 094 | 11,242 | 11,332 6.948 | 11,381 | 11,394 | 9,870 5 | 9, 831 5,509 | 8,661 4,409 | 8,650 | 8,071 | 8. 100 |
|  | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 5.532 1.00 | 1.00 1.00 | 4,409 1.00 |  | ${ }_{1,00}$ |  |
|  | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 | 1.25 |
|  | 11,751 | 11,655 | 11, 637 | 11,616 | 11,610 | 9,095 | 8,997 | 7.585 | 7,531 | 6,923 | 6,885 |
|  | -4.035 | - 4.035 | - 4.035 | a 4.035 | a 4.035 | a 4.030 | - 4.024 | -3.494 | 3. 513 |  | 4.681 |
| Failures, commercial.......-...............-----num Security markets: | 199 | 233 | 224 | 215 | 243 | 272 | 272 | 292 | 311 | 281 | 326 |
| Security markets: ${ }_{\text {Bond sales }}(\boldsymbol{N}, \boldsymbol{Y}, \boldsymbol{S}$, E.) .....thous. of dol. par value.- | 40,591 | 38,747 | 37, 227 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Bond yjelds (Moody's)! -.............-.-...--percent.. | 3.36 | 3.34 | 3.34 | 3.34 | 3.35 | 3.38 | 3.39 | 3.52 | 3.54 | 3.82 | 3.84 |
|  | 1,742 | 1,743 | 2,008 | 1,724 | 1,338 | 2,137 | 2,406 | 3,999 | 4,623 | 2,639 | 2,858 |
| Stock prices ( $\boldsymbol{N}$. $\dot{Y}$. Times) t ............ dol. per share.- | 65.51 | 66.19 | 67.62 | 69.84 | 68.74 | 83.96 | 84.34 | 108.13 | 108.56 | 93.23 | 91.57 |
|  | 60.8 62.4 | 62.7 64.2 | 63.2 | 65.3 | 64.4 65.9 | 75.9 75.5 | 76.5 75.9 | 96.4 | ${ }_{98.6}^{97.6}$ | 87.8 | 85.5 |
| Industrials (354). <br> Public utilities (28) <br> Railroads (20) $\qquad$ $\qquad$ | 53.1 | 56.3 | 57.0 | 58.3 | 57.7 | 79.7 | 81.5 | 101.8 | 101.5 | 95.3 | 94.0 |
|  | 60.1 | 60.3 | 60.2 | 63.0 | 61.7 | 70.8 | 70.8 | 75.3 | 76.9 | 66.0 | 63.9 |
| PRODUCTION, CONSTRUCTION, AND |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Production: |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | 1,916 | 1,919 | 1,879 | 2,019 | 867 | 261 | 1,331 | 1,308 | 467 | 564 |
|  |  | 3,299 | 3,308 | 3,321 | 3,349 | 2,945 | 2. 950 | 2,504 | 2,499 | 2,225 | 2, 244 |
|  |  | 3,581 | 3.545 | 3. 543 | 3,418 | 3,507 | 3,727 | 3.679 | 3,845 | 3,581 |  |
| Construction contract awards $\$$.............thous. of dol | 98. | 97.6 | 17,718 | 88.6 | 98.8 | 19,517 | 86.0 | 61.8 |  | 47.8 | 14,148 |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | 861,353 | 846, 562 | . 814,233 | 828,890 | 794,301 | 721,627 | 665,547 | 644,804 | 572,025 | 585, 190 |
|  |  | 169,659 | 166,618 | 160,646 | 147,816 | 92, 786 | 38, 440 | 122,544 | 117,338 | 58,934 | 74, 757 |
| $\qquad$ do- |  | 14,048 51,260 | 13,925 49 | 13,768 | 13,845 | 10, 273 | 9, 141 | 7,685 | 7,871 | 5,368 | 5,397 |
| Grains and grain products.................................................... |  | - 35,677 | - 46,178 | 46,867 | 48,415 | 42, 674 | 40, 432 | 31, 215 |  | 30, 121 | 29, 253 |
|  |  | 13, 785 | 12,803 | 11,117 | 11,986 | 12,835 | 33, 540 | 13,071 | 12,352 | 34, 1386 | 14, 100 |
|  |  | 123, 580 | 129,436 | 132,367 | 139, 798 | 163,691 | 161, 283 | 149, 902 | 148, 637 | 153, 808 | 153,432 |
| Ore.elilane |  | 70,911 | 58, 3797 | 56, 007 | 55,044 | 79, 271 | 75, 385 | 35, 478 | 20, 881 | 16,612 | 15,890 |
| Reccipels |  | 382, 433 | 379,633 | 364, 600 | 376,656 | 358,917 | 348, 943 | 272, 479 | 268,071 | 258, 290 | 257, 126 |
| Cattle and calvest....--...--...-.-......thousands.. |  | 220 | 203 | 205 | 212 | 207 |  | 182 |  |  |  |
|  |  | 305 | 278 | 272 | 278 | 311 | 299 | 340 | 264 |  |  |
| Wheat at primary markets. $\qquad$ thous. of bu.. | 3,017 | 3,181 | 3,027 | 3,083 | 2,050 | 4,056 | 4,071 | 8,564 | 8,091 | 4,758 | 4,461 |

$\ddagger$ Daily average. Data do not cover calendar weeks in all cases. - Free rate.
TRevised series. See table 32, pp. $24-26$ of the November 1941 Surver for stock prices beginning January 1939 and cotton prices beginning August 1939. New series.
$\oplus$ fate for week ended May 9 is 98.6 ; data for 1942 are based on estimated capacity as of Dec. 31, 1941, of $88,570,000$ tons of steel ingots and steel for castings. A1941 data are shown on a revised basis beginning with the Jan. 15, 1942, issue; 1941 and earlier revisions not published are available on request.


- Publication of data discontinued to avoid disclosure of military pay rolls.
- Revised.
$\dagger$ Revised series. See note on corresponding item in the April 1942 SURVEF.
Data for months shown are for 4 weeks.



## Revised.

*New series. See note on corresponding item in the April 1942 Surver.
$\dagger$ Revised series. See note on corresponding item In the April 1942 SURVEY.
TData include a small number of pairs of shoes other than men's leather (nurses, athletic, etc.) made for Government contract.

