

# STATISTICS IN THE TRANSPORTATION FIELDS AS A MEASURE OF THE VOLUME OF DISTRIBUTION OF GOODS

*By*

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Statistics are dull and uninteresting things. To most people statistical figures have no meaning, no significance. That is probably the reason why the average person, when reading a newspaper report or a feature article in a magazine, reads only with interest the factual contents of the report or the article skipping over any figures cited.

To businessmen and statisticians, however, statistics are like a physician's stethoscope, stethometer, electro-cardiograph or some such medical instrument by which doctors diagnose a patient's ailment. Statistics tell us the trend of production, the movement of prices, the condition of business, the increase or decrease in population, the incidence of infectious diseases, etc. They are the instrument by which statisticians, business executives and trade organizations try to diagnose the state of a nation's business, production, health, population, etc. No accurate study and appraisal of trade and business conditions and other vital matters affecting a nation can be made without statistics.

I am therefore very happy to have been given for my talk today the subject of statistics in the field of transportation as a measure of determining the movement of goods into the country, out of the country, and within the country.

What statistics do we have in the Philippines today by which we can determine this movement in a fairly accurate way? With the exception of statistics showing the volume of imports and exports, there is no statistical report by which we can find out how commodities move from one place to an-

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other within the Philippines. For instance, how many tons of merchandise moved from Manila to the port of Cebu during the year 1955? How many tons of merchandise moved from the port of Cebu to Manila during the same year?

Gentlemen, no statistics are available to give us this much-needed information. The figures have not been compiled and, to my knowledge, there is no plan for compiling them. We, therefore, have no idea as to the actual volume of business between Manila and the port of Cebu. Should we wish to have this information in order to find out the total tonnage of shipping that the trade between Manila and Cebu needs, we will have to dig up the records of the Bureau of Customs or of shipping companies for weeks and months, jotting down figures from thousands of bills of lading and compile the needed data into readable statistical tabulation — a gruelling and expensive undertaking.

The Filipino Shipowners Association of which I have the honor to be President, undertook three years ago to compile statistics on the volume of goods which moved between Manila and the ports of the Visayas and Mindanao in order that the Association may have an idea of the trend of commodity movement between different localities of the Islands and thus discover where more bottoms are needed or where there is more tonnage than necessary. The data compiled by the Association covered only a twelve-month period. The task, however, was so difficult that it took five researchers of the Association three months to finish the compilation. Because the undertaking involved so much expense and time, the Association gave up plans for the compilation of data covering other years.

Realizing the need for statistics in order to be able to make an intelligent study of the local shipping situation, my Association has undertaken to compile vital statistics on different aspects of the Philippine shipping industry. The Association has spent quite a bit of money in the compilation of the data that we already have on hand. From the voluminous figures we have compiled from different offices of the government, we are publishing a *Philippine Shipping Directory*, a volume which is very badly needed by the government, by ship-

ping people, and by businessmen here in the Philippines as well as abroad. The Directory is now in the process of printing and we expect to have it out on or about the later part of November or the early part of December, this year.

Gentlemen, no other agency of the government, no other group of people in the Philippines today should realize more than those connected with the Statistical Center the great need in this country for statistics. Speaking for the shipping industry, I wish to say now that the complex problems of the Industry cannot be intelligently studied nor can we find a solution to these problems until we have compiled the necessary statistics upon which to base our studies and the appraisal of the current shipping situation. Until last June 30 when the Filipino Shipowners Association completed compilation of statistics on the Philippine maritime industry, we had only the vaguest idea of the number of ships operating in the inter-island trade; we had only the haziest idea of the number of shipping companies in the Philippines; we had no idea of the number of barges and lighters and tugboats, fishing boats, dockyards, slipways and other vital information relative to the shipping industry.

Today, gentlemen, at much expense and effort, the Filipino Shipowners Association has now this information which, as I said, will be compiled in one volume which will soon be published and which will be entitled the *Philippine Shipping Directory*. This statistical volume will be made available to all interested at a very moderate price. The volume will be reprinted every year with such revisions as may be necessary. Through this volume we hope to be able to supply one of the greatest needs of the Philippine shipping industry, that is, statistics covering the industry.

It is to be regretted, however, that owing to the complexity, the difficulty, and the magnitude of the undertaking of compiling statistics on the movement of merchandise within the Philippines, this very vital information is not included in our *Directory*. The undertaking of compiling commodity movement from one port to another in the Philippines is a colossal job. It requires digging up bills of lading of individual shipping

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companies, the employment of many people who will have to go to different Philippine ports to compile figures on incoming and outgoing merchandise. As you can see, gentlemen, the task is a big one which involves a great deal of time and expense and which, unfortunately, my Association cannot afford at the present time.

Speaking for my colleagues in the shipping industry, I wish to urge in the strongest possible terms that the government put aside a certain sum of money for the different customs offices in the Philippines and for municipal authorities in other ports where there are no customs offices for the compilation of statistics covering goods entering or going out of each port.

