

NESC REPORT NO. 17
STATISTICS FOR SOCIAL POLICY

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NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Statistics for Social Policy

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

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7. The Council shall regulate its own procedure.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION*

1.1. The Council in its work on social policy over the last two years has become increasingly aware of the problems of obtaining adequate data on the social services, and on the social implications of other policies. Most of the reports on social policy published so far by the Council have adverted to this problem. In its comments on Professor Donnison's study on social policy, the Council stated:—

"The Council cannot do its job and progress cannot be made in social policies unless it becomes a regular convention that estimates and forecasts (relating to new policies and their implications) are made and in the more important cases publicly discussed, and their outcomes investigated later. Reliable and adequate data are necessary for the formulation of social policies or the measurement of the social implications of economic policies."**

1.2. While the Council and other bodies have commented in a general way on the inadequacy of available social data, to date no detailed examination has been made of statistical requirements in the social policy area and how existing data collection is meeting these requirements. Accordingly, the Social Policy Committee of the Council has investigated these detailed requirements in this report. While this report deals only with social statistics, the Council is aware that there are problems and gaps in economic statistics also. These have been examined elsewhere.†

*Following discussions in the Social Policy Committee, and by the Council at its meeting on 19 February 1976, successive drafts of this report were prepared by Eithne Fitzgerald in the Council's Secretariat.

**NESC Report No. 8.

†Report of the Committee on Statistical Priorities, C.S.O., November 1974.

1.3. As this report will show, a great deal of valuable statistical material is already collected on social topics. In many areas the statistical coverage is excellent; in others, the main problems are not that the material is not collected, but that access, presentation, or speed of publication could be improved. If this report concentrates on gaps and deficiencies, it is not from any lack of appreciation of what is already being done, but because the report's primary task is to outline what statistics are still needed.

Approach taken

1.4. This report concentrates on gaps in social statistics, that is, gaps in information which are best met by the regular collection of numerical data. The Council did not examine gaps in information which might be more appropriately met by a deeper type of investigation than that primarily concerned with gathering factual data. Nor did the Council look at the wider question of priorities in social research. "Social" statistics are taken as those which deal with the traditionally social areas of housing, health, incomes and income maintenance, manpower, education, and the personal social services; and with the dimension of inequality. The statistics are examined from a social administrator's rather than a technical point of view; for example in dealing with health, it is the statistics which are relevant to the provision of health services rather than for medical research which are considered.

1.5. In preparing this report, the statistics, both published and unpublished, at present collected by Government departments, Health Boards, etc. were examined. The principal statistical sources are given at the beginning of each chapter, and the publication frequency and time lag for the main publications are shown in Appendix I.* A questionnaire was circulated to members of the university social science departments and the various research institutes with an interest in social policy, in an attempt to identify the data problems encountered in undertaking research. Gaps in statistical information for planning purposes were discussed with various people involved in planning in

*A more detailed discussion of individual tables in various publications will be found in McGilvray, J., Irish Social Statistics, Institute of Public Administration, forthcoming.

different Government departments. Many helpful comments were received from these departments on earlier drafts of this report.

The need for social statistics

1.6. Better social statistics would help improve the quality of day to day social administration by placing it on a sounder factual basis. For example, up to now, administrators have been hampered by a lack of information on income distribution. This has led to difficulties in the costing of new proposals and has caused problems in deciding income limits for entitlement to various services. Similarly, the lack of up-to-date information on population trends affects forward planning for the provision of houses, schools, and hospitals. In times of acute financial stringency, when the amount of money provided for social services is strictly limited, the over-costing of any one service due to a lack of accurate information may mean that another service which could in fact have been afforded is not provided because of an apparent lack of funds. On the other hand where a project is under-costed because statistics are not available, approval can be given even though it would have been withheld had the true cost been known at the planning stage. It is important that decisions about the spending of public money should be based on the best possible information about the costs and the consequences of the proposed spending.

Review of policy

1.7. A second major use for social statistics is in the review of existing policies. Regular information for the review of policy is not always available, which means that the measurement of progress from year to year, and decisions to change the direction of policy, can be based on unquantified impressions. It is necessary that information needed to review present policies is seen to be as important as the information required to design new policies.

