

a Test Census revealed that the hand editing of documents to correct errors could be eliminated. The electronic statistical machine quickly and accurately rejects punch cards containing errors and indicates, in general groups, the type of error present on the card. Thus, a much more economical editing procedure is possible.

3. Decentralization will be an important aspect of the coming Census. Hitherto, all schedules have been returned to Ottawa for editing and processing. In the coming Census, six Regional Offices across Canada will act as sectional centres, controlling the enumeration in their territories and supervising the office processing of returns to the card-punching stage. This change has the advantage of spreading the work of processing returns across Canadian, and of having the agencies which do the initial processing close to the area covered, where difficulties can be quickly dealt with. Incidentally, some 1500 clerks are required for processing from three months to a year, and the housing situation makes it practically impossible to concentrate that number in any one centre.

A Census of the Americas

During the years 1950 and 1951, the world is experiencing census-taking activity on an unprecedented scale. Some 40 countries are engaged in this activity. In the Western Hemisphere, 22 countries are working co-operatively to take a Census of the Americas. This is the first attempt to gather vital economic and social data about the 300,000,000 inhabitants of North and South America at approximately the same census period.

This effort is unique in several ways. It is a co-operative programme co-ordinated by the Inter-American Statistical Institute, of which Canada is a member and in the work of which Canada's census experts have participated. While each nation will take its own census and publish the results, a minimum programme has been accepted by all, involving the use of certain basic minimum standards as to census questions, definitions and published results. Thus, as between countries, the statistics will be comparable.

Census-taking in South American countries in the past has varied widely in character. The range is from no census at all, through partial and indifferent, to adequate efforts. In some, the last attempt at a census was from 20 all the way to 50 years ago. It is obvious, therefore, that personnel capable of taking a census had to be trained from the beginning in some countries. To meet this need, the Inter-American Statistical Institute and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations organized classes in which considerable numbers were trained for census-taking.

Encouragement by U.N. Bodies

Special efforts to promote the taking of current censuses have gone farther afield than the Census of the Americas. The latter has the endorsement of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, together with its