SOCIAL STATISTICS: PRESENT CONDITIONS, FUTURE NEEDS AND PROSPECTS

R. T. Bowman, Alexander Gall, Israel Rubin, Bureau of the Budget

In his preface to the American edition of Herbert Spencer's The Study of Sociology [1] Professor Youmans notes that Spencer, prior to starting work on his three volume Principles of Sociology, foresaw a difficulty that would arise in working out these principles, namely, "a lack of the data or facts necsssary as a basis of reasoning upon the subject." Professor Youmans then calls attention to the clarity with which Spencer saw the need for facts by quoting from an article written by Spencer in 1858 for the Westminster Review, entitled "What Knowledge is of Most Worth." We commend to your attention the full text of the article cited by Professor Youmans, and give here only a brief excerpt to illustrate the kinds of data which Spencer felt were needed:

> "We want all the facts which help us to understand how a nation has grown and organized itself . . . not only the nature and actions of the central government, but also those of local governments, down to their minutest ramifications . . . Let us be informed of the control exercised by class over class . . . customs which regulated the popular life out-of-doors and in-doors including those concerning the relations of the sexes and the relations of parents to children . . . what was the connection between employers and employed . . . the intellectual condition of the nation in its various grades . . . the kind and amount of education . . . the progress made in science . . . the degree of aesthetic culture . . . the daily lives of the people - their food, their homes, and their amusements . . . These facts, given with as much brevity as consists with clearness and accuracy, should be so grouped and arranged that they may be comprehended in their ensemble, and contemplated as mutually-dependent parts of one great whole. The aim should be so to present them that men may readily trace the consensus subsisting among them, with the view of learning what social phenomena coexist with what others."

Today, more than a century later, Spencer's catalog of information needs still has much that is relevant to the problems with which this paper is concerned. There would be fewer gaps in our social statistics if, as Spencer thought possible, the facts could be gathered and organized according to his prescription - "so grouped and arranged that they may be comprehended in their entirety." But such "descriptive sociology" has proved difficult to achieve and in part must be recognized as an illusion. Yet, quite properly sociologists today are as keenly aware as Spencer of unfilled needs for data. It remains true that "facts" about society are stubborn, hard to capture, and even harder to utilize in ways that are relevant to and adequate for the issues of the times.

This paper was undertaken for one major purpose, to provide a setting for discussion concerning social statistics. It is our hope that this discussion will focus on what social statistics are, their adequacy or inadequacy today, the need for improvement and extension, the possible guides to establishing priorities to meet generally recognized needs, the special problems involved in developing organizations, methods, and procedures for the collection of social statistics of high quality, and, within the climate of interest and need now prevailing and anticipated, the prospects for better social statistics.

Social Statistics Distinguished

A precise definition of social statistics will not be attempted here. Instead we shall try to distinguish the area of social statistics empirically, rather than in accordance with a formula or preconception. It seems to us that even a strict definition of social statistics would probably have to provide criteria that would permit the same body of statistical information to be included as within or outside social statistics depending upon the special uses of the data. For example, to be unemployed is a condition affecting the individual, his family group and perhaps social actions in his community. In this sense data on unemployment, when related to the individual or family, are certainly social statistics. Unemployment, particularly when viewed as an aggregate, is also an indicator of economic activity, and as such is clearly part of the body of economic statistics.

In general, statistics which provide distinguishing characteristics of individuals, families, households, young people, older people, wealthy people, etc., are being used to delineate social (and economic) conditions, and in this sense are social statistics. There are also certain characteristics of individuals and social groups that are clearly not economic even though often influenced by economic or political factors. These aspects such as health conditions, education level and educational aptitudes, marital status, fertility, migration rates, dependency, delinquency and crime, recreation habits, social status, race, citizenship, nationality, are clearly social characteristics on which statistical information is desired. With respect to many of these as well as other significant areas of social statistics, we agree that available data are often inadequate or fail to meet appropriate statistical standards.

