

THE EVOLUTION OF A NATIONAL STATISTICAL AGENCY

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A chronological account of the development of Canada's central statistical agency is presented in this paper with emphasis on the importance of adapting the organization to the demands of the times.

To study the history of statistical progress in Canada since 1666 is to read of successes and failures as men of statistical vision attempted to respond to need as they saw it (see [1]). They sought to define appropriate mandates and to put organizations in place to carry them out. It was a long drawn out, difficult process.

Canada as a nation was born in 1867 as a largely rural society based on agriculture and other primary industry. In a little more than 100 years Canada has experienced very rapid social, industrial and political development. Paralleling this development has been the evolution of a supporting statistical system culminating in a centralized statistical agency as the hub of the system.

We have to thank the Deputy Minister of the Department of Agriculture, Dr. J.C. Taché, for appraising the statistical scene in Canada in 1864, and preparing a report which formed the base for the references to statistics in the British North America Act. One item in the BNA Act profoundly affected the future state of Canadian statistics. It named "statistics" as among matters under the sole control of the federal authority and provided the legal setting for a federal statistical agency.

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It recognized the impossibility of a federal system without statistics pertaining to the whole society, that is to say to those parts under provincial, as well as those under dominion jurisdiction. It appears that our constitutionalists intended that there should be provincial statistics, but that the two series, federal and provincial, should make one entity. Confederation greatly dispersed administrative authority; instead of a single government responsible for everything, there were now two governments operating in each province, each with its controls. Among Taché's recommendations in 1864 for the reform of the statistical process was a consulting board consisting of the heads of departments and agencies. They were to concern themselves with the best method of collecting, analyzing and arranging statistics connected with the concerns of their respective departments.

The idea of a board with affiliation of Deputy Ministers as consulting auxiliaries was debated, and somehow the whole affiliation idea got lost in the process of setting up the new machinery of confederation. Notwithstanding the key item in Section 91 of the BNA Act, a practice of statistical decentralization was adopted, more through the practice of osmosis than by intent.

Rather surprisingly, from today's perspective, as early as 1871 there was evidence of pressure from the provinces for a central statistical system. The Registrar General for Ontario was very unhappy with the state of statistical collection and publishing in Canada, and recommended that there should be a statistical bureau in Ottawa to develop a uniform system of statistics covering all of Canada.

1879 was a key date for the Canadian statistical system. It was in this year that a **new** census and statistical Act was passed. This Act provided for the taking of a census in 1881, and "at the beginning of every 10th year thereafter". As well as changing some of the detail regarding censuses, it added a very significant clause, namely, Section 28, under

the heading of statistics. This provided that the Minister of Agriculture should from time to time make rules and regulations "for the purpose of collecting, abstracting, tabulating and publishing vital, agricultural, commercial, criminal and other statistics". It is also significant that the Act refers to "arrangements with the provinces and other public offices in order to obtain these statistics external to the census". The Act provided for "special investigations" and so for the very first time the requirement for national statistics as a totality was envisioned and written into the legislation. The Act, however, did not contain any directive as to the machinery to be used, nor set out the procedures by which the statistical arrangements with the provinces would be carried out. In fact, it took nearly another 40 years before an effective centralized statistical office was put in place. During these years, the provinces were left severely alone as far as their statistical progress was concerned. Dominion government statistics were departmentalized, and the policy of the government during this period was, despite Section 91 of the BNA Act, that statistics be produced through the administrative motions of government departments. If additional statistics were needed as a guide to policy then the relevant department produced them if it had the powers. If the department did not have the powers, then it sought them.

Many serious problems existed. For example, Canada's production figures at the time of confederation, and for many years after, were entirely inadequate. One of the main reasons was that at confederation the control of production had passed almost wholly to the provinces. Disorder ruled; 9 separate authorities were responsible for one issue which was in turn split into many parts for which a dozen different authorities were responsible within each province. With statistical chaos ruling between the provinces and with the census chronically out of date - the inevitable happened. Certain federal departments (Mines, Forestry, Agriculture) invaded the statistical field. As another example, under the BNA Act, agriculture was a field which was covered both by dominion and provincial jurisdictions but without central co-ordination statistical confusion

reigned. Most of the provinces had set up annual and even monthly crop and livestock reporting soon after the close of the century, but the figures were all at cross purposes, coinciding neither as to time, definition, nor general methods.

