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velopment and testing of new theories of economic fluctuations. They constitute an unparalleled challenge to the ingenuity and imagination of economic statisticians.

(6) Modern data-processing systems record, store, calculate, compare, choose, and print numbers, letters, and other symbols. They perform these operations automatically, accurately, and at lightning speeds, but with abject devotion to very detailed instructions provided by human beings. While there is no doubt that this equipment will eventually be used to proliferate other more elaborate measures of economic activities, the mechanical production of such new measures is not enough to assure an improvement in our understanding of economic events. The fruitfulness of this work will ultimately depend, as do all other empirical studies, upon the quality of the theoretical concepts formulated by economic scientists to organize and analyze the data.

APPENDIX A

REVISIONS OF SEASONAL METHOD II NOW UNDER CONSIDERATION

Since the completion of the Univac program considerable experience has been gained with the results of Method II. On the basis of this experience, we are making tests with a view to revising the electronic computer program. A brief description of each of the contemplated tests is given below. The series to be used in testing has been selected with the following criteria in mind: (1) differing irregular, cyclical, and seasonal components so that the results for series with different types of economic fluctuations will be known; and (2) widely used series, so that the substantive meaning of the results can better be understood. The five series selected are: total unemployment; railroad freight ton miles; residential construction contracts; business failures, liabilities; and Federal Reserve index of mining production.

(a) *Variable method of adjusting ends of series*: The present method of obtaining seasonal-irregular ratios at the ends of series will not give good results when the last two ratios, whose average is used as the estimate for the years following the last one for which a figure is available, are both relatively extreme, and particularly when they fall on the same side of the seasonal adjustment factor curve (see, for example, Chart 2, Business Failures, December). Experiments are under way to determine an effective way of handling such situations.

These experiments will involve adjusting the test series for periods which both include and exclude data for terminal years; for example, a series for which data for the period 1940-1956 are available will be adjusted for the period 1940-1950 and 1946-1956. The effect of the method of adjusting ends can thus be determined by comparing the adjustments for the years 1946-1950 when data for 1940-1945 and 1951-1956 are and are not used.

Several different methods of estimating seasonal-irregular ratios for the years for which they are needed to bring the seasonal adjustment factor curves to the end years will be tested. For illustrative purposes these alternative methods along with the implicit weights given in each case to the seasonal-irregular ratios, when a three-term of a three-term moving average is fitted to them, are shown in Table A-1. Our present thought is that a variable method will prove the best; for example, to average no more than two ratios, as at present, when the irregular component is small, and four ratios when it is large.

(b) *Control limits*: The selection of two standard errors as the limits for separating normal from extreme ratios was arbitrary, in the sense that it was not based on any study of the distribution of seasonal-irregular ratios. Now evidence is mounting that these limits are too broad—too many extreme ratios appear to be included without modification in the averaging for the seasonal adjustment factors. We are planning studies of the distribution of seasonal-irregular ratios and tests to determine the comparative results with limits of 1 and $1\frac{1}{2}$ standard errors.

TABLE A-1
 METHODS OF ESTIMATING SEASONAL-IRREGULAR RATIOS AND IMPLICIT WEIGHTS GIVEN TO AVAILABLE RATIOS IN COMPUTING SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT FACTORS

(N is the last year for which a seasonal-irregular ratio, X_N , is available; the weights are adjusted so their sum equals 10)