We do not attempt in this paper to chart a detailed program to rectify existing deficiencies or serve anticipated needs, but seek rather to suggest factors to be taken into account in the formulation of such a program and in efforts to put it into operation. Our discussion of these

factors is organized under three major headings, as follows:

1. Special aspects of the collection, dissemination and analysis of social statistics

2. Present Federal social statistics evaluated

3. Prospects for the future

Special Aspects of the Collection, Dissemination and Analysis of Social Statistics

One of the first factors to take into account when considering the status of Federal social statistics programs is that most of the operating responsibilities in this field are those of State and local governments. This presents a problem of securing data at the Federal level which meet desired standards without interfering unduly in the exercise of the responsibilities of other governmental units or of private organizations. In this category are to be found for example, education statistics, marriage and divorce statistics, birth and death statistics, and criminal and judicial statistics (except with respect to violations of Federal laws). We do not suggest that a satisfactory set of national data has not in many cases been developed under such circumstances but merely that the difficulties are intensified. These difficulties are further increased if the data reported to the States or local governments involve legal prescriptions which cannot easily be made uniform. In some instances even the resistance to change from inertia alone is a significant factor, particularly with respect to data about people.

A second factor that must be borne in mind about social statistics is that they generally concern information about individuals or family groups ordinarily not recorded in books of accounts or other records. The information, at least in the first instance, has to be obtained from individuals rather than business firms. Non-statistical agencies and organizations, such as schools, hospitals, prisons, courts, welfare organizations, employment offices, ordinarily assemble selected information in the course of their operations, and may be able to provide it for statistical purposes at the Federal level; or information may be obtained directly by enumeration of samples of individuals or households. In either case techniques for gathering such information are an important factor. Our use and knowledge of the techniques required and the institutional arrangements necessary are developing. It is still true, however, that many problems remain concerning appropriate Federal, state and local inter-relationships, the validity of questions asked and the recorded responses, the memory span and recall for information where records are not readily available, and the biases that may be introduced by either or both the respondent and the interviewer.

A third set of factors which are extremely important in evaluating a program of social statistics arises from the uses to which such statistics are put, the local character of problems, the myriad special demands which general purpose data cannot meet adequately, and the lack of unifying principles to guide the design of an overall body of social data. In the economic area, national accounting has come to be a guide for better integrating economic facts, highlighting important gaps, and providing a frame of reference or model to assist in analysis. Demography has provided some of this for the better understanding of population growth, but for the body of social statistics as a whole there is at this time no guiding design comparable to that provided by the national accounts for economic data. Considerable interest has been shown in attempts to develop overall indexes of "levels of living" or separate indicators of different aspects of levels of living but little agreement has been reached concerning the validity or usefulness of such approaches or their value as guides for determining priorities for the collection of social statistics. Not unique with social statistics but also highly important is the fact that much social data are accumulated for administrative purposes and are not designed for analytical uses or broad policy guidance. Since administrative responsibility for many social programs, for example education, resides in the States and local governments, a choice of how to obtain data has to be made. If the responsible operating units are to be the principal sources, then generalized data requirements must be integrated with local needs. If direct inquiry of individuals or institutions is used, a significant problem often arises; it would be generally desirable to collect the data on a sample basis to yield national totals and thus valid data would not ordinarily be provided at the local levels for local policy guidance.

Present Federal Social Statistics Evaluated

It is our intention here to touch briefly on the principal areas of social statistics, indicating major strengths and weaknesses. We shall not attempt to describe the numerous programs contributing to our fund of information concerning social phenomena or problems, but rather to select from them areas which seem to us most illustrative of factors on which attention should be focused. For a brief but nevertheless fairly comprehensive description of our principal social statistics programs, we commend to your attention Part II (pp. 27-77) of the booklet on Statistical Services of the United States Government (revised edition, 1959), prepared by the Office of Statistical Standards of the Bureau of the Budget. We also call your attention to two new publications by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. The first is titled Health, Education, and Welfare Indicators, published monthly, and the second Health, Education, and Welfare Trends, published annually. They are in response to the growing interest in social statistics. It is our hope that their use will be instrumental in generating the types of criticism that are effective

for real improvement in statistics. The world-wide interest in social data and the response to that interest are indicated by the effort now being made by the United Nations to develop a Compendium of Social Statistics as recommended by the Statistical Commission at its last session.

Population Statistics

A host of social data are provided in the population and housing censuses. This body of information has grown and improved over the decades and it may well be regarded with pride. In methods, in the items covered, and in the care taken in publication and in making special tabulations available on a cost basis to interested localities and research groups, we are on the way to quality statistics on the characteristics of our country's people. This is not to say that much cannot still be done.

One of the values of the decennial censuses is that they provide comparable data at the local as well as the national level. At the present time some groups are advocating that we should have a "head count" census in years ending with 5 as well as a complete census in years opening each decade. This has merit largely because of the population information it would provide at the local levels. The problem facing us is to assess the value of such interim population data to the States and localities, to estimate proper allocation of governmental financing, and to consider the value of other statistical needs that could be met by an expenditure of about $50 million or, over the years of the decade, $5 million per year.

