First Six Months Of 1956 Saw Business Rolling Along Toward Another Record

By WALTER BREEDE JR.

NEW YORK (AP) — Despite some rough spots in the economy, the first six months of 1956 saw the business boom rolling along to what may be another record year.

Autos, appliances and homebuilding dropped behind last year's furious pace. But taken as a whole, the January-June period was indisputably a record-breaker.

Gross national product—the sum total of all business activity—was running at a yearly rate of about 398 billion dollars. Last year's national production, a record up to then, was 387 billion.

The nation's steel mills, racing to beat a strike deadline, poured out 62 ¼ million tons of ingots and steel for castings in the first six months this year. Output for the first half of 1955 was 57 one third million.

King-sized gains were scored also in coal production, freight carloadings and electric power distribution. Retail trade, measured in terms of department store sales, topped last year's figures by four per cent. Business spending on new plant and equipment was at a record annual clip of 35 billion dollars. Total construction eclipsed the record 1955 pace; contracts awarded for heavy construction jobs in the first six months this year amounted to 11 one third billion dollars, an increase of 21 per cent. Sizable increases were racked up by producers and refiners of crude oil as consumer demand for gasoline and other petroleum climbed about four per cent.

Employment in the first six months set new records; at last count, 65 million Americans had jobs. Despite loss of overtime in some industries, average weekly take home pay of factory workers was higher than a year ago, although it turned down slightly in May.

Against this illustrious background, the rough spots in the economy stood out like sore thumbs.

Auto production moved into low gear; output for the first six months fell to 3,190,900 cars from 4 ¼ million in the first half of 1955 as the industry's sales force dug out from under a record inventory.

By midyear Detroit's effort to hold production down was paying off in reduced inventories all along the line. Dealers' stocks of unsold new cars, which had totaled a staggering 903,000 in March, were down to around 700,000. More production-paring was in prospect; some factories sent their workers home Friday and told them not to come back until after July 4th. Ford, however, made an upward revision in its production plans for July, and Chevrolet was rumored taking similar action.

The home building decline in the first six months was another cause for worry. Government experts said contractors would dig foundations for 1,100,000 new houses this year—a dip of about 12 per cent from last year's 1,300,000. One compensating factor: although fewer houses are being built, many of them are bigger.

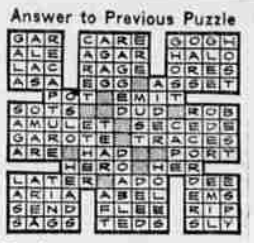
Likewise prominent among the ragged spots was an old perennial—the farm problem. But here there was at last a ray of hope: As the first half drew to a close, farm prices were finally heading higher.

Meanwhile steel industry leaders let it be known that they'd lose no time passing the cost of wage increases on to steel consumers. This raised the possibility of a brand new round of wholesale boosts, to be followed some months hence by more increases at the retail stage. Effects were expected to show up in higher prices for automobiles, railroad cars, oil pipe, bulldozers, farm machinery and foundry castings.

Looking ahead, business could count on a big boost from the new 33-billion-dollar federal highway program. Signed into law by President Eisenhower this week, the bill was expected to result in the immediate awarding of more than 100 million dollars of highway contracts in the next two months. So said the Associated General Contractors of America Inc., adding that by year's end the total should reach 400 million.

Movie Actor

Answer to Previous Puzzle

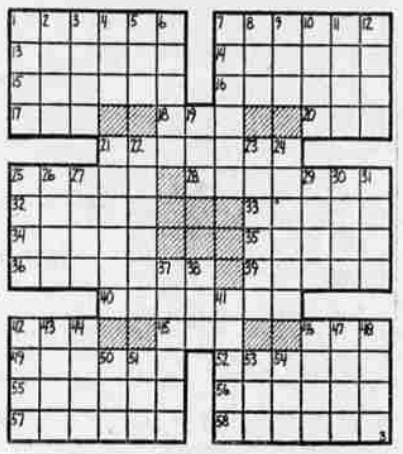


ACROSS

1 Movie actor, Charles ——
7 He is a —— performer
13 Mortgagee
14 Fold
15 Declare
16 Cooks by radiant heat
17 Daylight saving time (ab.)
18 Expire
22 Eyes (Scot.)
21 Light colors
25 Fountain drinks
28 Redactors
32 Iron
33 World ——
34 Puff up
35 Vestige
36 Shields
39 Conger fisherman
40 Stretches
42 —— Khan
45 Augment
46 Depot (ab.)
49 Petty prince
52 Speaker
55 Civil
56 Having lobes
57 Slips
58 Looks fixedly

DOWN

1 Attired
2 Lubricants
3 Trouser support
4 An (Fr.)
5 Regular (ab.)
6 Requires
7 Tirade
8 Blood money
9 Turmeric
10 Facility
11 Royal Italian family name
12 Promontory
19 Follower
21 Sticky substances
22 Concurrence
23 Give ear to
24 Cubic meters
25 Raced
26 Shield bearing
27 Unhearing
29 Verbal
30 Cereal grain
31 Soothsayer
37 Hangs in folds
38 Sorrowful
41 False gods
42 Vipers
43 Jail
44 Gudrun's husband
46 He is a ——
47 Carry (coll.)
48 War god
50 Disencumber
51 Consumed
53 Decay
54 Arabian garment



Melrose Thomases Visited By Parents

By NETTIE WOODRUFF

Visiting at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Thomas and family are his parents, Mrs. and Mrs. Glen Thomas Sr., of Los Angeles, and Mrs. John Swiger of Ontario, Calif. They arrived Thursday for several days and plan to do some fishing in the area.

Napa Visitors

Mrs. Spence Howard and two children are visiting at the home of the former's uncle, L. L. Chitwood, and family. They reside in Napa, Calif. The former's husband is serving with the Navy in Hawaii.

