

THE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

THURSDAY JUNE 8, 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 10:07 a.m., in room 6226, New Senate Office Building, Hon. Herman R. Talmadge (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Senator Talmadge.

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

Chairman TALMADGE. The subcommittee will please come to order.

This morning the subcommittee begins its fourth and last scheduled day of hearings on the subject of the coordination and integration of Government statistical programs. The topic of this morning's hearing concerns the long-range possibilities and problems of our statistical system.

We are fortunate to have as witnesses, Mr. Arthur M. Okun, member of the Council of Economic Advisers; and Mr. Ewan Clague, formerly Commissioner of Labor Statistics.

Gentlemen, we appreciate your coming to contribute to our hearings.

Mr. Okun will discuss the statistical improvements for more effective public policies, and Mr. Clague the goals and difficulties of the Government statistical programs.

Mr. Okun, you may proceed as you wish.

STATEMENT OF HON. ARTHUR M. OKUN, MEMBER, COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISERS

Mr. OKUN. Thank you, Senator Talmadge.

As a member of the President's Council of Economic Advisers, I am an avid consumer of economic statistics. As you know, the Council is not a data-gathering agency. Rather it is our job to interpret and analyze economic data collected by other agencies and to advise the President on the implications and significance of the figures for public policy. The data producing agencies treat us like good customers. They recognize our wants and needs; they are responsive to our requests; they even cater to our idiosyncrasies. We get good service and we appreciate it. Yet, in the nature of the case, we never get all the numbers we want as accurately or as rapidly as we would like.