Extrapolation Method	Factor for Year N-1					Factor for Year N									
	Implicit Weights Given to Ratio for Year	N-6	N-5	N-4	N-3	N-2	N-1	N	N-6	N-5	N-4	N-3	N-2	N-1	N
Three-Term Moving Average of Three-Term Moving Average															
I. $\frac{1}{2}(X_N + X_{N-1}) = X_{N+1} = X_{N+2}$ (Method II)	1.1	2.2	3.9	2.8									1.1	3.9	5.0
II. $\frac{2}{3}(X_N + X_{N-1} + X_{N-2}) = X_{N+1} = X_{N+2}$	1.1	2.6	3.7	2.6									2.2	3.3	4.4
III. $\frac{1}{4}(X_N + X_{N-1} + X_{N-2} + X_{N-3}) = X_{N+1} = X_{N+2}$	1.4	2.5	3.6	2.5									0.8	1.9	3.1
IV. Straight line fitted to moving average values of $X_{N-4}, X_{N-3}, X_{N-2}$; fitted value for $X_N = \bar{X}_{N+1} = \bar{X}_{N+2}$	-0.1	-0.2	-0.1	1.4	2.8	3.8	2.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.7	-0.4	0.9	3.0	3.7	4.0
Simple Five-Term Moving Average															
V. $X_{N+1} = X_{N-4}; X_{N+2} = X_{N-3}$ (Method I)														2.0	2.0
														2.0	2.0

(c) *Moving averages of seasonal-irregular ratios*: Where the average monthly irregular amplitude is less than 2, Method II now uses a three-term moving average of a three-term moving average, which is equivalent to a five-term moving average with weights 1, 2, 3, 2, 1; for series where the average irregular amplitude is 2 or more, it uses a three-term moving average of a five-term moving average, which is equivalent to a seven-term moving average with weights 1, 2, 3, 3, 3, 2, 1. This weighted seven-term moving average sometimes does not turn with the ratios, and, of course, requires more extrapolation for missing ratios than the weighted five-term moving average. We are now considering two changes: (i) the substitution for the three of a five-term moving average, of a five-term moving average with different weight patterns, for example 1, 3, 4, 3, 1—this curve, a member of a family of weighted moving averages suggested by Victor Zarnowitz, has the advantage of a shorter period involving less extrapolation at the ends and may also be expected to follow the seasonal-irregular ratios more closely, since the central points have relatively more weight; (ii) the use of less flexible curves, possibly straight lines, for measuring the seasonal adjustment factor for series in which the irregular factor is very pronounced.

(d) *Variable cycle-trend curves*: We are searching for a family of curves to use for series with different irregular components. We are considering (i) Robert Henderson's general formula which makes the sum of the squares of the third differences in the weights of the weight diagram a minimum for any number of terms desired; (ii) variants of the five-term moving average with weights 1, 3, 4, 3, 1: for example, a nine-term moving average with weights 1, 3, 6, 8, 9, 8, 6, 3, 1. For relatively smooth series, as indicated by the magnitude of the irregular component, these curves would be used in place of the weighted fifteen-term moving average (Spencer curve), now used to delineate the cycle-trend component. Such curves, being for a shorter period, would involve less extrapolation at the end and would perhaps also result in better estimates of the irregular component.

(e) *Correlation of I and S*: A common method of judging the validity of a seasonal adjustment is to compare the month-to-month movements in the seasonally adjusted series with the month-to-month movements in the seasonal adjustment factors. Following our usual thinking, the seasonally adjusted series is considered to be made up of trend-cycle and irregular factors. Since a smooth curve, usually the Spencer graduation, is used as the estimate of the trend-cycle factor, it may be disregarded for this purpose and the correlation coefficient between the month-to-month movements of the irregular and seasonal factors may provide a test of the validity of the seasonal adjustment. Since a residual seasonal will often appear in a positive pattern in some years and in an inverted pattern in others, separate correlation coefficients have to be computed for each year. The presence of significant correlation coefficients would be interpreted to mean that there is a seasonal component in the adjusted series; in this case a statement would automatically be printed after the computations indicating that a residual seasonal pattern remains and that further work is required.¹

This test would also be applied to determine whether there is a seasonal pattern in the original observations. Here the cycle-trend curve would be divided into the original observations and the quotient correlated with the seasonal adjustment factors. The absence of significant correlation coefficients would be interpreted to mean that there is no seasonal pattern in the original observations. In such cases, the statement that the original observations have no seasonal pattern would be printed instead of the tables.

While these changes may appear to be large, we do not believe they would affect many series. The Univac programming and the experimental work involved is substantial, however, and changes cannot, therefore, be introduced in the method for some time. The user of Method II should expect further refinements with the accumulation of additional experience. Many of these improvements have been suggested by the experience of users and further suggestions would be most welcome.

