

affairs. They collect figures of exports and imports because of the obvious bearing of such figures upon the collection of a revenue; and in some cases provide us with information regarding the industry carried on within the country because certain articles of manufacture are subject to internal revenue duties. Where there is no question of collecting revenue, the information afforded us is not usually carefully collected. We know more accurately what is imported than what is exported; we know better how much beer is consumed than we do how much meat or grain is consumed; how much tobacco better than how much clothing. The interest of the government is mainly in the collection of revenue. An enlightened government may make provision for the collection of other statistics; it may establish labor bureaus and agricultural departments; it may publish banking returns and railroad earnings; but since the interest of these things is not so immediately practical, the information afforded is apt to be meagre and to cease, short of the point of completeness. For instance, the main industry in Canada is agriculture; but we know less of the output of our farms than we do of the output of our breweries. Ontario and Manitoba collect elaborate agricultural statistics; but in the other provinces the gathering of information is perfunctorily performed or not performed at all; and, consequently, we cannot even use what information we have, because statistics of interprovincial trade are lacking. In the census years, elaborate returns are made; but even here there are gaps in our information, and too much of what is set down depends on the memory of the private citizen, which is not a scientific instrument. In Canada there is an additional difficulty in the way of obtaining adequate consumption statistics. Nearly half of our population is dependent on agriculture. In time, and with organization, we may learn the amount of eggs and potatoes, milk and meat and vegetables, maple sugar and cordwood marketed; but it will always be next to impossible to ascertain how much of these commodities the autonomous producer uses in his own consumption. Private investigation may step in to make up for the deficiencies of