

similar to that required of regulatory agencies under the Administrative Practices Code?

Mr. CLAGUE. Mr. Chairman, I did not get the first part of that question.

Chairman TALMADGE. Should the proposed major changes in the statistical series be subject to notices and hearings in the agency similar to that required in the regulatory agencies under the Administrative Practices Code?

Mr. CLAGUE. I think, Mr. Chairman, I would not favor that. My feeling is that, as long as reporting is voluntary, a statistical agency should be able to try its hand at collecting information that might be useful to it. My impression is that formalized hearings patterned on those of the regulatory agencies, would be somewhat restrictive on the development of statistics. The procedural rigidities might inhibit the agency from developing new series and even handicap them in maintaining old ones. I think I would vote for some more flexible mechanism.

Let me cite one other alternative. In the Bureau of Labor Statistics we have two advisory councils, one from labor and one from management. We do check with them and they check with us, on all the series the BLS produces. In addition, they are our major respondents. I think this advisory system has worked very well. I do not recall any basic criticism of the work of the Bureau of Labor Statistics from either of those groups. I think I would vote for a more flexible mechanism rather than establishing a system of hearings patterned on the regulatory agencies.

Chairman TALMADGE. You raised an interesting question about lack of international statistics. Is there any way that we could stimulate the development of adequate programs of international statistics?

Mr. CLAGUE. Yes. Certainly, one way is to provide some funds to gather that information and develop the necessary statistics. I tried to develop those statistics when I was Commissioner, and I think that Commissioner Ross has continued the effort. The BLS has been eager to develop statistical series of import prices and export prices. There is no reason why we should not have an index of that kind, in addition to our indexes of wholesale and consumer prices.

Also, for a number of years the Bureau of Labor Statistics has had a small staff working on the problem of international productivity comparisons. This means comparing wages, productivity, and unit labor costs in different countries. The Bureau is coming out shortly with a special study on the steel industry comparing several Western European countries with the United States. I think, Mr. Chairman, that more interest should be expressed in this general field, and secondly, that funds ought to be provided because I can assure you the funds at present are really quite small in relation to the urgent need for facts of this sort.

Chairman TALMADGE. Mr. Clague, we appreciate very much your appearing before us this morning. You speak with a vast experience and knowledge in this field and have contributed very much to the committee. Thank you, sir.

The committee will stand adjourned until further call.

(Whereupon, at 11:05 a.m. the subcommittee adjourned, subject to the call of the Chair.)