Census-type data are also collected currently for the nation as a whole on various social and economic characteristics of the population through a monthly sample of 35,000 households. While the Current Population Survey is best known for the information it produces on labor force, employment and unemployment, it is also the basis for information on selected demographic characteristics--such as the population living on farms, migration, fertility--and for social characteristics such as income and school enrollment. Most important, by combining economic, demographic, and other social statistics inquiries in one survey and by analyzing the data for both individuals and for family groups, this Survey provides a wealth of information for the social scientists. From time to time supplementary questions are added to illuminate a particular research or program problem. Here we have an illustration of a design for social statistics along modern lines. It avoids the difficulties of numerous jurisdictions. It does not, however, produce data for small geographic areas nor tie in with the administrative data which arise from social program administration at either the national or local levels. Nor can it continue to meet the increasing demands for supplementary questions on both social and economic characteristics. Serious consideration is now being given to the possibility of establishing a second panel of similar size to carry some of the burden of additional inquiries.

Few analysts seem to be aware of the wealth of CPS data already provided. We cannot forebear mentioning that one of the most frustrating occupational hazards of the Government statistician is that of being publicly chided for the lack of statistics which he has lovingly designed, collected, tabulated, published, and, he thought, publicized. We agree that the fault is largely ours. Obviously, the last step has not been sufficiently well done. If the discussion here can suggest better ways to bring the statistician's product before the appropriate users, we should be grateful.

We readily admit that the Current Population Survey does not measure all the characteristics of the population which the social scientist would find significant. In some cases, the affected population groups are too small for reliable measurement (migratory agricultural laborers, for example) or too difficult to identify in a household interview (who will admit to having a juvenile delinquent in the family?). In other cases, concepts and measurement techniques are not yet sufficiently well-defined to permit general agreement on survey design, for example in the measurement of social status and social mobility. We have yet to obtain agreement in the U. S. on an acceptable scale for assigning "socio-economic status", an endeavor which has absorbed considerable time at various international statistical conferences during the past decade.

In spite of the general state of excellence of our population statistics, there are a number of attributes of the Nation's inhabitants which are not measured at all or measured with indifferent success. In each such case the reasons are not far to seek, but perhaps further efforts would be repaid in more reliable statistics to serve the interests of sociologists. Among these areas, we suggest the following as of considerable importance:

Religion - Information on religious preference was collected on an experimental basis in the Current Population Survey in 1957 but was not added to the 1960 Census because of public disapproval of the inquiry.

Ethnic stock - Although sociologists are almost uniformly agreed on the importance of information on ethnic stock, and medical scientists are developing an interest in the data in studying the incidence of certain diseases, methods of measurement developed to date for use in the decennial censuses are generally inadequate. Neither "country of birth of parents"

nor "mother tongue" seem happy solutions.

Handicapped persons - Information on the numbers, location, and the personal, economic, and family characteristics of handicapped persons, especially the blind, are in great demand. Such information might appear to be suitable for census of population inquiries except for the apparently insurmountable technical difficulties of adequately identifying these people under "census conditions". At present, we "make do" with information on persons served by various governmental and private programs without knowing whether or not they are representative of the unknown totals of the afflicted groups. Some national information may become available from the National Health Survey in later years when the accumulation of data will permit analysis for such relatively small groups.

Employment and Unemployment

Although aggregative measures of employment and unemployment are generally considered economic indicators rather than social statistics, labor force status is certainly an important social characteristic. It seems unnecessary to enumerate here the variety of social characteristics of individuals and families which are cross-classified in the Current Population Survey with employment status. The variety, frequency and reliability of these data are unique in the annals of statistics. In addition to the fact of employment, or of seeking work, the information simultaneously obtained on occupation, class of worker (employee, self-employed, or unpaid family workers) and hours of work are important social attributes.

Nevertheless, important questions remain unanswered which seem suitable for statistical investigation. The measurement of underemployment, for example, in terms of training or capability; the mobility of the unemployed; changes in labor force participation rates and their relation to various social conditions as well as economic events. From the point of view of possible governmental programs, these are questions which are particularly relevant to "depressed areas" and persistent unemployment of individuals. Some exploratory work has been done on some of them in occasional studies of particular areas. For example, the Department of Agriculture has cooperated with a number of local groups in studies of unemployment and underemployment among farmers and their families; the Bureau of Labor Statistics has engaged in studies of the job-seeking experiences of laid-off employees and of youths leaving school before graduation; the Bureau of Employment Security has sponsored a number of inquiries by State employment security agencies into the characteristics of the unemployed and the occupational skills of the labor force. At the moment, these disparate surveys do not seem to add up to a "program". Social scientists might well join with labor force analysts in suggesting desirable lines of investigation and testing research methods.