Social research

1.8. Social statistics are essential to facilitate social research. Busy administrators have little time to engage in research themselves; therefore, this task is largely undertaken by outside agencies and individuals who, being outside the administration process, often find difficulty in obtaining the information they require, or in getting priority for their

requests for data. Social research is in turn a valuable input into policy making. It is important to facilitate researchers in their search for statistical data, and to recognise the collection and use of such data as something valuable and worthwhile, rather than a nuisance.

Public debate

1.9. The level of public discussion of social issues in Ireland has not been very high. There has been no significant questioning of the structure of the social services, and relatively little debate about changes in policy. There has been a lack of serious discussion about the choices to be made in allocating money between the different social services—for example, whether scarce resources should be allocated to hospitals rather than schools, to housebuilding rather than pensions. While the needs of particular groups have been well articulated in recent years by specific pressure groups—widows, deserted wives, children in care—the needs of other groups, say adult illiterates, have received relatively little prominence, and few people are aware how numerous such groups might be, and how severe their problems. Some blame for the low level of debate on social issues must rest on the inaccessibility of some of the relevant information, and on the lack of publicity given to much of the available data.

1.10. In his paper for the Council "An Approach to Social Policy", Professor Donnison underlined the importance of public debate on social policy:*

"Social policies cannot be effective without the voters' support. Because the larger questions about distribution have rarely been discussed in Ireland, . . . it is unlikely that there is any coherent public opinion about the issues (involved). . . . An informed public opinion will depend on, and then demand, much better evidence about the distribution of incomes, services, social conditions, and the general trends of the country. . . . Public understanding of social policy, public capacity to use social services, and public willingness to pay the taxes, insurance contributions and charges required for them are precious assets which must be carefully nurtured."

*NESC Report No. 8: An Approach to Social Policy. June 1975.

General problems in using existing statistics

1.11. The specific needs for statistics in the main policy areas are discussed in the body of the report. There are, however, a number of general points to be made about social statistics and about the problems involved in making use of the data which are already collected.

Statistics as a by-product of administration

1.12. Most social statistics are collected as a by-product of some administrative procedure—for example, unemployment figures are calculated from the numbers qualifying for certain social welfare benefits, and the number of house completions is based on the number of grants paid. It is clear that there can be problems in using such proxy measures which may not reflect fully the size or the change in the underlying variable. A particular problem arises when changes occur in the administrative procedures and these cause a shift in the statistical series. An example of this occurs in the series of insured workers, which is used as the denominator in calculating the unemployment rate. Up to 1974, when the income limit for compulsory social insurance for non-manual workers was abolished, the number of insured workers was continually changing in response to changes in incomes, so that the unemployment rate as calculated reflected this administrative factor as much as the underlying level of unemployment. A more serious problem arises when changes in administrative procedures which affect the statistics are not recorded in the published tables. It is very important that such changes be recorded and their effects if possible quantified. Where this type of administrative change is frequent, there are difficulties in getting enough observations to do any econometric or statistical analysis of the data.

Presentation of data

1.13. Most statistical tables deal with totals and averages. These are useful summary ways of dealing with large quantities of data, and for comparing data over time. Relatively few tables are presented to show a frequency distribution, although this information is obtainable from the underlying data. For example, there are figures of average earnings in industry, but not now of the distribution of earnings. Professor Donnison's study* stressed that social policy is concerned with the

*NESC Report No. 8.

dimension of inequality. Obviously, the main focus of social concern must be the bottom 10% or 20% of any distribution. Movements in the average can disguise what is happening to this group.

