

THE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 1967

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC STATISTICS OF THE
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to recess, at 10 a.m., in room 6226, New Senate Office Building, Hon. Herman E. Talmadge (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senators Talmadge and Miller; and Representative Bolling.

Also present: John R. Stark, executive director; James W. Knowles, director of research; and George R. Iden, staff economist.

Chairman TALMADGE. The subcommittee will come to order.

The Subcommittee on Economic Statistics today begins the first of 4 scheduled days of hearings on the coordination and integration of Government statistical programs.

The issues at stake are indeed very significant, for the hearing involves the general quality and adequacy of our statistical programs. General economic knowledge is not as sufficient as it might have been when at least the direction of needed monetary and fiscal policies was clear. Now, when the economy is operating near full employment, accurate quantification of developments is essential. Near full employment, it is also essential to have statistics on the structure of the economy. Such data are needed for price-wage guideposts and for the operation of human resource programs.

The statistical needs of the private sector have also become increasingly demanding. Examples include data for business planning and for the large number of individuals engaged in social science research.

On the side of the supply of economic statistics, there have been technological advances of revolutionary proportion, making possible entirely new dimensions in statistical capabilities. These advances include the application of computer technology and electronic transmission and storage of data.

Developments in the demand for and the supply of economic statistics have not gone unnoticed. During the 80th Congress, almost 20 years ago, the Joint Economic Committee published a staff study entitled "Statistical Gaps" which reviewed some of the pressing statistical measures needed at that time, along with cost estimates. During the 89th Congress the Subcommittee on Economic Statistics, under the chairmanship of Senator Proxmire, conducted a study entitled "Improved Statistics for Economic Growth." The subcom-