By 1901, the demand for a more adequate system of statistics had become more and more insistent. In this year a report by the Minister of Agriculture to Cabinet included the following, "The aim and intention of the several Acts is the establishment of a bureau of statistics which shall form part of the Department of Agriculture, and in which will be consolidated the general statistics of the country, the officers in charge of which shall have every facility necessary to enable them to obtain the needed statistics from the several departments of the federal government, the provincial governments, or by special statistical investigations. The revised statutes give the necessary legislative authority to enable the department to join the provincial authorities in making arrangements for the better collection of different kinds of statistics, without limiting the power of any department to enter upon provincial fields not worked by provincial organizations. By a combination of forces, the results would be more satisfactory than by any other system that would be originated by federal authorities. Instead of clashing statistics there could be statistics having a joint approval". Another five years went by before there was any action on these proposals.

In 1906, Sydney Fisher, the Minister of Agriculture, attempted to put an end to statistical fragmentation in Canada when he made the Census and Statistics Office permanent. The Act of 1906 supported this centralization in Section 19 and Section 23, but once again while the realization of the inadequacies was apparent, and legal authority was granted to permit their correction, implementation took a long time. The implementation stage appears to be a perennial government problem.

At long last, however, influences were at work which were to lead to radical changes. First the inadequacies of Canadian statistics had reached the state where they were handicapping governments at all levels, business and all users of statistics. Sir George Foster, then Minister of Trade and Commerce attended a Dominion Royal Commission in 1911 to take stock of the natural resources of the British Empire and to see if a greater exchange of products could be encouraged. One of the first things he discovered was the unsatisfactory state of statistics as the background for their investigations. The statistics they required were either non-existent or had been developed along very different lines in the countries of the empire. As a result of these inadequacies Sir George Foster decided that the Canadian statistical state of affairs had to be put in order.

Sir George Foster's first move in 1912 was to obtain the transfer of the Census and Statistics Office from the Department of Agriculture to the Department of Trade and Commerce where it would be under his immediate control. This explains why the central statistical office has been located in or linked with this Department ever since. The next step was to arrange for a thorough investigation of the existing statistical environment and product and Sir George Foster was responsible for setting up the inter-departmental Commission on the Official Statistics of Canada to carry this out. The commission included representatives from the Civil Service Commission, the Census and Statistics Office, the Department of Trade and Commerce, the Department of Labour and the Department of Customs. The representative from the Department of Labour was Robert Hamilton Coats, who was to become the chief architect of the Commission report and the developments which arose from it.

The Commission was required to report on "a comprehensive system of general statistics adequate to the necessities of the country in keeping with the demands of the time". The Commission was authorized to communicate with the various governments with a view to ascertaining "what branches of

statistical work are being conducted by the provinces and to what extent these may assist in or duplicate work being done by the dominion, looking to a system of co-operation". The Commission was also authorized to enquire into the statistical work being carried out in various departments. Coats describes the investigation thus, "As for existing conditions, a pilgrimage from department to department revealed them worse than had been suspected. From any general standpoint notwithstanding excellence in spots, imperfections of method, restrictions of outlook, lack of unity and co-ordination were found rampant". The report pointed particularly to "the lack of coherence and common purpose in the body of Canadian statistics as a whole" and concluded that "Each department or branch charged directly or indirectly with statistical investigation, has concerned itself primarily with the immediate purpose only in view. The effect statistically has been to inculcate routine and a neglect of opportunities".

Coats made three important recommendations resulting from the Commission's investigations. Firstly, that a central statistical office be created to organize, in co-operation with the several departments concerned, the statistical work undertaken by the Dominion Government. Secondly, he recommended consultation with provincial governments starting with an Interprovincial Conference on Statistics, and thirdly, that an Interdepartmental Statistical Committee be formed consisting of representatives selected from the statistical office, and from other departments engaged in the collection of statistics. He proposed that this Interdepartmental Committee be advisory and deliberative rather than executive with the following objectives:

- to prevent duplication and conflicting results;
- to better adapt the statistical material of one branch to the needs of another;
- to establish uniformity in definitions and methods;

- to ensure expansion and development along appropriate lines, including the suggesting of new work and its allocation to those branches best equipped to carry it out;
- to supervise the various statistical publications with a view to the proper distribution of statistical information.

