



## A NATIONAL SYSTEM OF STATISTICS FOR CANADA

### CENTRALIZATION, REORGANIZATION AND ENLARGEMENT OF CANADIAN STATISTICS.

There is perhaps greater need at present than at any previous time for economic guidance of the kind best yielded by an adequate system of statistics. With the end of the war, Canada must assume her part of the greatest reconstruction in history. The burden will be the greater from the fact that when the war began we were in the "backwash" of a boom unexampled for length and intensity, to which the war came, in the first instance, as an actual relief—the relief afforded by the draining off of three hundred thousand men from the labour market and by a huge accession of war orders. The underlying situation, however, though obscured, remains, rendering the problem as a whole one of extreme complexity.

The Government is keenly alive to the necessity of making ready in many directions against the return of peace and the full incidence of this problem. The appointment of the Economic Commission and of the Commission on the railway situation are instances. A third and even more direct effort is the convention of business men called by the Right Honourable the Minister of Trade and Commerce. In announcing this convention the Minister said:—

"Rebounding from two years and more of the most destructive and wasteful war of history, the world will plunge into a trade and economic contest in which forces will assume totally new alignments, when competition will be keener and stronger than ever, and when science and *organization* will play a leading part in any successful role. *For this struggle Canada must gird her loins and make ready her full equipment of preparedness.*"

For the framing of fundamental economic policy, no less than for the treatment of financial, trade and transportation problems, a properly inclusive and thoroughly coordinated system of statistics is indispensable. It is respectfully submitted that of the "equipment" referred to by the Minister no single phase is of greater importance than the statistical, and that in view of the gaps, inequalities and lack of organization that at present prevail, the bringing into existence of a national system of statistics is one of the urgent duties of an hour dedicated, like the present, to "preparedness." Especially is this true in face of the fact that our problems will to a new degree involve our relations with other countries, particularly those of the rest of the Empire and of the Allies, with whose statistical data it is most important that our own should range in scope and quality. Already a conference for the coordination of Imperial statistics has been mooted. In such a conference, our organization being what it is, Canada would find it difficult to take an effective part.

#### HOW THE EXISTING SITUATION AROSE.

Into the earlier history of our statistical development it is unnecessary to enter. Briefly it comprises: (1) the period of the French and English colonies, whose records,