

the first since 1957 and the principal part of the 5-year cycle, is in an advanced stage. A census of foreign financial assets in the United States will follow.

Foreign Trade Statistics

Several recommendations on which action has been taken are concerned with the merchandise trade statistics in the balance of payments. These recommendations were:

(1) "The Census Bureau (with BPD cooperation) should promptly make studies to discover and measure sources of error in valuation, coverage, timing, and other aspects of trade data for balance of payments purposes." With the cooperation of the Customs Bureau considerable activity has gone into improving the timing of the reporting to Census of import data. A study of sources of error in export reporting by commercial sources on the Shipper's Export Declaration is presently being made. The Review Committee went on to state that, "These studies should include . . . an inquiry as to the adequacy of export reporting on the Canadian border." A study by the Census Bureau of the comprehensiveness of reporting of truck exports along the border is nearing completion.

(2) "The Census Bureau should take steps immediately to make instructions for reporting the value of exports and imports insofar as possible consistent with balance of payments concepts." Amendments to the *Foreign Trade Statistics Regulations* will be issued by the Census Bureau to eliminate the language "cost if not sold" from the instructions for reporting exports on consignment and substitute the correct concept of an approximate sales value of the materials shipped.

(3) The Review Committee in several ways called for improvement in the quality of trade statistics. In addition to the actions noted above which were taken by the Census Bureau and Customs Bureau, the Balance of Payments Division has completed a revision of its end-use classifications for imports and exports. These classifications group U.S. trade by probable end-use in American industry and commerce.

(4) "... the findings and recommendations of the Stigler Committee (the Price Statistics Review Committee of the National Bureau of Economic Research, which reported to the Bureau of the Budget in 1960) be reviewed and acted upon promptly" in connection with the construction of true price indexes (as opposed to the currently published unit value indexes) for imports and exports, both in aggregate and by five "economic classes." The Bureau of Labor Statistics currently is conducting a comprehensive theoretical review of the problems involved in constructing such indexes. Funds are included in the President's 1968 budget to further this work.

(5) The Review Committee recommended that the Bureau of the Census "accelerate its efforts to present its foreign trade statistics in a way more suitable for economic analysis." The Census Bureau's Foreign Trade Division has devoted considerable effort to achieving this objective. The publication program of the Division has been changed so as to provide more general-purpose foreign trade data as distinguished from highly detailed commodity-by-country data. The new FT-990 series *Highlights of U.S. Export and Import Trade* reflects this effort. Gaps in the data for Special Category commodity exports, those not shown in full detail because of security restrictions, are being reduced insofar as possible without sacrificing national security. Finally, the publication of an annual foreign trade reference volume, *Foreign Commerce and Navigation of the United States*, as been resumed after an interval of 15 years.

Travel and Transportation

Statistics on travel and transportation receipts and expenditures in the balance of payments were the subject of several Review Committee recommendations and action is in progress on several of these recommendations.

The Balance of Payments Division has recently completed preliminary studies of Mexican border area transactions, and of the characteristics of the border area labor force, with the objective of establishing a system for more accurately estimating expenditures by both Mexican and U.S. border crossers. The travel receipts and expenditures estimates for the United States vis-a-vis Mexico have been "the most unsatisfactory" of the estimates entering the travel account.

The Review Committee also recommended that the Balance of Payments Division should seek to improve the sampling coverage of both U.S. travelers and foreign visitors by more effective ways of soliciting cooperation, by discussion with transportation companies of the possibility of distributing question-