

## APPENDIX.

## I. REPORT OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

Census and Statistics Office, Wellington, 18th April, 1916.

THE main work of the office consists in the preparation and publication annually of the Official Year-book and the four volumes "Statistics of the Dominion." On my return from Australia in 1913, and again in 1914, at the special request of the then Minister of Internal Affairs, I furnished reports, which were presented to Parliament, dealing with the various activities of the office (see H.-12 and H.-12A of 1914). As stated in these reports, the statistics of the Dominion are defective principally in so far as they deal with production. The recommendations made in these reports for the improvement of our statistics have been carried into effect in part only.

The trade statistics have been brought into line with Australia, and are now published showing the country of origin. Industrial and economic inquiries (prices, wages, unemployment, &c.) are now dealt with, and a report on the cost of living (retail prices) has been issued, and it is highly desirable that wholesale prices should be covered in the same way as soon as possible. Statistics of industrial production, which have hitherto been collected quinquennially in conjunction with the population census, are being collected again this year. The question of their collection annually as recommended, which would greatly enhance their accuracy and value, has not yet been determined. Statistics of our fisheries and forestry are still practically non-existent, and it is advisable that these should be placed on a satisfactory footing at an early date.

Agricultural and pastoral production forms over 80 per cent. of New Zealand's exports, and the importance to the Dominion of having complete and accurate statistics of agricultural and pastoral production cannot be too strongly emphasized. This was clearly proved during the crisis which arose in connection with the wheat-supply immediately after the outbreak of war in 1914. The defective nature of these statistics made it most difficult to adequately deal with the position. As stated in my previous reports, the collection of these statistics by post is most unsatisfactory; the areas under crop for the 1914-15 season, as shown by returns obtained through the post, were subsequently proved to have understated the acreage in wheat by over 40,000 acres. The new system of collection recommended for these statistics is now in progress, and the first results will be available for the 1915-16 season. I have every hope and confidence that when the new system is fully developed these statistics will be both complete and accurate.

The basis of statistics of agricultural production is the area under crop, and the inherent difference between the new system and previous systems is that it is the areas reaped which will be ascertained after harvest, instead of the areas sown in the spring. Areas sown may never be reaped, as, owing to failure of the crop, or scarcity of other feed, the crop may be fed off instead of being cut. Then again, under the new system the statistics will be collected by permanent Government officials (the police) after personal interviews with the farmers themselves, instead of the returns being obtained through the post, as has been done during the past few years. Advantage will, however, also be taken of the post as an economical means of obtaining certain information supplementary to and based on the main collection by the police. Briefly, the new system involves—

- (1.) Main collection immediately after harvest by the police, after visiting each holding, covering all particulars as to occupied holdings and live-stock thereon.
- (2.) Collection by post of returns showing various breeds of cattle and horses, &c. (probably every third year).
- (3.) Collection by post of returns as to kinds of trees and production in orchards growing fruit for sale.
- (4.) Collection by post in the spring of returns showing areas sown in wheat and oats.
- (5.) Collection by post, probably in December each year, of returns showing commercial stocks of wheat, oats, and flour to ascertain the carry-over from one season to another.
- (6.) Pre-harvest collection by post of returns of estimated yields of wheat and oats.
- (7.) Collection monthly through Field Inspectors of Department of Agriculture, from January to August inclusive, of returns from threshing-mill owners showing actual threshings of wheat and oats.

During the past eighteen months the office has had a particularly strenuous time owing to the extra work caused since the outbreak of war. In addition to the production of the usual statistics the following matters deserve special mention :—

From November, 1914, to October, 1915, no fewer than five censuses were taken at intervals of the commercial stocks of wheat, flour, and oats in the Dominion. Fortnightly returns were collected as to wholesale prices of agricultural produce, and monthly returns of threshings were obtained from threshing-mill owners throughout the Dominion. For a short period until the establishment of the Imperial Meat-supply Branch this office collected and dealt with returns weekly from all meat-freezing companies.

The office was also responsible for the administration of the National Registration Act passed last year, and the personal schedules required under the Act were collected during October and November; early this year local rolls (over 300) of men of military age were compiled for each county, borough, and town district in New Zealand to form a basis from which local recruiting committees might undertake a personal canvass of their districts.