

BEHIND THE SCENES IN AMERICAN BUSINESS

By JOHN CRADDOCK

BUSINESS—Though you may have spotted price rises in some things, and got the impression that living costs were on a strong uptrend, fact is living cost rises have been amazingly low in comparison with what was feared the war would bring, on the basis of the 1914-18 experience. National Industrial Conference Board's report on 1940 shows that the wage-earner paid only nine-tenths of one per cent more for his essential requirements in 1940 than in 1939—and nearly three per cent less than in 1937. The survey covers food, clothing, housing, sundries, light and fuel. The board uses 1923 as the standard for living costs. With that as "100," costs during 1940 for the fields surveyed aggregated 85.3. Which means that the purchasing power of the '40 dollar was 117.2 per cent of what it was in '23 . . . you could buy as much with a single round dollar in those essentials as you could have got for \$1.17 in 1923.

NO RUNAWAY—So maybe prices aren't going to run away, after all—though we certainly heard plenty of talk expressing fear of just that when the defense drive was just starting. Maybe we should knock on wood. But the experts say this stability in cost of living, thus far, in spite of numerous "inflationary" influences, has been due mainly to three factors: (1) Our abundance of foodstuffs and raw materials; (2) mutual determination, arising out of experience in the other war, on the part of both business and government to keep prices down; (3) comparatively small number of labor disturbances, to date.

LOW-PRICE TREND—The auto industry, which has pledged itself to priorities on defense orders, finds itself able to surge ahead full-blast to meet what is predicted to be the greatest spring demand in its history. Announcement of new models shows a definite trend toward stepped-up production and continued low prices, indicating no noticeable shortage in basic materials. Among the late news on the industry is the announcement by one concern, Willys-Overland, of what is described as "the lowest-priced full-sized automobile in the world"—a new coupe priced at \$70 under any other model of the company—in addition to five other low-cost models. According to Ward M. Canady, chairman of the company, "the location of defense plants in outlying areas and the general trend of industrial decentralization makes it imperative that hundreds of thousands of workers be provided with low-cost auto transportation to reach their jobs. We are gearing our production to meet these needs."

CONSUMERS' OUTLOOK—More money is now in circulation than at any previous time in American history, and consumer buying has reacted to give the retail trade an extended contra-seasonal rise. Automobile sales, for instance, set an all-time January

record. Consumers, however, despite "hold downs" thus far, still are wary of rises in retail prices. Thus, many business leaders are now looking for means of protecting the consumers' interest, not only for the consumers' sake, but as a safeguard for the entire economic structure. For example, Lewis S. Rosenetisl, chairman of Schenley Distillers, points out that "if we are to preserve private enterprise, we must recognize that the consumer is 'the boss,' and that the era is one of service to the consumer." A portentous sign of the increasing nearness to "war-time economy" is the report from Washington that the nation may soon be asked to convert at least 25 per cent of its production facilities to defense purposes, which will mean a scarcity of many materials previously used principally for civilian needs.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR—A typewriter roller that can be illuminated "from inside" shining through to make everything perfectly visible when cutting a stencil for the mimeograph machine—it's made of lucite, that transparent plastic that conveys light around corners . . . More cigarets in the "long" size—there's a rumor one of the big three may emerge soon as a longie . . . Cooking and salad oil made from tobacco seeds—they say this part of the plant contains no nicotine and yields acceptable vegetable oil . . . A new biscuit-maker, an electrical one operating on the waffle-iron principle, for making hot biscuits right at the dining table . . . Men's cuff links with first-name initial on one side, last-name initial on t'other (how's come it took so long for somebody to think of that?) . . . Bread made of grass—introduced experimentally in Duluth, an especially "tough" market for baker's bread because so many housewives there bake their own, this innovation has been a big seller, despite a price three cents above that for regular bread in same size loaf; the accent is on vitamins.

WAGES UP, PRICES DOWN—Between 1914 and 1920, hourly wages in U. S. manufacturing industries rose from 25 to 60 cents (averages), largely under impetus of war-hoisted cost of living, for the latter jumped from an "index" of 61 to 118. Since 1920 the position of the wage earner has continued to improve, with the hour-

ly rate moving on up from 60 to 73 cents. During the same time costs have gone the other way, from the 118 of 1920 to the 85.3 of 1940. Taking another and less spread-out basis for comparison: hourly wage rates now stand about 20 per cent above the level of 1929, while living costs are about 15 per cent lower than in that "chicken-in-every-pot" year.

