A. Industry, Trade, Commerce, and Finance

In considering the general economic background of the City of Fresno, one primary factor must be always kept in mind, namely, the city's dependence on agriculture. In the last analysis, the city is purely a farm service community. Its two principal functions are, first, to distribute goods and equipment to the farmer and, second, to assemble, process and distribute his products. Consequently, all its business activities fluctuate directly with the farmer's income. In 1928 business conditions were reported satisfactory, and for that year the county's income, for principal agriculture and livestock products, was $41,000,000.*

In 1933 conditions were considered most unsatisfactory. The city carried a heavy indigent loan, an abnormal increase in bankruptcies, a good many vacant commercial establishments, and the lowest record of bank debits, postal receipts, and building permits in years. That year farm income amounted to only $23,500,000.*

This season the income from farm products is practically back to the 1928 level. The agricultural products, upon which the prosperity of Fresno County, and, consequently, the City of Fresno, is based, are raisins, table grapes, figs, in which the county ranks first in the state, cotton, in which the county ranks third in the state, and other produce such as peaches, alfalfa, wine grapes, oranges, plums, etc. Aside from agricultural products, the county has oil and other minerals of commercial value.

Industry

Fresno is not primarily an industrial town, as indicated above, but according to U. S. Census reports in 1929 there were 126 establishments employing 3,819 wage earners, paying $3,970,484 in wages and producing products valuated at $36,135,123. By 1933 the U. S. Census reported only 100 establishments, employing more people but paying only about 80% of the amount of wages paid in 1929, and the value of the products had shrunk to only about 60% of the 1929 value. The shrinkage in the value of the products from 1929 to the low point of the depression is not as acute as it was in many towns.

*State Department of Agriculture.