

Most Americans Better Off Than Ever Despite Declining Dollar

Washington—The value of the dollar has been falling but most Americans are better off than ever before, government data indicates.

Sounds impossible? Let's see how it works out.

When economists say the value of the dollar drops, they mean that a dollar buys fewer things than it used to. The dollar itself is the same, but prices have risen.

The consumer dollar today is estimated to have a purchasing power about five-sixths of what it was 10 years ago.

Put another way, with the 1957-49 average of consumer goods prices equal to 100, the Bureau of Labor Statistics' latest price index stood at 120.2—an all-time high.

Yet despite this record of inflation—a record that runs back into the 19th Century—Americans on the average are able to buy more goods and services than ever before.

'Real' Income Increase
Commerce Department figures show that national average per capita "real" income in 1956 was nearly 50 per cent greater than in 1929. That is, the average American could buy 50 per cent more goods and services last year than in the heyday of the golden Twenties.

This despite the increase in taxes since then. And despite the fact that the purchasing power of the dollar (taking 1947-49 as a base of 100 cents) fell from \$1.36 in 1949 to 86 cents now.

The explanation of course is that average income rose faster than prices and taxes.

Economists noted that these figures are for national per capita averages. Different segments of the population have fared differently, to say nothing of differences in individual fortunes.

As a class, manufacturing production workers have had the greatest gain.

Rising prices probably have had their worst effect on older folk—people who live on pensions and other kinds of fixed incomes which have not increased as much as prices.

Today's dollar would look even smaller if its value were estimated from 1913 prices instead of the base of 1947-49 now used, in that case, the 1947 buck would be worth about 36 cents.

Using this same base, last month's consumer price index number would be 284 instead of 120.2.

The government likes to avoid such long-run comparisons and such astronomical figures. It prefers to use relatively recent base periods, a spokesman said, because economic comparisons lose their significance over long periods.

In addition, it is occasionally necessary to revise the relative weighing of the components of an index. The economists feel it is good procedure to update the base at the same time. Hence, from time to time, the base period is changed. The latest switch in the consumer price base was in 1953. At that time, the 1935-39 price average was dropped in favor of 1947-49.

The change was made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics on the recommendation of the Budget Bureau's Office of Statistical Standards.

On The Side

By E. V. Durling

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I am not afflicted with insomnia. I usually doze off a minute after I hit the pillow. If a neighbor is playing his television set a little loud or tossing a party, it may take me two minutes to get to sleep. However, there is one situation which is a major menace to my slumber.

That is a mosquito buzzing around the bedroom in the darkness. Some of these insects are very crafty. They will stop buzzing finally and let you get to sleep. Then while you are slumbering, and won't be able to swing at them they sting you. As you probably know it is the female mosquito that stings. The male mosquito is a vegetarian.

Please Note

Frequently heard is a popular song, the music of which is highly reminiscent of a song hit of the composer of the song of the past can be found on the title sheet. It is credited to a modern author and copyrighted by him. This situation has inspired Humphrey Littleton to observe, "If George Gershwin's heirs could collect on every variation of the I Got Rhythm" they would be in the Rockefeller class."

Shakespeare's Worst

What can be called Shakespeare's worst play? It is generally conceded to be "Titus Andronicus." This is probably the most horrible horror play of all time. In the store are included 11 murders, two mutilations, one rape and one cannibal banquet. Yet a production of "Titus Andronicus" featuring Sir Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh recently scored a terrific hit in London.

Divorce

In what state can a divorce be secured with the least inconvenience? It is said to be Wyoming where a divorce can be obtained in 60 days. In Nevada a divorce can be secured in six weeks. However, this calls for actual residence during that period. In Wyoming the divorce seeker can file a petition and then leave the state returning in 60 days for the hearing.

Asking

Queries from clients. Q. Who wrote the song titled "My Mother's Eyes"? A. Georgie Jessel. He also wrote that torch song "Oh, How I Laugh When I Think How I Cried About You."

Q. Who was the head of the New York organization called "The Society For The Prevention of Crime"? I claim it was Anthony Comstock. A. You are slightly confused, sir. Comstock headed "The Society For The Suppression of Vice." Dr. Charles Henry Parkhurst headed "The Society For The Prevention of Crime." Comstock's campaigns were of a trivial nature compared to those of Parkhurst. The latter's vigorous battle against political corruption inspired the Lexow investigation and the overthrow of Tammany Hall. Would be nice to have a man of Parkhurst's calibre around New York now.

