

# The Monetary Times

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## The Monetary Times OF CANADA

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### BUILDING A STATISTICAL ORGANIZATION

It is material that the country in the stages of early and rapid growth should have proper statistical records. Of these there has been in Canada a marked absence. The Dominion has maintained a census and statistics office as a sort of incident to government instead of making it one of the important departments. The various departments have also kept certain statistics, but insufficient time, money, labor and staff have been concentrated to give the Dominion the statistical organization it should properly have. The provincial governments also collect various statistics, but methods of compilation differ in almost every province. Municipal accounts and statistics are not compiled in a uniform way. No one knows how much has been given by municipalities as bonuses to industries. No public records are available as to the idle railroad cars in the country on any given day. There is no compilation showing the stock and bond indebtedness of Canada; and so one might extend the list indefinitely. At a belated date, this dearth of statistical information has been recognized by the Government of Canada. A departmental commission was appointed, consisting of Mr. Richard Grigg, commissioner of commerce, as chairman; Professor Adam Shortt, civil service commissioner; E. H. Godfrey, of the census and statistics branch; W. A. Warne, statistical branch, trade and commerce department; R. H. Coats, department of labor; and J. R. K. Bristol, department of customs. They have made an exhaustive and valuable inquiry into the statistical work now carried on in the various departments, as to its scope, methods, reliability and the question of duplication.

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They admit that the scope of Canadian statistics has been restricted, and that on not a few points of vital interest to the country little or no statistical information exists in a form for practical application. They find that there is considerable duplication, that available statistics are unequal in quality and value, that the restriction of outlook has impaired promptitude in the issue of reports, and that lack of unity and co-ordination prevents true comparisons between Canada and other countries. For these shortcomings, which the commission mildly describes as unfortunate, the commissioners recommend briefly:—

I. The organization of a central statistical office for the co-ordination, unification, extension and general improvement of statistics, involving:—

(1) The creation of a Dominion Inter-departmental Statistical Committee.

(2) The creation of an Interprovincial Conference on Statistics.

II. The following reforms in existing statistics:—

#### (1) Dominion

(a) The Census.—The taking of a quinquennial census and the limitation of the field of the census proper to the enumeration of population and property, with a thorough re-examination of the methods at present in use in collecting and compiling data and in publishing results.

(b) Production.—The institution of an annual census of production, embracing the chief products of agriculture, forestry, fisheries, mining and manufactures.

(c) Trade.—The co-ordination of the work of the statistical branches of the Departments of Customs and