

134 COORDINATION OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

Chairman TALMADGE. Thank you very much. We appreciate your appearing with us this morning, and your testimony will be very valuable in our deliberations.

Mr. OKUN. Thank you. It was my pleasure.

Chairman TALMADGE. Mr. Clague, you may proceed as you see fit, please.

TESTIMONY OF EWAN CLAGUE, FORMER COMMISSIONER OF LABOR STATISTICS

Mr. CLAGUE. Mr. Chairman, I have a written statement which I would like to submit for the record and then, if you please, I would like to talk extemporaneously in a brief summary of it.

Chairman TALMADGE. Without objection, the statement will be inserted in the record, and you may proceed as you see fit, sir.

(Mr. Clague's prepared statement follows:)

PREPARED STATEMENT OF EWAN CLAGUE

THE COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to respond to the invitation to discuss the questions you and your Subcommittee have posed on the general subject of Federal Government statistics. At the outset, I want to emphasize that I am speaking as an individual and not as a representative of any government agency. I retired from the Federal service in December 1965 after nearly 35 years of government service.

I. COORDINATION OF STATISTICAL PROGRAMS

There is in existence a system of coordination of statistics for programs within the Federal Government, a system which has been operating more than 30 years. This coordinating system resulted from the work of the Committee on Government Statistics and Information Services in 1933-34. That Committee was established by the American Statistical Association at the request of the Government, which asked the Committee to conduct a comprehensive survey of Federal statistics and to make recommendations for their improvement. The Committee recommended a decentralized system, with the basic statistical agencies being located in the respective departments—Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, etc. However, recognizing the need for coordination, the Committee further recommended the establishment of a Central Statistical Board, with a budget and a staff, whose function was to establish and maintain coordination among the agencies. Some years later this Central Statistical Board became the Office of Statistical Standards of the Bureau of the Budget, where it is still functioning today.

This system of cooperation has worked well in a number of cases where good cooperative relationships have been established among Federal agencies. In 1959, by agreement of the Secretaries of Commerce and Labor, a cooperative arrangement was worked out between the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Bureau of the Census for the production of the overall statistics of labor force, employment and unemployment. The Bureau of Labor Statistics obtains the funds, while the field surveys and the tabulations are conducted by the Bureau of the Census on a contractual arrangement. The Bureau of Labor Statistics is responsible for the analysis and publication of the results. This is a highly efficient and economical operation for the production of the monthly labor force statistics.

Furthermore, by using the Census household survey samples, it is possible to develop special labor force and manpower reports linked to the continuing monthly labor force series. Those special reports are on such subjects as income of the unemployed, work experience of the labor force in a given year, women's participation in the labor force, unemployment of youth, etc.

This cooperative arrangement has proved itself to be so economical and efficient that other agencies adopted it. The Public Health Service has developed a partnership arrangement with the Census for sample surveys of the health of the population. More recently, the Office of Economic Opportunity has tied in to the BLS-Census program for some of their research and statistical studies.