Very different in nature, and with implications for both economic and social analysis, are the statistics collected on working conditions - accidents, work stoppages, collective bargaining provisions, and labor standards. Some of these have long been a part of our statistical repertoire. In general, they suffer from limited coverage, or insufficient financial support, since they appear central neither to economic or social analysis nor (except for labor standards) to Federal "action" programs.

Social Insurance and Social Welfare

In the fields of governmentally-operated insurance, pension and assistance programs, very considerable progress has been made, especially in the development of "operating" or workload statistics. A look back at the situation up to and largely through the period of the thirties provides major contrasts and indicates significant progress. We now have considerable information about our pension and dependent population segments. Recently, realization has been growing that such statistics are insufficient or of the wrong kind, that related information is needed on the affected individuals and their families. Furthermore, many families may be simultaneously affected by more than one program. Sporadic attempts have been made to fill these needs, for example, by adding occasional supplementary questions about veterans to the Current Population Survey; by taking surveys "in depth" on the resources, living arrangements and scale of living of old-age beneficiaries; by collating a sample of assistance recipients against old-age and survivors' records to determine the number of families receiving income under both programs; by instituting special surveys of the expenditures of unemployment insurance beneficiaries before and after loss of employment, etc.

It is probably true that these types of information have not as yet been properly integrated with other bodies of information about persons and families and one of our major efforts in the future will be to pull the various aspects of social statistics into a more coherent body of information. For this task guidance is necessary from social analysts generally since no clear guide lines exist at present. At the same time it seems evident that for many "program-planning" purposes, information is required in far more variety and depth than can be supplied on a repetitive mass statistical basis. There will always be room for the small-scale intensive exploration of emerging problems, using statistical procedures which approach the case study method. More atten-

tion should be devoted to questions of when the use of such methods is appropriate and how they can be made to yield results which will permit reliable analysis and generalization.

Family Living

Historically studies of family living have provided a whole range of social and economic data, including information about the cultural and social characteristics of the groups studied. It is true, however, that statistical studies of family living have focused most attention on those characteristics which are closely related to economic condition. Thus much emphasis has been devoted to statistics of family incomes and expenditures.

Family-living studies can be approached in two ways - indirectly, from sources exterior to the family and by direct inquiries involving members of the family.

In the first category are most of the comprehensive data relating to consumption and saving which appear in the national accounts. These are compiled largely from business and Government administrative sources.

Family-living statistics which are directly collected from individuals or families include first, the largest of all regular "surveys" in the country, the Federal income tax return, data from which are utilized for a wide variety of purposes both economic and social. They also include the sample surveys of consumer expenditures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the farm family living surveys of the Department of Agriculture.

The BLS Survey of Consumer Expenditures last made in 1950 will again be carried out in 1961 and 1962. This survey of 11,500 families is designed both to provide weights for the Consumer Price Index and to provide data on family income, savings and expenditures in as much detail as feasible. A proposed innovation in this survey is its extension to farm and rural nonfarm families in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture.

Statistics on the expenditures of farm families are available from a number of studies of the Department of Agriculture. In 1955 the Department carried out a nation-wide survey of living expenses and farm operating expenses of farm families. Although a basic purpose of this study was to furnish weights for the Index of Prices Paid by Farmers it provided a wide variety of additional information on family levels of living.

Continuing data on farm-families (and sometimes rural non-farm families) have been made available by recent studies of the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Service. These studies are made on a "spot" basis, usually covering a few counties in a State and are designed to give not only expenditure data, but an analysis of some special topic, e.g. the job-related expenditures of working wives.

Mention should also be made of the nation-wide food consumption studies of the Department of Agriculture, last made in 1955, which provided estimates of food consumption for all population groups in the country, urban, farm, and rural non-farm.

With many workmanlike surveys furnishing statistics of family living it may seem paradoxical to maintain that in terms of reliable totals for large aggregations of families they add little to the data obtained from indirect sources. For aggregate economic data, as Broida points out, "consumers are a high-cost source of information of a quality that is often poor," [2] and this for several reasons.