The first step in carrying out the recommendations of the report of the Commission was taken on June 19, 1915 by the creation of the Office of the Dominion Statistician and Dr. Coats was appointed Dominion Statistician. The Commission report contained a chapter on statistical organization, and that chapter contained a key phrase repeated by Coats many times throughout his term of office. It was evidently at the core of his thinking.

"The object of this organization should be to co-ordinate the statistics of Canada under a single comprehensive scheme and so to extend them that they meet the present needs of the country and follow the probable course of its development ... The object of such a reorganization should be primarily to constitute "a central thinking office" on the subject of statistics in Canada".

The translation of the Commission's suggestions into a series of implementation plans led to another major milestone in Canada's statistical progress: an Act establishing the Dominion Bureau of Statistics - the Statistics Act in 1918. Structurally the Act was a consolidation of previous statistical legislation of the dominion government. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics was charged with the general administration of the Act. Its duties were, "to collect, abstract, compile and publish statistical information relative to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities and conditions of the people".

Particularly significant was the provision for collaboration with other departments. It was specified that where statistics originate as by-products of departmental administration for their own accounting purposes, they should, through consultation with the bureau, also conform to general

statistical needs. Thus, the right of enquiry possessed by the government for different purposes could be used to the best statistical advantage. This right of enquiry is conferred on departments having executive control in specific fields in order to exercise that control and upon the Dominion Bureau of Statistics for informational purposes. It was clearly set out at that time that where two sets of powers are exercised in parallel, they are to be organized in co-operation for statistical purposes. The right to collect all other statistics was invested in the Bureau.

In order to define the principle explicitly and to facilitate satisfactory interdepartmental arrangements, an Order-in-Council under the Act was passed on October 12, 1918. Extracts from this Order-in-Council are worth quoting:

- (1) That all purely statistical investigations relative to the commercial, industrial, social, economic and general activities of the people shall be carried in the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.
- (2) That with respect to such records of any department or branch of the Public Service as are of a statistical character, the Dominion Statistician shall confer with the head of such department or branch with a view to arranging that such records be collected, and compiled insofar as possible in conformity with the methods and organization established in the bureau, the object of such arrangement being the prevention of overlapping, the increase of comparability and the utilization of departmental organizations in the best manner for statistical ends.
- (3) That after such conference, the Dominion Statistician shall, at an early a date as practicable, prepare a report on the statistical work of each department or branch of the Public Service, with a view to carrying out the above requirements, such report to be submitted to the Council for approval with a view to effecting a permanent arrangement for dealing with the statistics collected by the government, and

- (4) To further promote efficiency and economy, all statistical compilations for the government be carried out insofar as practicable by mechanical appliances and for this purpose use be made of the machines installed in the Bureau of Statistics.

The Act also provided the machinery for provincial co-operation by a clause enabling the bureau to enter into arrangements for the collection and supplying of statistical data through provincial departments or offices.

During the years following the passage of the Statistics Act in 1918, statistical work in the federal government was transferred from various departments to the bureau by the authority of Orders-in-Council. It was also the period during which dominion-provincial co-operation was established to co-ordinate statistical work, for the primary purpose of ensuring unified practices and eliminating duplication. The first annual report of the Dominion Statistician contained this sentence - "In addition, there has been created what is frequently called a central "thinking office" in statistics, continuously in touch with the general conditions and the line of probable development". This was a clear statement of the overall criteria for accountability which the first Dominion Statistician set for the organization.

Once the early phases of the bureau organization were worked out, including the establishment of its eleven branches covering subject matter fields, the way was clear for the development of new statistical series and the expansion of existing ones. High unemployment, poverty and subsequent human suffering during the depression years brought about demands for revolutionary changes in social services. In comparison with many other countries, Canada had made small progress in establishing a social security programme. The distribution of powers and jurisdictions under the British North America Act presented many difficulties, and these would not be investigated until the Rowell-Sirois Commission of 1935.

The Commission discovered that to bring about the social and economic reforms necessary, the redistribution of national income through the medium of such measures as old age pensions, family allowances and health insurance, was essential. The time was right for the dominion government to assume responsibility for problems of economic need arising out of unemployment and agricultural distress; it was prepared to accept this responsibility subject to a general revision of intergovernmental/ financial relationships. The Rowell-Sirois Commission was set up as the investigatory body and as a result of its work there was a prime need for improved statistics on finance. This led to a series of dominion-provincial conferences on the public finance statistics of the provinces and municipalities and a further strengthening of the Bureau's staff.