If that is done we shall have, within a year valuable data on the volume of merchandise which goes out of every port and the volume of merchandise moving in. Within a five or ten-year period with the figures already compiled, we shall be able to plan intelligently for the construction of piers and wharves and other port facilities where they are most needed and also to determine the shipping tonnage that should be assigned in each port. With the statistics available for a five or ten-year period we can have a clear picture of domestic trade activity and have an idea of the economic progress of the different areas of the country. Considering the importance of statistics on the movement of merchandise from one place to another in the Islands, I believe that any appropriation put aside by the government for the compilation of figures covering the movement of goods will be well spent. I do not think a very large amount will be required. With the personnel now employed by the customs offices in the different ports of entry and with the personnel of the offices either of municipal mayors or municipal treasurers, the compilation I suggest can be undertaken.

My Association is at a loss as to what instrumentality of the government we should approach to urge the compilation of statistics covering the Philippine shipping industry. The different government offices we have approached have admitted how badly we need statistics covering shipping.

Mr. Filemon Rodriguez, former Chairman of the NEC, when requested several years ago by my Association for in-

formation as to what plans the government had for the development of the interisland shipping industry, said that the adoption of any development plan was not possible until statistics on the industry has been compiled for study and appraisal. He deplored the almost complete lack of statistics covering the local shipping industry.

The situation, gentlemen, has not changed. We still lack statistics to guide us in any attempt to adopt plans for the expansion and the development of Philippine domestic shipping.

As a result of the recommendation of Mr. Filemon Rodriguez two years ago for a nation-wide survey of Philippine transportation needs and problems, a seven-man mission of transportation specialists came to the Philippines from the United States last March to undertake a thorough study of local land, water and air transportation. The seven-man mission came from Stanford University at Menlo Park, California, and went to work for six months' here completing their survey about the middle of last month.

One of the first things the mission looked for when it started its survey were statistics, declaring that they were essential and indispensable for an intelligent study of the country's transportation system. During a conference between members of the mission and members of my Association, the mission expressed great surprise that a maritime country like the Philippines which is so dependent on its shipping industry, should have totally neglected the compilation of the necessary data upon which to make studies of its transportation problems and needs.

It was fortunate that the Filipino Shipowners Association had already been able to complete the compilation of vital figures on Philippine domestic shipping by the time the Survey Mission came to the Philippines. We made available to the mission all the data my Association had on hand. But even after we made available to the mission the statistics compiled by the Association, the mission had to spend a great deal of its time digging into the records of the Bureau of Customs and other government offices for the figures that they needed to

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get a clear picture of the transportation situation in this country.

The mission submitted only a rough draft of its report to the National Economic Council. According to Mr. Robert O. Shreve, Project Leader of the Survey Mission, the mission report will be prepared at the Stanford University, Menlo Park, USA. It is expected to be airmailed to the National Economic Council about the later part of December this year or the early part of January, 1957. Although the Survey Mission, while conducting its survey, went about its work very quietly and refused to comment or to reveal anything connected with its work, it was clear from their investigations and inquiries that they were vitally interested in the compilation of accurate statistics on the different phases of the Philippine transportation network. When the Mission first arrived in Manila, they made inquiries as to the number of shipping companies in the Philippines. No such list was readily available and they could not get the information anywhere. They also inquired as to the number of interisland vessels of from 100 gross tons upward operating in the coastwise trade. That, too, was not readily available and they could not get it from anywhere. Other inquiries were also made such as the number of lighters, barges, fishing boats, slipways, dockyards and other vital information relative to the shipping industry. None of these were readily available from any source.

Fortunately the Filipino Shipowners Association, at considerable expense and time, had by June 30 completed its researches and had these figures tabulated. So we gave the Mission the information they needed as follows:

1. Shipping companies registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission ..... 111
2. Number of interisland vessels of from 100 gross tons upward registered with the customs office in Manila ..... 75
3. Number of interisland vessels of from 100 gross tons upward registered with the customs office of Cebu ..... 97

4. Number of interisland vessels of 100 tons upward registered in Iloilo .....	9
5. Number of interisland vessels registered in the customs office of Tacloban, Leyte .....	1
6. Number of ocean going vessels of Philippine registry .....	12
7. Number of lighters registered in Manila .....	48
8. Number of lighters registered in Cebu .....	15
9. Number of slipways and dockyards .....	15
10. Number of ports of entry (including Dumaguete which was made a port of entry last April by Congress) .....	13

Other vital information was made available to the Survey Mission which no doubt made the Mission's work much easier than would have been otherwise.

There are other vital statistics which, owing to the limitations of the resources of my Association, we cannot undertake.

Permit me, gentlemen, to suggest that the Statistical Center initiate the move to have the Bureau of Customs and other government offices concerned start compiling vital statistics on the different phases of the Philippine shipping industry beginning next year. The Statistical Center, more than anyone else, realizes the imperative need for this compilation. Our shipping industry, gentlemen, is in such a condition that government officials themselves have declared that it is in a very confused and chaotic condition. It is the most neglected industry in the country today and yet it is one of the most vital and indispensable to the well-being of the country. Without ships we can never have a stable economy. Deprive this country of shipping even for three months and a national emergency will arise. We cannot get along, gentlemen, without our shipping industry. It is as necessary to us as the very air we breathe. Let us give shipping more attention than has been given it thus far. And the first thing that we should do is to make a thorough study of the industry. And in that study, the compilation of statistics is imperative.

