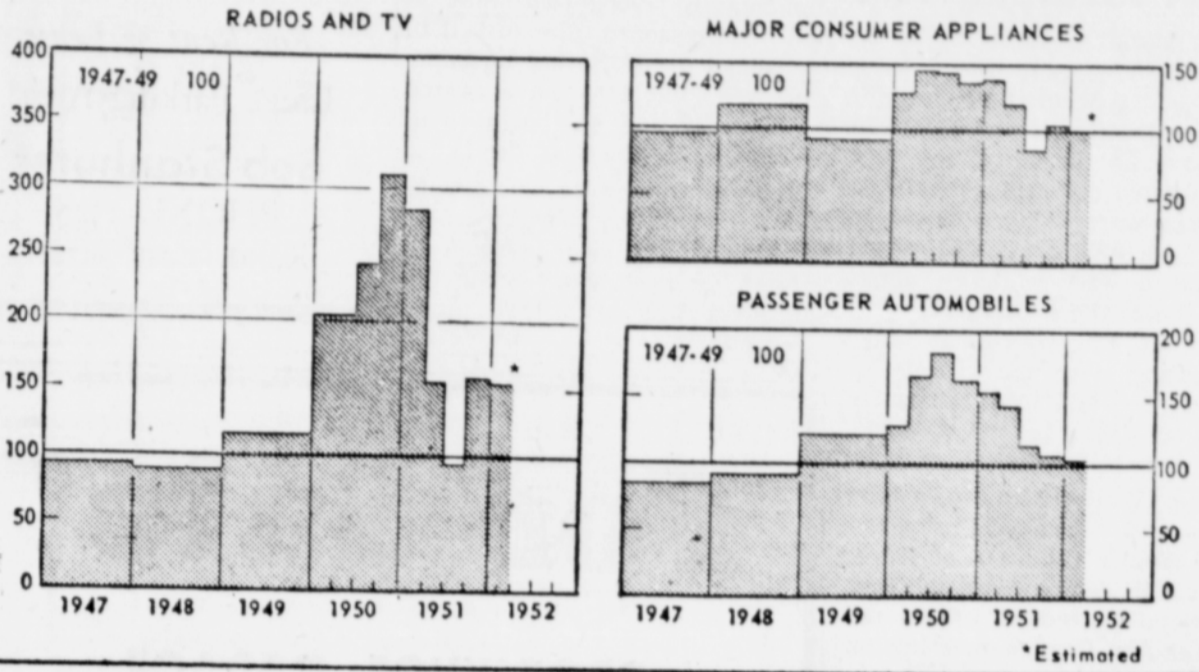


Production of consumer durables down, yet still close to 1947-1949 levels



WASHINGTON WEEK

By Harris Ellsworth, M. C.

The regular annual appropriations bills are being reported to the floor of the house and are being acted upon earlier this year than in any session since the 80th congress. I understand the chairman of the committee intends completing the series of bills before the end of April. Aside from the fact that this speed-up in the handling of these bills may permit an early adjournment of this session, the completion of appropriations legislation before the end of the fiscal year (June 30) is a mighty good thing for the country for another reason. If that is done, every agency and department of the government will know exactly how much money it has to spend when its book-keeping year begins. Their work can be planned accordingly. When the passage of appropriations bills is delayed long after the beginning of the new fiscal year (as last year and the year before) many agencies are seriously handicapped. Last year, for example, several important administrative agencies did not know what their budget allowance was until their fiscal year was more than one-fourth gone.

Speaking of government appropriations and government spending (and who isn't these days), I recently gave my political opposition a fine bit of thunder to use against me—if they are foolish enough to do so. When the appropriations of the Bonneville Administration were under consideration I voted against a motion to drastically cut the appropriation for transmission line construction. I have been talking economy and have been voting for economy for many years. In my opinion the above-mentioned motion was merely a demagogic gesture which sounds like economy. The purpose of the funds which that motion would have cut is to build heavy transmission lines from two big Columbia River power dams which will begin producing power next year, to where it can be distributed and use. Suppose you built a house and bought an electric range for the kitchen but refused to spend the money to run the necessary electric wires to the stove—could you get neighbors to believe you had economized by doing that? You would not do such a thing, of course, nor would I vote to hold up construction that would bring revenue to the U. S. treasury from the sale of hydro-electric power.

This discussion of spending and appropriations reminds me to point out a rather important po-

litical fact regarding this subject. The same political party (Democrat) which controls the administration—the president and the executive departments and the

agencies which spend the money—also controls both houses of the congress by substantial majorities—criticism and protests should be directed to officials and elected officers who are members of that party! I have watched the voting on the floor of the house and I can assure you that I and my colleagues in the minority party have consistently voted for reductions in cost of government.

Still on a political note, it is reported in the cloakrooms that the administration has a new reelection slogan: "Honesty is no substitute for experience."

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