

APPENDIX.

I. REPORT OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICIAN.

Census and Statistics Office, Wellington, 14th July, 1919.

AFTER a lapse of nearly three years the whole of the staff of the Office is again accommodated under one roof. Military-service work has almost entirely ceased, and close attention to all branches of statistical work is therefore now possible. As the organization of the Office is improved and strengthened it is hoped to make the statistics of the Dominion in the near future as comprehensive and complete as those of any part of the Empire.

The promotion of Mr. J. P. Black, A.I.A.N.Z., to the position of Compiler in Charge of Statistics of Production, and the appointment of Mr. E. P. Neale, M.A., LL.B., B.Com., as Compiler in Charge of Statistics of Finance, greatly strengthens the executive of the staff; and as soon as a sufficient number of officers can be trained as understudies and assistants the staff organization will be on a satisfactory footing.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF NATIONAL EFFICIENCY BOARD.

Some months ago the National Efficiency Board made certain recommendations to the Government for the extension and co-ordination of the statistics of the Dominion. Cabinet approved the recommendations, and instructed all Government Departments to assist and co-operate with this Office in giving effect thereto. The necessary work is being taken in hand as speedily as possible, and I have much pleasure in acknowledging that Heads of Departments have readily responded whenever their assistance and co-operation was required.

INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURE.

Hitherto statistics of industrial manufacture have been collected quinquennially, in the same year as the population census is taken. One of the recommendations of the National Efficiency Board was that this important work should be done annually, as is the case in Australia; and, in accordance with Cabinet's direction, returns are now being collected for the year ended 31st March, 1919.

AGRICULTURAL AND PASTORAL STATISTICS.

The system inaugurated some four seasons ago in regard to the other principal branch of production—viz., agricultural and pastoral statistics—has now become well established and more or less of a routine character. The results obtained well justify the increased expenditure as compared with the unsatisfactory method in vogue for some years prior to the season 1915-16.

Under the present system the principal collection is made by personal canvass immediately after the harvest, while pre-harvest estimates in regard to wheat and oats are based on the acreage ascertained by means of cards obtained from all growers *through the post* in the spring. There is a considerable demand from the mercantile community and others for pre-harvest information in regard to other crops also, but I do not think the postal collection sufficiently reliable for much extension. In New South Wales a personal canvass by police sub-enumerators is also made in the spring, and satisfactory information in regard to spring sowings of all crops could only be obtained in New Zealand by the adoption of a similarly modified personal canvass. The organization and carrying-out of such a canvass would probably be more costly than would be justified by the advantages to be gained.

INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC INQUIRIES.

In this branch a good deal of progress has been made during the past twelve months, particularly in regard to the collection and tabulation of statistics of wholesale prices for past years and the preparation of index numbers therefrom to supplement the information already published for some years past in regard to retail prices. When the work is completed the results could probably be embodied in a special report containing also the results of the retail-prices investigation brought up to date.

A commencement has also been made in regard to wages and conditions of employment, advantage being taken of the collection of returns of industrial manufacture to collect data in regard to earnings, overtime, short time, &c. Some preliminary work in connection with the regular collection of statistics of unemployment has also been put in hand.

STATISTICS OF FINANCE.

The returns annually collected from local governing bodies have been revised, and in the case of Harbour Boards considerably extended. With the revisions, &c., made the statistical tables for local governing bodies will be as complete and comprehensive as any in existence elsewhere. Attention is also being given to fire-insurance statistics in regard to which no particulars have hitherto been obtained or published, and it is hoped to be able to publish statistical information on the lines of that given in the United Kingdom and Canada.