By 1939 it could be said that the broad framework of a unified and co-ordinated system of national statistics for Canada had been established. World War II brought an unprecedented demand for statistics. For example, the cost of living index became a key figure; employment statistics had to be expanded to meet the requirements of war departments; monthly payroll statistics were added to the bureau's employment series.

In 1942, Robert Hamilton Coats retired from the Office of Dominion Statistician. He was the dominant figure in Canadian statistics for the first half of this century. Coats was a centralist and throughout his career as the Dominion Statistician he worked towards the goal of creating a central statistical organization. His main objective was statistical objectivity and to separate the statistician from those with administrative or political interest in the figures. He worked hard and steadily towards the goal of removing statistical units from departments and placing them within the Dominion Bureau of Statistics so that they would not be influenced by departmental or political interests and pressures. Technical standards advanced under Coats, statistical objectivity became the essential by-word and professionalism increased in every area. In every way he increased the respect for, and the integrity and value of the statistician and the statistical process. The organization under his management responded to the needs of the times.

In 1943, an interdepartmental committee was set up by the Dominion Statistician to produce the reorganization which would enable the bureau to meet the post-war statistical needs. At this point in its growth two important developments occurred which were to have a profound influence on the progress of the bureau. One was the establishment of a central research and development staff, and the other was the establishment of a sampling organization to develop probability sampling. The function of the Research and Development Division was to integrate and analyze existing statistical data and to develop a new series of economic statistics. The National Accounts were the result. Not only would these estimates constitute a basic statistical background for financial and fiscal policy but the classification of these accounts into a separate statistical summary for various sections of the economy revealed the inadequacies in existing statistics, gaps which had to be filled and defects in the integration of statistical series. Statistical sampling opened new doors for securing statistical information and permitted the exploitation of many fields of information that had previously been unobtainable except in decennial or quinquennial censuses or not at all. The most important of the sample surveys was the labour force survey first taken in 1945. The wide coverage of this sample required the setting up of Regional Offices in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. Later, offices were added in Edmonton, St. John's, Newfoundland and in Ottawa. In 1948, the Statistics Act was amended to ensure legislative authority for the collection of statistics by means of sampling.

Major national social welfare programmes began to emerge in the fifties. Old age pensions on a universal scale were established in 1952. Unemployment insurance, health insurance, post-secondary educational facilities and welfare expenditures all received attention which resulted in increased growth and coverage of the bureau's data base.

Changes affected the bureau through the evolving needs of the user community, but changes also resulted from Federal Government investigations into its own activities. A prime example was the investigation undertaken by what was to be known as the "Glassco Commission".

In 1960, a Royal Commission on Government Organization was established under the chairmanship of J. Grant Glassco. The Commission's mandate was "to recommend the changes therein which they considered were the best to promote efficiency, economy and improved service in the dispatch of public business". The report which resulted in 1962 contained a recommendation for increased expenditures for statistical services and considered that no other conclusion was possible if quality was to be maintained and pressing needs adequately met. The report described economic and social statistics as "essential nutrients in the regular functioning of a complex society", and emphasized the need to pursue an "integrated statistical system for social statistics as well as for economic statistics". The Commission weighed the pros and cons of a centralized vs decentralized statistical system and ruled heavily in favour of a centralized and specialized statistical agency. Interestingly, the Commissioners recommended that the bureau audit the statistical programmes of all departments and agencies and report annually to Parliament on the state of government statistical services.

A recommendation of the Glassco Commission of key importance to the agency was implemented by Order-in-Council in January of 1965. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics was designated a "department" of the Federal Government and the Dominion Statistician was assigned the status and power of a Deputy Minister. The purpose of the recommendation was to "emphasize the independence of the Dominion Statistician because of the position of trust he holds with respect to those who are required by law to report confidential information to him". In addition, even though the Dominion Statistician would act as deputy for the Minister responsible for the Department of Trade and Commerce and continue an association with this department, the move had the advantage of making the Bureau an independent departmental entity, separate from the Department of Trade and Commerce.

The report of the Royal Commission on Government Organization (the Glassco Report) was studied by bureau officials during 1964 and a number of administrative improvements were put into effect as a result. There was a notable acceleration in the statistical needs of both federal and provincial government departments and agencies. The importance of statistics in the 1960's arose from a spectacular growth in technology, increasing professional expertise in internal and in user communities and an increasing attention given to a new phase of social statistics. By 1966 there were new demands placed on the bureau in the form of the need for broad national figures and information on regions and sub-provincial areas. These demands coincided with the planning and implementation of important and far-reaching government programmes with a great deal of emphasis placed on regional development. Increased attention was directed to the possible use of administrative statistics as a more economical method of obtaining information.