1.14. Another way of presenting statistics to highlight inequality is to show figures relating to different regions and to different social groups. The way in which statistics are compiled usually allows figures for different parts of the country to be obtained. (The Council has examined separately the question of gaps in regional statistics.) Questions on social group are not often included in statistical inquiries; this problem can be overcome to some degree by giving data relating to areas in which one social group predominates—for example, by giving figures relating to particular city suburbs or counties. The Council has already stressed the importance of presenting Government expenditure on new proposals in a way which shows the distributional effects.*

1.15. Social measurement has generally been concerned with measuring the inputs into various services, the level of expenditure, or the number of people employed, rather than the level of output or the achievement of objectives. The programme budgeting exercise carried out in Government departments in recent years was intended to quantify outputs, but in spite of the considerable efforts put into this exercise, in fact the assessment of progress and output measurement consisted of little more than presenting existing statistics along with expenditure tables in a programme budget format. No new statistics were provided as a result of this exercise, and the output measurement never developed sufficiently to form the basis for a systematic review of policy.

1.16. The major forum for the review of present policies is the annual Estimates speech in the Dáil. Too often here the emphasis in presenting statistics is on the work done rather than placing this in context as the degree of progress towards a goal. Information on total expenditure on a service or the total number of clients for a service is not sufficient in itself; it needs to be supplemented by information on the total amount of expenditure needed, the proportion of potential clients reached, or the waiting list for a service. While this sort of information is often available, it is rarely presented in this form.

*NESC Report No. 8, Council comments, para. 22.

Availability of statistics at present collected

1.17. A particularly striking feature of the discussions with statistics users which preceded this report was the number of "gaps" in statistics which were mentioned but which were not strictly speaking gaps at all; the material was already being collected, but was either unpublished, unavailable on request, or the potential users did not know of its existence. This is a symptom of the serious problems which exist because of delays in publication of statistics, reluctance to release unpublished material, the lack of a guide to unpublished statistics, and the generally random and haphazard way in which social statistics reach the interested public.

Published statistics

1.18. The delays in publishing statistics are adverted to throughout the text and can be seen from Appendix I. Statistics relating to a single policy area may be found scattered in a wide variety of publications, or may appear at random in response to parliamentary questions. Some are to be found in departmental reports which have been published progressively less frequently and with longer delays. A great deal of time is spent unnecessarily chasing figures through different publications, and in seeking more up-to-date figures from departmental files. It would save both users and providers of statistics a great deal of trouble if each Government department published the statistics which it collects at frequent intervals and with minimum delay in a simple, readily available form. The Council also sees a great deal of merit in the suggestion it received that the main social statistics should be kept on a centralised computer file, which would be added to immediately as new figures became available, and from which policy-makers and researchers could draw print-outs on request.

Departmental Statistical Reports

1.19. (i) The *Department of Local Government* publishes the *Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics*, about two months after the end of the period to which it refers. In addition to the statistics collected by the Department, it includes some figures on housing expenditure which are published elsewhere, and a summary of the census findings on housing. The speed of publication and the frequency are both excellent. A stencilled

publication, it demonstrates that regular departmental statistical bulletins need not be particularly elaborate or expensive to produce.

- (ii) The *Department of Health* does not publish an annual statistical report as such, but in recent years a statistical document has been prepared annually and circulated to deputies at the Estimates debate, and has been available from the Department of Health on request. It is understood that this statistical report is to be published from next year. Similar statistics are collected by the Health Boards in preparing their annual estimates. The Department have also prepared a very useful catalogue of all the statistics which they collect, outlining the problems associated with using each series.
- (iii) The *Department of Social Welfare* publishes a printed report. The first such report was for 1947–49, and subsequent reports have covered four year periods up to the last available report, for the five years 1967–71. This issue was published in May 1973, thereby taking over six years for official published statistics referring to the year ended 31st March, 1967 to appear. Much more frequent and up-to-date information is available from the Department on request; for most services, quarterly data are kept. Quarterly figures are useful in order to separate the effects of mid-year budget changes from underlying trends in numbers. *It is recommended, therefore, that in place of the annual report, the Department should publish a quarterly bulletin of an informal kind, giving the statistics as and when they become available.*
- (iv) The *Department of Labour* does not publish an annual report, but statistics on employment and unemployment are published by the CSO. There is the annual *Trend of Employment and Unemployment* and weekly stencils of the number on the Live Register, with more detailed monthly and quarterly analyses. The publication frequency does not present a problem here.
- (v) Up to 1967, the *Department of Education* published an annual statistical report, *Táibll Staitiscl*. In 1974, a report was issued

covering the years 1968–69 to 1971–72. It therefore took six years to get official published statistics for 1968–69. A report covering 1972–73 was published in December 1975. *It is recommended that the Department return to the practice of issuing a report annually, if necessary issuing it in a less formal format to speed publication.*