¹ See Arthur F. Burns and Wesley C. Mitchell, *op. cit.*, pp. 54-55.

APPENDIX B

OTHER ELECTRONIC COMPUTER METHODS FOR SEASONAL ADJUSTMENT

Two additional computer methods for seasonal analysis have been programmed recently and applied on a limited scale. A brief description of them follows:

1. *Regression Seasonal Adjustments*

The present writers have prepared and "proved-in" a program for the calculation of regression seasonal adjustments. In this method, the original observations and a Spencer fifteen-month weighted moving average of the standard seasonally adjusted data in Method II are used as the basis for the computations. Differences between the original observations and the Spencer graduation are computed to provide a measure of the seasonal-irregular component. Seasonal adjustment factors are then fitted to (a) the differences as the dependent variable, and (b) the corresponding values of the smooth curve of the seasonally adjusted series as the independent variable.

The logic of this approach is as follows: Consider a monthly time series for which a scatter diagram is drawn so that values for a given month are plotted as the ordinate and the corresponding values representing the trend and cyclical components as the abscissa. If the original values for the month include neither a random nor a seasonal component, all the points fall on a straight line that passes through the origin and has a slope of one because the trend-cycle component has merely been plotted against itself. If the assumptions are changed to allow a multiplicative seasonal component in the original values, all the points fall on a straight line that passes through the origin, but the slope deviates from one. If the original values include an additive seasonal component, the slope of the line remains one, but the line no longer passes through the origin. If the seasonal component is partly additive and partly multiplicative, the line does not pass through the origin and its slope differs from one. These relations tend to prevail if the series also includes a random component. However, the observations no longer fall on a straight line, but tend to be distributed at random around such a line. It can be concluded, therefore, that the seasonal component for a given month can be measured by the difference between the parameters of a fitted straight line and the parameters of a line passing through the origin and having a slope of one.

In order to allow for the possibility of a changing seasonal pattern, time is introduced as a third variable. The equation used to derive the seasonal adjustment factors for each month is $y - x = a + bx + ct + dxt$, where y represents the original observations, x represents the corresponding values of the trend-cycle curve, and t represents time. Other variables could, of course, be added to this program, for example, variations in the average temperature, the number of Saturdays and Sundays in each month, and so on.

The regression technique for measuring and adjusting seasonal fluctuations comprises an entirely different conceptual approach from that followed in Methods I and II. In making the adjustments it attempts to take into account certain causes of seasonal variations. This is intellectually preferable to the more mechanical approach of the earlier methods. On the other hand, the regression technique is very sensitive: The regression curves are fitted to approximate measures of the seasonal-irregular factors; minor defects of measurement can result in poor regression curves, as was demonstrated by earlier experiments with the use of deviations from the twelve-month moving average of original observations. Furthermore, a method of handling extremes must also be developed for this program. While this approach is promising, the writers do not feel that there is as yet enough experience with it to form a judgment of its usefulness.

2. *Moving Polynomial Graduations*

A seasonal program has been prepared for the IBM 701 electronic computer following a plan developed at the National Bureau by Millard Hastay. While this program, like Method II described above, is based on the standard ratio-to-moving-average method, it differs in a number of important respects. First, the smoothing of the seasonal-irregular ratios for each month is accomplished in the IBM program by moving polynomial gradua-

