

# PROPOSED REORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL SERVICES IN THE GOVERNMENT

*by*

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To set the keynote for the Reorganization plans on statistics I would like to quote from the Introduction of the Tentative Report on the subject.

"The continuous and regular availability of adequate, current, and factual basic data is essential to the efficient conduct of government and of private enterprise. Today, as never before, statistical intelligence plays a major role in the formulation of long-range policies and day-to-day-decisions about a wide range of public and private issues.

"Statistical data are used by Congress as a guide to legislation; by the President in determining the direction of executive action; and by businessmen in planning programs of investment, production, and distribution.

"Present deficiencies in government statistical services stem from the absolute lack of coordination and direction of the decentralized statistical operations of the various statistical entities; from the lack of adequate standards for a systematic and orderly collection of data; from the apparent discrepancies in prevailing collection and tabulation practices resulting in the production of wholly inaccurate and unreliable data; from the lack of trained and competent statisticians; and from other related causes.

The Government Survey and Reorganization Commission, cognizant of the importance of sound statistical data to modern society, has conducted a general and comprehensive survey of the major aspects of the government statistical system, with the end in view of correcting these deficiencies."

This is perhaps a harsh criticism of existing practices but at the same time it represents complete recognition of the importance of statistics and statisticians to your Government. The fact that this long delayed recognition is now a reality should be the most important phase of this report.

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## REORGANIZATION OF STATISTICAL SERVICES

At the present time the following reorganization has been approved by the Task Force on Statistics consisting of Congressman Apacible, Senator Peralta, and H. B. Reyes. It has not yet been approved by the entire Commission to be forwarded to the President and to Congress so it must still be labeled "tentative". I will make my remarks extremely brief in order to allow time for questions on your main points of interests. Thus I give you a summary on a subject that should merit detailed discussion.

The plan is prefaced recommendations to the President and to Congress on two major general policies. First, that adequate standards be established for statistical personnel and secondly that greater emphasis and support be given to training and education of statisticians in order to alleviate the current shortage.

On specific reorganization the tentative report makes the following recommendations:

1. Continue the present decentralized system of statistics but with clearer allocation of responsibilities and elimination of duplication.
2. Strengthen the Bureau of the Census by elimination of functions which are duplicated in other Government entities including the Central Bank. It allows them to retain their present personnel which would be re-allocated in order to give them more adequate support for remaining functions. Establish that the Bureau of the Census is the principal statistical entity with responsibility for mass enumeration and statistics with inter-departmental significance.
3. Establish an office of Statistic Coordination and Standards at the highest possible level of government. In this case the proposed new Economic Council which will be far more important than any entity now in existence.
4. Establish a Statistical Advisory Board to assist this new office in its task of establishing standards and allocating functions.

Because of the limitation imposed on the Reorganization Commission of remaining with current appropriations they did not have the authority to quadruple salaries for statisticians and triple statistical staff as many of you might wish. The salary portion of this problem has already been discussed by Mr. Rosen.

The Commission is seeking to establish a firm pattern which will gradually provide a base for improvement of standards of statistics in this country.