Weekend guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. W. R. Thompson and children on Doerner Road were Thompson's uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Merlin Mitchell, and granddaughter of Portland.

Mr. and Mrs. J. E. Conn and Joel Fenn drove to Salem Friday to attend a turkey grower's meeting. After attending other business in Salem they returned home the following day.

Marine Pvt. James Oglesby spent a day last week fishing at the coast. He is on a short leave from duty.

Spending the weekend in Coos Bay were Mr. and Mrs. H. P. Conn and their daughter, Mrs. Martin Schneider. They visited the latter's daughter, Mrs. James Lortie, and family.

Word has recently been received by Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Bonebrake of the birth of a daughter, Terresa, to their son and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Grant Bonebrake, of Eagle Point. The new baby arrived June 20 and weighed 7 pounds, four ounces.

Mrs. Niles Leach of Port Angeles visited recently here with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. F. Bonebrake, and with other relatives in Roseburg. On her return home she and Mr. Leach will leave on a two-week vacation trip aboard their yacht "Mora" in the Vancouver Island area.

Educators Urge Federal School Aid Bill Action

By HERMAN R. ALLEN

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — The National Education Assn. laid down a transcontinental barrage of telegrams today in a final effort to push federal school building aid through to passage in this waning session of Congress.

"Hundreds of telegrams already have been sent to congressmen," said James L. McCaskill, executive secretary of the NEA Legislative Commission, in an interview, "and more will go out today from individuals, state associations and other NEA groups to let them know how American teachers feel about this legislation."

The NEA is meeting here in convention. In Washington today the House scheduled debate on amendments to a bill which would provide $1,600,000,000 over four years to help states meet classroom shortages. The federal money would be matched dollar for dollar with state funds.

This and That

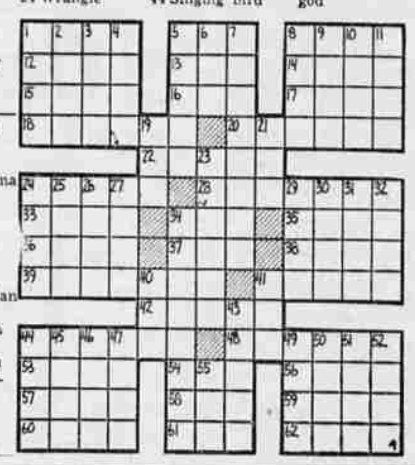
Answer to Previous Puzzle

ACROSS

1 Hurl
5 Automobile
8 Dish of chopped meat
12 To the sheltered side
13 Falsehood
14 Feminine appellation
15 Cloy
16 Skill
17 Dutch cheese town
18 Effaces
20 Form of footrace (pl.)
22 Tremulous
24 Barbed weapon
28 Fundamental
33 Cat murmur
34 Not happy
35 Japanese general
36 Islands in Galway bay
37 Belonging to him
38 To fly the ——
39 Fixes shoes again
41 Squads
42 Musical drama
44 Power of extension
48 Famous Roman highway
53 Character from "Arabian Nights"
54 Biblical high priest
56 City in Syria
57 Actress, —— Hayworth
58 Moved fast
59 Purposes
60 Understood
61 Arid
62 Tinge

DOWN

1 Box
2 Wing-shaped
3 Bristle
4 Golf cones
5 Social rank
6 Atmosphere
7 Recaps, as a tire
8 Part of foot
9 Actor, Robert ——
10 Kill
11 Amateur radio operators
19 Organ of hearing
21 Finish
23 Eulogize
24 Wrangle
25 Genuine
26 Ages
27 River in Italy
29 Ancient Peruvian
30 ——skin cap
31 Excited
32 Embouchures
34 Keeper of sheep
40 Parcel of land
41 Chasm
43 Showery
44 Singing bird
45 German explorer, Pasha ——
46 Night (var.)
47 Eat away
49 Son of Ham
50 City in Romania
51 So be it!
52 American cartoonist, Thomas ——
55 Household god



FUNNY BUSINESS

"He's always saying the wrong things, so we speed him through the back platform steps!"

FROM NINE TO FIVE

By Joe Fischer

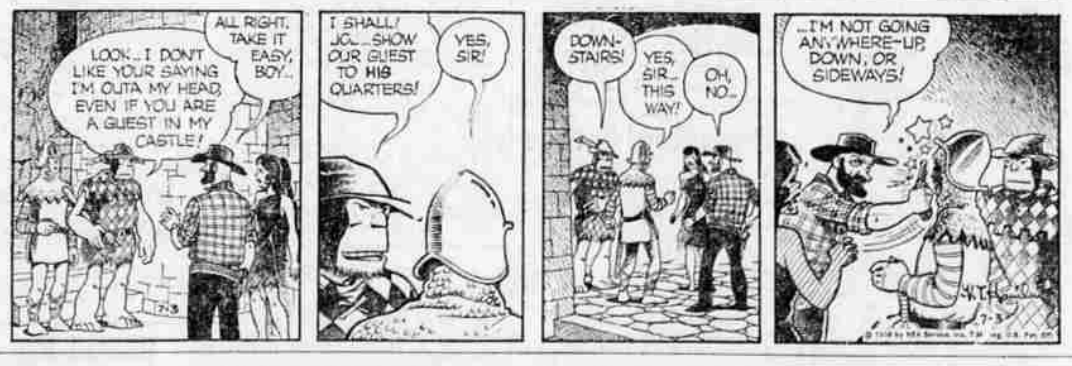
Have I got lots of pep lately, Hysteria! I'm only postponing for a day work that I usually postpone for a week.

CAT EASY

FRECKLES

LITTLE ABNER

ALLEY OOP



BLONDIE