2 RATIOS OF ORIGINAL TO PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING

SERIES #4406

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1940			-	100.7	96.6	97.0	107.3	109.3	85.7	102.6	102.6	94.2
1941	107.1	99.6	97.7	104.9	90.1	106.2	101.6	105.2	98.9	90.6	101.9	89.2
1942	112.8	102.3	101.0	98.9	87.2	106.6	111.4	97.1	88.4	97.3	104.2	97.7
1943	100.7	109.2	92.2	97.6	82.3	111.1	118.3	92.9	95.1	98.7	96.6	90.8
1944	117.4	92.0	104.5	88.7	96.7	108.6	114.1	91.3	107.1	80.0	106.4	88.5
1945	110.5	104.9	100.9	94.6	74.6	120.3	110.5	63.8	138.1	92.0	98.6	97.5
1946	99.6	106.0	108.4	93.0	94.3	112.2	98.1	94.9	103.0	98.0	94.6	97.9
1947	104.1	105.3	94.9	112.8	78.7	112.8	110.7	93.5	100.8	95.8	97.3	89.1
1948	96.3	117.3	101.0	104.3	80.5	109.3	108.3	93.9	106.1	87.9	102.2	85.4
1949	103.1	110.5	101.6	93.5	96.8	102.3	109.8	99.1	92.2	105.9	96.5	88.5
1950	109.7	108.8	100.5	98.1	88.7	107.8	109.2	90.1	105.4	84.7	107.4	94.1
1951	107.8	103.7	103.6	92.6	86.6	114.1	104.5	91.1	100.6	94.2	111.2	85.1
1952	109.0	108.6	97.3	94.7	93.3	102.8	113.5	94.7	100.0	89.5	105.6	85.2
1953	118.1	100.6	99.1	106.0	83.4	109.1	110.7	86.4	103.9	86.1	94.2	96.5
1954	103.3	107.8	104.3	98.6	96.9	100.8	101.7	100.5	103.7	91.5	103.6	91.0
1955	107.7	103.5	100.3	104.4	88.3	108.1	100.4	97.0	98.4	93.6	105.3	92.0
1956	107.9	101.9	103.5	94.1	95.1	107.7	110.3	91.1	97.3	85.7	112.1	91.9
1957	109.7	102.1	100.7									

AVERAGES OF RATIOS

SERIES #4406

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
107.3	104.9	100.7	98.7	88.8	108.0	108.3	93.6	101.5	92.6	102.4	91.6

3 UNCENTERED 12-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE OF ORIGINAL

SERIES #4406

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1940			-	-	-	-	-	778	763	747	728	710
1941	684	658	640	611	583	555	529	505	481	453	428	400
1942	374	345	320	302	284	266	242	221	200	183	169	156
1943	144	135	128	121	113	106	101	95	91	88	86	83
1944	78	75	73	70	69	67	65	65	64	63	62	62
1945	62	64	72	82	92	104	118	135	152	167	182	196
1946	207	218	221	224	226	227	228	227	224	224	221	221
1947	224	224	223	221	218	214	211	213	213	212	210	207
1948	204	202	202	202	204	206	211	216	222	229	242	255
1949	271	285	297	314	327	340	355	367	375	379	377	374
1950	366	356	348	334	325	314	298	279	262	247	235	224
1951	212	205	199	196	193	188	184	182	179	178	177	176
1952	177	177	176	173	169	167	166	163	162	162	160	157
1953	154	151	150	150	153	160	170	186	203	219	235	250
1954	265	282	297	309	318	323	325	323	318	314	307	302
1955	294	286	278	273	269	265	262	258	255	251	252	254
1956	257	257	256	254	255	255	255	255	254	253	-	-
1957	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

4 CENTERED 12-MONTH MOVING AVERAGE OF ORIGINAL

SERIES #4406

YEAR	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1940			-	-	-	-	-	-	770	755	738	719
1941	657	671	649	626	597	569	542	517	493	467	441	414
1942	387	360	333	311	293	275	254	232	210	192	176	163
1943	150	139	131	124	117	110	104	98	93	90	87	84
1944	81	77	74	72	69	68	66	65	65	64	63	62
1945	62	63	68	77	87	98	111	127	144	160	175	189
1946	202	212	219	223	225	227	228	227	225	224	223	221
1947	223	224	224	222	219	216	213	212	213	213	211	208
1948	205	203	202	202	203	205	209	214	219	226	235	249
1949	263	278	291	306	320	333	347	361	371	377	378	376
1950	370	361	352	341	330	319	306	288	271	255	241	230
1951	218	209	202	197	194	190	186	183	180	178	178	177
1952	177	177	176	174	171	168	167	165	163	162	161	159
1953	156	153	151	150	152	156	165	178	194	211	227	243
1954	258	273	289	303	314	321	324	324	320	316	311	304
1955	298	290	282	276	271	267	264	260	256	253	252	253
1956	256	257	257	255	254	255	255	255	255	254		