PRACTICAL PLAN

Up in Baltimore they have Toy Week about the middle of February. All who will give away used toys are asked to have them ready to be called for, and the entire lot is sorted out for repairs and repainting. Then they are stored against the coming of Christmas, when they will be given to children of poor families.

The idea seems to be that by the end of six week the newness of many toys is worn off; the owners have had time to decide which are favorites and to be kept; the toys given away are in much better condition than if they were allowed to lie around for six or eight more months, by which time many might be thrown into trash piles. Finally, the organizations doing the collecting know far ahead of the day of need just what they have in stock.

UNFAIR TO STATE

When the three educational institutions comprising the present North Carolina University system were consolidated, it was to be expected that difficulties would be encountered in administration. No one seems to be blaming President Graham, but charges are being widely circulated that State College is being treated unfairly in appropriations and equipment. It is said that Dr. Graham plans to equalize matters as soon as possible.

Soil-Building

Farmers of Johnston County are thinking more in terms of soil-building than they ever have before, reports R. M. Holder, assistant farm agent of the State College extension service.

Seen & Heard

A Compliment from Youth to Age A few nights ago Mrs. A. J. Hunt entered the Wakelon Theatre to see "Life With Henry." She went down near the center of the theatre and as she turned to sit down, some small child in the rear of the building shouted: "Hey yo, Mrs. Hunt." Smiling, Mrs. Hunt waved her hand back to her young friend. A ripple of amusement ran through the crowd. Our own opinion is that the laughter expressed the appreciation of the

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hearers for the fine friendly greeting of one of Mrs. Hunt's very good young friends. Who does not appreciate the friendship of children!

WEST LEAVES, BUNN COMES

J. T. West, who took over the management of the City Cafe some time ago, took Scotch leave a few nights ago. He locked the front door but left the rear open. No one knows just why he left. He had made a number of improvements and appeared to be doing a fair business.

R. D. Bunn, young man from the Hopkins Chapel community, has taken over the business and expects to give the people of Zebulon good service in lunches, meals and drinks.

SOFT DRINKS POPULAR

Popularity of bottled soft drinks is increasing yearly as Americans make bottled beverage drinking a year-around habit. Last year about 90 bottles of soft drinks were consumed for every person in the United States and total bill for these beverages was more than \$500,000,000.

POPULAR BOOK

Cook County, Illinois, bought more Bibles last year than were sold of any popular novel in the last ten years all over the world. There is no need to assume that any large percentage of them were used for swearing in witnesses in Chicago's courts.

Mr. and Mrs. Onnie Carlyle left for Baltimore, Md., January 20. They are nursing in Springfield State Hospital at Sykesville, Md.

Mrs. Henry Hood is still sick at her home. She had the influenza after Christmas and has not entirely recovered.

Your side of the road is the right side.

NOTICE OF SALE

Under and by virtue of that certain deed of trust executed under date of July 5, 1932, by Bettie Carpenter and Jake Carpenter, which deed of trust is recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Wake County, in book 633, page 562, default having been made in the payment of

the indebtedness thereby secured, the undersigned Trustee will on MONDAY, MARCH 9, 1941, at 12 O'clock noon, at the Courthouse door of Wake County in the City of Raleigh, North Carolina, offer for sale to the highest bidder for cash, the following described land, to-wit:

Beginning at a stake on the E. side of Gill Avenue, 150 Ft. S. of North St.; running thence in an Easterly direction 150 feet; thence in a Southerly direction 150 ft.; thence in a Westerly direction 150 ft.; thence in a Northerly direction along Gill Avenue 150 ft. to the beginning. The same being lots Nos. 27, 28, and 29 as shown by map of the Zebulon Place Property, recorded in book of maps 1885 at page 99 in the register of deeds office for Wake County.

This the 6th day of February, 1941.

IRBY D. GILL, Trustee.

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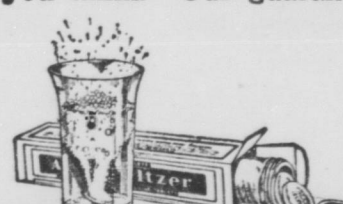
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