The skewness of the distribution of consumers according to many variables (e.g. income, corporate stockholdings, etc.) introduces a difficult sampling problem and the difficulty may be compounded if the response rate or the accuracy of replies varies with the variable. It has been the consistent experience of technicians in the field that the refusal rates in such surveys tend to be higher among high-income families. Under-reporting of income is also common and there is evidence that understatement of income from interest, dividends, and similar sources is greater than for other types and therefore is more serious for higher income families.

But most important as a single source of error is the fact that families just do not keep organized records of at least a large part of their expenditures, so that errors of recall, both as to items purchased and time of purchase become quite important.

We cannot undertake here a summary of the errors which affect, in different proportions, data compiled from indirect sources, particularly businesses and those compiled from the families themselves. Research in both fields is needed.[3] Briefly we may point out certain broad considerations.

(1) Data from indirect sources furnish statistics concerning consumers in broad aggregations which are for many purposes superior to corresponding data which are furnished by the existing direct surveys.

(2) Research is needed which is directed toward integrating information from both types of source. At the present time studies producing detailed family expenditures also use appropriately broad aggregated totals corresponding to the detailed data. Further research may well make it possible to utilize indirect sources for broad categories and the more detailed direct surveys for relative dis-

tributions within those categories. Such a development would have an integrating effect upon all statistics of family living, however derived.

Education, Science and Culture

Statistics about the educational process and its achievements are today one of the areas of social statistics being subjected to major adverse criticism. The expressions of dissatisfaction have justification but they should be tempered with a realization that the newly awakened interest must also be constructive. Suddenly, we as a people are demanding that achievements in science and technology be accelerated. We demand such success from the educational process, and we want more education and better education immediately. We want to know more about education to these ends.

More should be known about education and its products and this knowledge should have been insisted upon much sooner. But statistical information about education must not be thought of as an end in itself. It must be designed to provide the guide lines to educational policy that will promote science, develop the arts and produce the educated man. These results do not come quickly or with great certainty.

Our educational system is not an easy one for which to produce both the general purpose type of data and the more searching information which throws light on the educational process and the potentials of our people. Since it does not now exist, a program must be designed to these ends. Efforts to achieve such a program must involve more than carping criticism, they must be unrelenting for the achievement of constructive advances in information about education, the educational process and the success of this process.

By a program for education statistics we mean to include (1) recurring general purpose statistics, (2) one-time statistical surveys, (3) statistical estimates and projections, (4) statistics to plan, administer and evaluate operating programs, and (5) statistics arranged for under contracts and grants for studies in depth. Until a recognizable, understandable, and defensible integration of these various aspects of educational statistics can be formulated into an action program, efforts will remain diffused and subject to unanswerable criticism. Two elements appear essential if progress is to be made. First, the Office of Education should organize so as to give high priority to the function of the analysis and planning of its statistical activities. Second, it should strengthen its staff of statisticians so as to improve the application of statistical standards to obtain quality statistics.

As we see it there is no magic formula (not even more money) for the development of educational statistics to meet major uses. The demands of users if unanalyzed and unrelated to statistical feasibility and best resource utilization provide no proper guide of what should be done. The instituting of more direct national surveys to secure repetitive type data, will not meet all of the needs either. One important element of the problem requires the establishment at State and local levels of a core of information available for both local and national purposes and consistent over the nation as a whole. There are subject areas, however, in which national data needs can be met by national surveys utilizing sample sizes which are easily manageable.

As we have noted, what Spencer called "the intellectual condition of the nation" embraces not only "the kind and amount of education," but also "the progress made in science" and "the degree of aesthetic culture." The latter areas have received relatively little emphasis in efforts in this country to measure social phenomena and behavior.

Health and Vital Statistics

Before adoption of the National Health Survey Act in 1956, national statistics of health and medical care were fragmentary, consisting mainly of data on morbidity covering the most common communicable diseases, compiled by the National Office of Vital Statistics, results of special studies and surveys conducted by the Public Health Service, and data arising from operating programs of the Public Health Service and such agencies as the Veterans Administration, Railroad Retirement Board, and departments of the Army, Navy and Air Force. Now, however, new and valuable national data on a variety of health subjects are provided by the National Health Survey, which serves as an outstanding demonstration of the advantages of the direct survey method as contrasted with indirect methods depending on the cooperation of autonomous units of State and local governments. The scope and value of the data obtained under this program have only begun to be realized, and their further development may be anticipated.

