

Fantasy artist Bill Baker

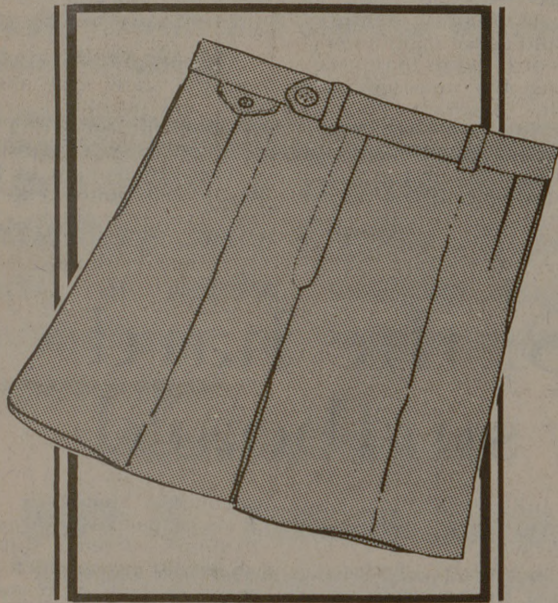
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April 22, 1982

**GNP, inflation rate fall for first
quarter; officials still optimistic**

United Press International
WASHINGTON — The nation's recession-bound gross national product declined 3.9 percent during this year's first three months, largely the result of auto industry troubles, the government said Wednesday.

But progress against inflation was dramatic, with price hikes throughout the economy dropping to a rate of only 3.6 percent, a six-year low.

The drop in the GNP from January through March, adding to a 4.5 percent drop from Octo-

ber through December, kept the U.S. economy at an annual level of \$2.96 trillion — just below the \$3 trillion level in current dollars that many economists had expected by now, the Commerce Department reported.

At the White House, the reaction to the GNP figures was guarded.

Deputy press secretary Larry Speakes said the inflation factor in the figures was "another confirmation of our substantial progress on this front."

Overall, "These results are

generally consistent with the pattern of activity that we've been expecting," Speakes said.

And Speakes repeated the administration's position that there are indicators the recession is at the bottom.

The overall GNP total was pulled down by a sharp sell-off of inventories, almost half of which were automobiles that were sold and not replaced by new production, the government said.

Real final sales increased 1.9 percent, an encouraging note

that could lead to new production to replenish warehouses that were emptied when production was cut in response to falling demand.

The broad-based measure of inflation contained in the GNP figures, dubbed the "implicit price deflator" by the government, dropped to its lowest level since an identical 3.6 percent rate in the first quarter of 1976. The rate has not been lower since the third quarter of 1972, department analysts said.

In determining the GNP, the

government combines measurements and estimates of the distribution of all the goods

services that are produced in a three-month period, and multiplies the figure by a factor to show what an annual rate would be.

The slowdown in prices accounted for primary prices of gasoline, consumer services other than natural gas, electricity and motor vehicles, the department said.

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**Jackson attacks
'boycott' of blacks
by white America**

United Press International
HOUSTON — The Voting Rights Act of 1965 has been reduced to an unenforced law and blacks still are being denied the right to vote in the jurisdictions it covers, the Rev. Jesse Jackson said.

The civil rights activist said Tuesday that as a result of the unenforced law, less than 1 percent of all elected officials in America are black, although the black population accounts for 10 to 12 percent of the nation's population.

"The most fundamental right of a democracy is the right to vote, and that right is non-negotiable," Jackson said. The Voting Rights Act will expire in August if Congress does not renew it.

Jackson, on a five-state march

to urge the Senate to go with a House-passed version of an extension of the act, American blacks should urge their young men to register to vote is assured.

"They give us the right to vote, and then they deny us the power of that vote," he said.

Jackson said a black bureau will be opened towards establishing "economic reciprocity" between black and corporate America.

He noted that none of the nation's 2,200 soft-drink bottlers and only 86 of the automobile dealerships are black-run.

"White America is boycotting black America," he said. "We are not wanting boycotts, we want trade."

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