An important milestone took place in 1966 with the creation of a DBS Satellite Unit within the Department of Transport to deal with air transport statistics. This was a reversal of the traditional practice of physical centralization of statistics, but it was believed that the physical proximity to the Department of Transport would ensure its effective support for the work of the Satellite, and that the supervision by bureau personnel would promote statistical efficiency and consistency. The bureau continued to experience a period of rapid growth and in order to handle this more efficiently a major reorganization was effected in 1967. A Socio-Economic Statistics Branch was put into place to deal mainly with statistics derived from or related to households and individuals; the Economic Statistics Branch covered statistics derived from business establishments; and the Financial Statistics Branch dealt with corporations. The increased importance of automation was recognized by the creation of an Operations and Systems Development Branch responsible for data processing and computer programming.

In 1971, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics officially became known as Statistics Canada, as a result of a new Statistics Act which received royal assent on February 11, 1971. The new Statistics Act resulted from a basic review of the needs of users, the growing importance of the provinces and from the experience of the bureau with previous legislation. It reflected the needs of the times. The new Statistics Act significantly reinforced the authority of Statistics Canada as the co-authority in the national statistical system. The Act provided far more legislative authority by which Statistics Canada and the provincial statistical agencies could co-ordinate and integrate their activities. The Act also provided explicit legislative authority by which Statistics Canada had access to tax returns and confirmed its access to the administrative records of other federal government departments. The changes in the Act were an important step forward for the bureau and it is a great tribute to the foresight of those who drafted earlier versions of the Act and in particular to R.H. Coats who prepared the first Act in 1918, that the basic principles of the legislation remained untouched by a comprehensive review and revision over fifty years later.

In 1972, a new Chief Statistician of Canada was named. The Chief Statistician set up a study group to identify the critical challenges facing the agency in the future. The pace of change had escalated sharply and the agency had to be re-shaped if it was to respond to changing need and remain accountable for its performance and product. To meet the ever-increasing demand for official statistics, there was an expansion in the statistical activity in federal departments and in the provinces, but the brunt of the responsibility to meet the statistical demands of the times still fell on Canada's centralized statistical agency and increased and more complex statistical demands had to be supported by changing the statistical environment. Technology had increased the capability of users to retrieve and manipulate data. Users had become more sophisticated and so the inter-action and data linkage between producers and users demanded greater attention and data

consistency. At this point in time the agency's 1973-74 budget was \$73 million, almost 2 1/2 times greater than the expenditures of five years earlier. The work force consisted of 5,000 people with a core of 680 statisticians and economists.

The study group charged with re-shaping the agency and ensuring its accountability identified three critical challenges relevant at this point in time:

- (1) making statistics more usable and useful;
- (2) upgrading the nation's overall statistical capability over the long haul; and
- (3) maintaining public support.

The process of change was escalating in another direction, however, and in the mid seventies Canada in common with most industrialized nations began to experience greatly reduced economic growth which resulted in increasing inflation and growing unemployment.

In 1975, a new Chief Statistician was charged with responsibility for the agency and he foresaw the inevitability of drastic change affecting the organization as the government moved towards a policy of fiscal restraint and zero growth in order to cope with its economic ills. In an important policy statement in July of 1976, he outlined his view of the future of the organization preparing it for an external environment which would impact on every aspect of its activities. He described a future in which the statistical system would be more visibly associated with an information industry. Statistics Canada would increasingly be viewed as only one node in the larger statistical system, albeit a dominant one, in which there would be numerous data bases connected by a common data base management system. Such a system would embody quality control with special emphasis on the production of clean microdata bases - the data capital of the system. Integration would become absolutely essential to this informational system and must be designed to be extremely adaptable to meet the diverse needs of users. This adaptability would be obtained as a result of the increased emphasis on the analytical function of the statistical system. In such an

environment, an essential requirement would be efficient control/co-ordination mechanisms. The Chief Statistician viewed it as a prime responsibility that the bureau would take the initiatives in fostering such a statistical informational system.

