

Business The Enterprise Weather

BUSINESS IMPROVING BABSON PARK, MASS. (Special.) Everyone seems more optimistic on the condition of business and the outlook for the balance of this year.

While the business activity figure shows July as but 6 per cent above normal, compared with 8 per cent above normal for the month.

There are a number of developments which make for better business. The situation in the STEEL INDUSTRY is particularly gratifying.

Of course there are always some factors which are not quite as encouraging. CAR LOADINGS have fallen below last year and June returns of RAILROAD EARNINGS show a marked decrease as compared with 1926.

MONEY: A general decline in money rates recently occurred, with abundance of funds in all lending markets and relatively quiet demand.

STOCK MARKET: The stock market has been described as a selectively bearish and selectively bullish market all the time.

COMMODITY PRICES: Except for slight fluctuations the trend for industrial prices is still downward while that for agricultural prices is upward.

PRODUCTION: Production figures so far this year have fallen behind last year's total. However, consumption continues in large volume.

SALES: As the purchasing power has increased general trade should continue good through the fall.

LABOR: The New York traction trouble is settled, at least temporarily. The bituminous coal strike is being gradually settled by regional agreements in different sections of the field.

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FOREIGN TRADE: Merchandise exports and imports each amounted to approximately \$359,000,000, producing an even balance in June.

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this year were greater by 6.2 per cent and the imports by 6.8 per cent. Net results of first half year to July 1 have been an export balance of \$240,758,000 this year as compared with an import balance of \$95,186,000 in 1926.

COMMODITY PRICES STRENGTHENING BABSON PARK, MASS. (Special.) Commodity prices during the last of July and the first week in August were slightly higher than during the last of June and the first of July.

The most important commodity price advances were in cotton and cotton goods, hogs and beef, hides and leather, copper and lead, burlap and rosin. The principal declines were in oats, wheat, cocoa, sugar, silk, tin and petroleum products.

NORTH AND CENTRAL WEST GAINING The agricultural areas of the North and Central West appear to be in line for definite gains in purchasing power during the coming fall months.

CHAIN AND MAIL STORES GAINING Chain stores sales have shown a strong upward trend, and in spite of slightly narrower profit margins, earnings are showing steady expansion.

often able to buy and sell cheaper than the retailer who has only his own small business.

As compared with the first half of 1926, sales volume for the mail order houses this year has shown a substantial expansion.

There has been a slightly easier market for municipal bonds of late. Probably in a measure this may be said to be due to the fact that municipal bonds in recent months have been put out in rather large amounts.

Business conditions seem to be talked about these days in just two ways. Either a person is interested in current business conditions most or else he is trying to determine more than anything else just what his business is likely to be during the months just ahead.

Business conditions in general are not improving as much as some business men would like. Many industries are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a reasonable margin of profit.

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