14 RATIOS, FINAL ADJ TO PRECEDING AND FOLLOWING

YEAR	SERIES #4406											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1940			-	98.6	105.3	94.3	101.1	104.1	92.6	106.2	100.5	101.1
1941	98.9	98.0	98.9	104.3	98.8	101.2	94.2	102.0	107.5	93.7	100.1	96.1
1942	104.4	99.6	102.9	99.8	97.2	98.3	103.2	99.1	93.1	101.1	103.4	104.1
1943	92.6	105.6	93.3	100.9	92.7	102.3	108.8	98.1	96.9	102.9	97.6	96.8
1944	108.7	88.1	104.6	91.2	112.1	95.5	107.0	97.8	106.8	83.3	108.6	94.8
1945	105.4	98.3	100.9	94.2	87.0	107.9	102.5	66.4	131.3	96.0	101.0	104.8
1946	95.3	100.0	106.6	95.0	109.2	97.6	92.6	101.9	99.1	102.7	96.6	106.0
1947	99.1	98.6	92.3	114.5	90.6	101.6	104.3	100.7	97.9	101.0	98.7	96.8
1948	93.9	109.0	99.3	105.9	92.5	99.5	101.0	99.8	104.8	92.2	103.2	95.6
1949	99.8	102.3	99.5	93.7	110.7	94.6	100.7	105.4	91.0	113.0	94.9	94.3
1950	103.1	100.9	99.6	100.7	100.0	99.5	100.5	97.1	105.1	90.9	105.0	103.6
1951	98.9	96.6	103.2	95.3	96.9	106.1	96.4	97.5	99.2	102.3	107.9	94.2
1952	100.3	102.4	96.7	96.1	104.3	95.5	105.5	102.0	98.8	97.5	102.6	93.8
1953	108.7	95.5	98.0	107.3	93.0	101.0	104.2	92.1	102.0	95.3	92.4	107.5
1954	96.9	102.7	103.0	98.8	107.2	93.2	95.0	106.4	102.9	101.3	98.5	98.2
1955	99.8	99.3	98.9	106.2	95.8	100.4	94.4	102.6	98.3	105.2	98.5	99.8
1956	99.8	98.6	101.8	95.9	102.5	100.2	103.5	98.2	98.4	97.2	103.6	99.6
1957	101.6	99.2	99.0									

AVERAGES

JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
100.4	99.7	99.9	100.1	99.8	99.3	100.9	98.3	101.5	98.9	100.8	99.5

15 UNCENTERED 12-MO MOVING AVERAGE FINAL ADJ

YEAR	SERIES #4406											
	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
1940			-	-	-	-	-	778	763	749	729	711
1941	688	664	644	612	581	551	527	504	480	452	425	399
1942	377	350	323	301	282	263	241	220	199	182	167	155
1943	145	136	129	121	113	105	100	94	90	87	85	82
1944	78	76	73	70	68	66	65	64	63	63	61	61
1945	61	63	72	83	95	108	121	136	152	167	183	196
1946	205	216	220	224	226	228	228	227	223	224	220	221
1947	223	224	223	220	217	213	210	211	211	209	208	205
1948	203	201	202	201	203	206	210	214	219	226	240	252
1949	267	282	296	316	330	345	358	368	375	379	377	374
1950	368	358	348	332	321	309	294	278	263	248	235	225
1951	215	207	200	197	193	188	184	182	179	178	178	177
1952	178	178	176	173	169	167	165	163	162	162	159	157
1953	154	151	150	151	153	161	170	183	198	213	230	243
1954	258	277	294	310	321	325	327	326	322	318	310	305
1955	298	288	279	273	268	265	261	258	256	253	254	255
1956	258	258	257	254	254	255	255	255	254	254		