Horses and Women
Red-haired girls with freckles are said to be intensely affectionate. Same is said of girls with dimples. Just saw a red-haired girl with freckles and dimples. She must be a really interesting companion on a moonlight stroll.

Passing By
Eddie Rickenbacker, World War I hero and flying ace. He is still a top man in aviation. The Eastern Airlines which he developed and heads is said to be the best money maker in its field. Eddie came up the hard way. Loss of his father made it necessary for him to go to work for a living at the age of 12. Attending night schools and self-education made him what he is today. Plus courage, of course.

Too Many Words
Referring to a film, an actor is quoted as saying, "Personally, I liked it." Actors, women and airway announcers use too many superfluous words, therefore, wasting their breath and other people's time. The "Personally" is superfluous in the aforementioned quotation. "I liked it" covers the situation.

Cigars

The most discerning smokers prefer cigars with a natural color wrapper. They also favor cigars that are not encased in aluminum or glass tubes or covered with cellophane. The flavor of a cigar improves by the proximity in a box of other cigars. That is "naked" or uncovered cigars. The aforementioned coverings eliminate this great benefit.

Resentment Delayed For Robert Merrill

Resentment of Robert Merrill, formerly sentenced to the state penitentiary on charges of robbery, has been postponed for several days pending further investigation, according to the district attorney's office.

Merrill was returned to Jackson county Friday by sheriff's deputies and sentencing was previously scheduled for Friday. He was originally sentenced to 20 years in the penitentiary in 1945 on charges of assault with intent to rob. Merrill was sentenced under an old statute, the district attorney's office said, which has since been proven unconstitutional and revised.

Under the old statute Merrill could only be sentenced to a maximum term of 15 years.

West Denies U.S. Will Negotiate Separately

London—Western officials Monday discounted reports the United States would try to break the deadlock in the London disarmament talks by private negotiations with the Russians.

American sources here said the negotiations with Russia would "remain four-power" on the western side composed of the U.S., Britain, France and Canada.



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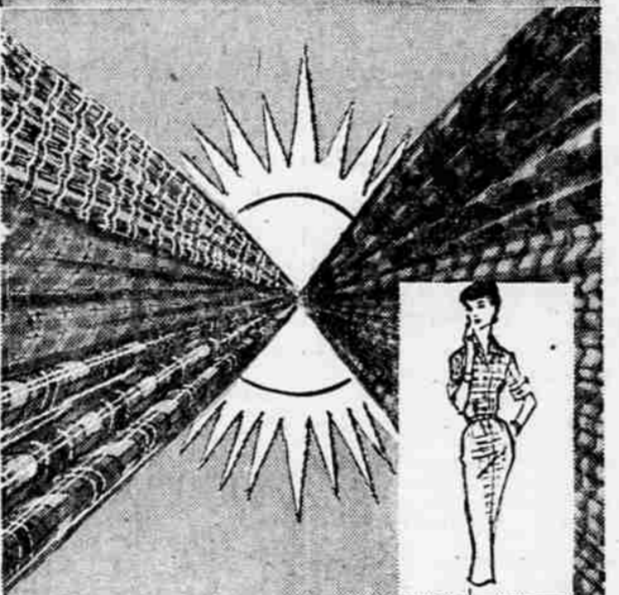
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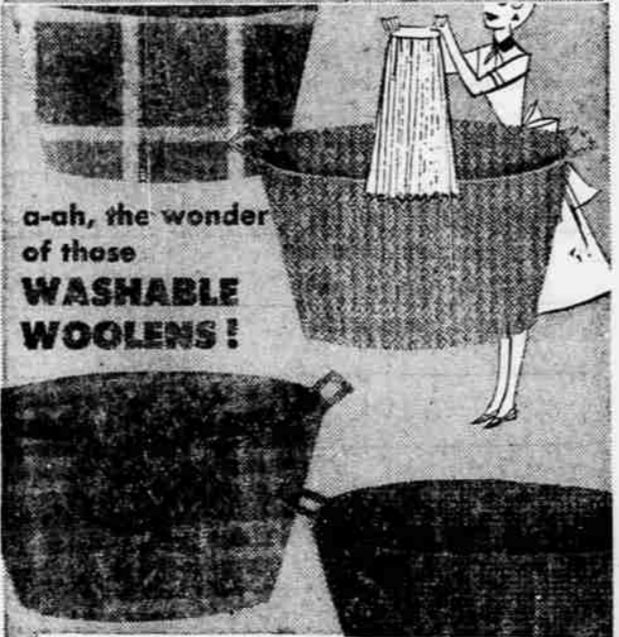
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