

unimportant as they are, included the first census of modern times, that of New France in 1666; (2) the period of the United Provinces and the operations under the Census Act of 1847; and (3) the reconstructive period of Confederation, during which the act of 1870 providing for the first census of the Dominion was passed, and various reforms made on the suggestions of Dr. Taché, Government Statistician and author of an able report on Canadian statistics dated 1865.

The modern period of Canadian statistics may be said to date from the Census and Statistics Act of 1879, and to fall into two stages: The first extends to 1905, during which the censuses of 1881, 1891 and 1901 were taken, and most of our present departmental statistics, Dominion and Provincial, saw their first substantial development; a start was also made in the co-ordination of general statistics (the Statistical Year Book dates from 1886). The second and final stage begins with the legislation and readjustments of 1905.

The Census and Statistics Act of 1905, which is the dominant legislation in the statistical field to-day, created a permanent census organization in place of the temporary organizations which had taken previous censuses, and absorbed into it the staff which had been employed on general statistics. Some important new work was undertaken by the amalgamated offices, notably annual statistics of agriculture and quinquennial statistics of manufactures. There was, however, at the first, little or no development in the work of co-ordinating general statistics. The year book was remodelled in 1905, omitting provincial statistics altogether. Meanwhile certain other departments, Dominion and Provincial, from time to time independently enlarged their statistical activities, no attempt at unification being made. It may be noted, however, in passing, that the province of Quebec in 1913 created a central statistical office and reorganized its statistical system.

THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION OF 1912.

It was the situation as thus developed that led, in 1912, to the step which has defined the problem as it stands to-day. It was generally recognized that certain Departmental statistics were good; at the same time the growth of the country and the increasing complexity of its economic questions drew attention to the overlapping of certain branches of statistics, the gaps between others, and the lack of general plan or policy. This culminated in the appointment, in 1912, of a Commission of six "to examine and report upon the official statistics of Canada." In the Order in Council appointing the Commission reference is made to the dearth of statistics of production and distribution, the duplication of effort between Departments, and the absence of co-ordination and collaboration, the Commission being directed to report "a comprehensive system of general statistics adequate to the necessities of the country and in keeping with the demands of the time." From the report of the Commission, which contains a review of the various departmental activities, may be quoted the passage which sums up the Commission's findings as to the general situation:—

"Though many of the statistical reports issued by various departments are of undoubted excellence, there is apparent in the body of Canadian statistics considered as a whole, a lack of coherence and common purpose. This is traceable to imperfect appreciation in the past of the fact that the statistics of the country should constitute a single harmonious system, with all divisions in due correlation. Under the British North America Act, 1867, the Dominion is

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