As the term "vital" statistics suggests, data on occurrence of such major events in the life of the individual as birth, death, marriage and divorce are recognized as basic elements of social statistics. In this area, at least with respect to compilation of national figures on births and deaths, a considerable degree of success has crowned years of patient effort to surmount difficulties inherent in the diffusion of responsibilities among State and local agencies for registration of vital events and compilation of data concerning them. We may anticipate a parallel development of marriage and divorce statistics in the future, with the gradual extension of the scope of registration areas and the introduction this year of a new program for direct processing and tabulation by the National Office of Vital Statistics of a national sample of the report forms (which for 1960 will be related to decennial population census data).

Perhaps the foremost unmet need in our vital statistics programs is for greater depth of analysis of available data. To some extent the feasibility of types of analysis that would be valuable for many social purposes is restricted, at least on a national basis, by the difficulty of integrating discrete elements of data from widely scattered sources. That such difficulties are not insurmountable, however, is illustrated by a paper being presented at another session of these meetings by Philip Hauser and Evelyn M. Kitagawa, on a study of social and economic differentials in mortality in the United States, which is to be conducted by the University of Chicago with the aid of a research grant from National Institutes of Health (also a unit of the U. S. Public Health Service). Another type of need will be served when NOVS completes work now planned on preparation for the 1960 census period of unabridged U. S. life tables and related actuarial tables, as well as sub-national life tables for geographic regions and States.

Future improvements in the area of health and vital statistics, particularly in analytical work, may be expected from the amalgamation of the National Office of Vital Statistics and the National Health Survey in a single unit of the Public Health Service, the newly created National Center for Health Statistics. The concept underlying this change is "to bring together those activities in which national vital and health statistics are collected and analyzed, as self-contained programs of national and international significance. Additional objectives are to increase the scope and effectiveness of such programs; /and/ to capture and disseminate more widely the significance of their data."

Other Subjects

In this rather impressionistic sweep over fields of social statistics we have omitted many subjects that could well be explored in depth. With respect to the important field of criminal and judicial statistics the omission is explained by the fact that a paper on this subject is being presented at another session of these meetings by Dana M. Barbour, also a member of the staff of the Office of Statistical Standards. As Mr. Barbour notes in his paper, there are major gaps in our data on crime and criminals, although significant improvements have been made and some further progress may be anticipated. The difficulties here are very great and much greater efforts on the part of specialists in criminology will be needed.

We have mentioned housing only incidentally, as one of the subjects on which a substantial amount of information is available from our decennial census program. Much more could be done in this field, however, by way of relating housing data to significant socio-economic characteristics of the population.

Although we have mentioned some of the important individual components of generally accepted measures of standards and levels of living, we have not undertaken an integrated approach to measures in this field parallel to that followed in recent years in efforts to develop international agreement on concepts and content of components and indicators of well being. We are not certain of the usefulness of such an approach for the United States.

Prospects for the Future

There is an old saying that "If wishes were horses, beggars might ride." Certainly if wishes were prospects the future of social statistics would be bright. It can be said with confidence that there is a rising tide of interest and that more attention will be devoted to this area of statistics. But at least three things must be achieved if there is to be a major development of social statistics generally.

First, better guides must be developed for establishing priorities within the various branches of social statistics and for social statistics generally. The analytical uses which establish these priorities must also be more clearly indicated. To this end Government efforts must be better guided by social scientists providing constructive and specific suggestions broader than the special research interests of individuals.

Second, methods must be developed to bring about consistent and meaningful information at the level of local program direction which is useful for national purposes as well as for local policy guidance.

Third, ways must be developed to integrate the various bodies of information from samples of households and individuals with data from records of operating agencies so that the unique advantages of each type of statistics may serve to reinforce and enrich the other. Operating records can be made to provide reliability and detail at relatively low cost, with individual and household sample surveys furnishing a variety of social characteristics essential for analysis.

Officially we have responsibilities for encouraging and supporting actions to achieve appropriate solutions to the problems here formulated. Some may even presume that the answers should all be known to us. In some instances we do think we know a few of the answers. It is not in a sense of modesty that we admit less than perfect knowledge of solutions but purely as a matter of necessity. It is our hope that from the discussion we stimulate here and from more intensive discussions which we plan to arrange for subsequently, necessary improvements in the whole field of social statistics can be accomplished.

1/ Herbert Spencer, The Study of Sociology, D. Appleton and Co., New York and London, 1921.

2/ Broida, A. L., Consumer Surveys as a source of information for social accounting -- the problems; paper delivered at Conference on Research in Income and Wealth, November 1959.

3/ A competent summary of many of the factors affecting both types of statistics is given by Broida, op. cit. Part II, Sources of Error in Consumer Surveys.