The changing expertise and awareness of users also demanded that the Bureau become more user oriented. The Chief Statistician designated that the program of collection would in future be related to "spheres of observation" - households, institutions, non-farm businesses and farms ... Such a conception was expected to solve many of the difficulties experienced in integrating information embodied in different surveys, as the spheres of observation would help define the primary level of integration.

Internal to the Bureau many changes would be necessary to prepare the organization to cope with this vision of future need and respond to it. The key requirements were described as follows:

- Reorganization into spheres of observation to permit economies of scale, to give impetus to integration and to make optimum use of specialization and professional skills.
- The development of the program control function concerned principally with establishing policy, setting priorities, allocating funds and evaluating performance.
- The fostering of the content and analysis function to support users' needs, define their requirements and provide expert consultants to their user communities.
- The recognition of the operations function concerned with survey design, survey operations and the generation of a clean data base as a professional activity and given its proper place of importance in the system.

In his policy paper, the Chief Statistician warned that the Bureau should prepare itself for a new statistical leadership and co-ordination role - a role which must be continually changed and modified in response to

changes in the environment in which it must operate. The Chief Statistician believed that the mid 80's would find more and more active participants in the national statistical system and that the new organization and functional separation of activities he proposed would accomplish two major objectives:

- 1) Create an organization adaptable to change,
- 2) Serve the reality of the new environment.

Or in other words meld the programs and structure of the agency so that they could form "a comprehensive system of statistics adequate to the necessities of the country in keeping with the demands of the times" to use the 1912 criteria for the Bureau's conception.

In January of 1978, a document "Statistics Canada - The Medium Term" was distributed to all main users in the user community throughout Canada. The document contained the bureau's mandate statement and a clear description of its main strategic thrusts based on the Chief Statistician's appraisal of future needs.

The most fundamental change recognized was the likelihood of zero or negative growth in statistical budgets resulting from the programme of fiscal restraint in the government. This would of course result in an intensive re-examination of programmes and priorities because of the necessity to fund new endeavours at the expense of existing programmes.

The document described environmental changes to which the agency must adapt:

- rising public concern with privacy and confidentiality
- heightened resentment of response burden
- concern about the cost of government
- criticism of the data published by Statistics Canada.

As a result of this examination of external concerns the strategic thrusts of the bureau over the next five years were identified as:

- a) improved service to users,
- b) reduction in response burden,
- c) enhanced efficiency,
- d) statistical leadership and co-ordination.

What was suggested was a gradual movement away from areas where others are able to assume the statistical responsibility or where respondent costs are high in favour of more national responsibilities and greater reliance on analysis and uses of administrative data.

The January 1978 declaration of mandate contains the following paragraph which captures succinctly the framework within which those who manage this organization and strive for statistical excellence are working.

"The mandate, as thus set out, differs little from that of the original legislation of 1918 which first brought into being a centralized statistical agency in Canada. It is broad and not suitable as a basis for prescribing specifically what should be done at any one time. This, however, should be regarded as an advantage rather than as a drawback. Those who first drafted the mandate recognized that a generalized statement of the responsibilities assigned to Statistics Canada would give it the necessary flexibility to change, in accordance with the needs of the times, its conception of what those responsibilities mean, the relative importance to be attached to each one of them, and the means for carrying them out".

The environment within which Canada's central statistical agency must operate is an ever changing one. In the seventies and looking into the eighties, the rate of change will continually escalate. It is important to remember that worthwhile institutions have lives of their

own that continue long after those who pass through them have gone. But they only thrive if those who work for them appreciate the continuing role of the institution, understand its mandate and work to protect its integrity even as they respond, on a daily and monthly basis to the changing demands of the time. R.H. Coats, the first Dominion Statistician, was one of many such individuals. When he was appointed he described his view of the organization:

"The object of this organization should be to co-ordinate the statistics of Canada under a single comprehensive scheme and so to extend them that they meet the present needs of the country and follow the probable course of its development ..."

Some thirty years later in 1946 his view had not changed.

"The statistical objective is to get a good body of statistics on each and every public interest, and at the same time see that these dovetail and provide a good conspectus of the whole: there are the rooms and there is the house. An edifice of this kind is never done building".

RESUME

Cet article présente les grandes étapes de l'histoire de l'organisme statistique central du Canada; l'accent est mis sur l'adaptation de l'appareil aux exigences de l'époque.

REFERENCE

- [1] Spear, J., "Historical Milestones in Canadian Statistics", November 1975, unpublished paper.