Unpublished statistics

1.20. It is not advocated that all statistical material be published. There is only a limited public interest in many of the detailed tables—for example figures on the domiciliary tuberculosis service—and to publish everything could lead to greater delays in publishing the more important material. It could also lead to a very indigestible mass of figures, making it difficult to find the important among so much of the unimportant. However, the corollary of deciding not to publish for these reasons is to provide easy access to the unpublished data for those interested.

1.21. A great deal of unpublished material is not confidential in character, yet it is difficult to get access to it. The decision not to publish such information is generally taken at official level, and the reason often given is that its disclosure would embarrass the Minister or some other authority. Apart from a few areas where publication might not be in the public interest—for example, figures about future spending plans not yet finally decided—this is not a defensible explanation. The aim of the public service, and of Ministers too, should be to promote understanding of the issues involved, so that the public are aware of the extent of various social problems and can seriously and realistically discuss alternative strategies to resolve them. The emphasis should be shifted from making specific decisions to release or publish information to making specific decisions not to publish.

Guide to unpublished statistics

1.22. Since a knowledge of what unpublished material is available is a precondition for making the best use of it, it is recommended that each Government department and Health Board should prepare a guide to the statistics which it collects, on the lines of the guide prepared by the Department of Health.

SUMMARY

1.23. Social statistics are an invaluable tool for the policy maker, the social research worker, and a public which interests itself in social policy. The presentation of such statistics should make it clear what is being measured; should draw attention to the position of the worst off, and should indicate the areas of unmet need. The dissemination of such statistics needs to be greatly improved, by speeding up publication, by publishing a higher proportion of the data collected, and by improving information about and access to unpublished statistics.

Chapter 2

CENSUS DATA

2.1. The census provides the fundamental benchmark data on the population for all kinds of social policy making—data on age, sex, occupation, area of residence—which are needed for policies as diverse as pensions for the self-employed, and school places for a particular county. In addition, information on individual areas of social policy is contained in the census volumes which give details on housing, education, occupation and industries, and employment and unemployment. Additional information on population is contained in the Vital Statistics reports.

Deferment of 1976 census

2.2. Because of the fundamental importance of the census for all social and economic planning, and social research, the decision to defer and possibly cancel completely the 1976 census is a cause for serious concern. It would be particularly serious to cancel a census in a period of rapid demographic change, when net emigration has virtually ceased for the first time in nearly two centuries, when birth and marriage rates are changing, and when fertility is falling. Planning for the nineteen eighties will have to be based on 1971 census data which will obviously be out of date. Population projections can fill the gap to some extent, but only at a national level. Such projections, however, are very sensitive to the assumptions about migration behaviour; in the absence of a census, it would be very difficult to check on how these assumptions are working out in practice. Moreover, projections cannot reliably provide the detailed regional or occupational data, or detailed cross classifications, that are needed for specific policies. Furthermore, any error in the population projections, while small overall, is likely to be concentrated in particular age groups, such as 0–4 year olds, and 15–24 year olds, and to

affect significantly forecasts of the demand for services consumed by these groups, such as children's allowances or housing. The task of planning in the absence of a full census would be somewhat easier if a sample census were taken. It is understood that this option has been rejected on the grounds that information will be available from the EEC Labour Force Survey. It is considered that given the fairly narrow focus of this inquiry, it is not an adequate substitute for a sample census covering a wider range of questions.

Under-recording of households

2.3. There is some evidence that some households, mainly consisting of young single people living in flats, are under-recorded in the census. This can cause quite serious distortions in areas where this type of household is concentrated. It is important to try and get complete coverage; one way of checking on the households missed might be a sample taken shortly after the census to see how many of this type of household had filled in a census form. If the coverage of a particular group in the census is improved through more careful checking of households, it is important that this increase in numbers be isolated and not treated as net immigration.

Time lag in publication

2.4. The main criticism of census data is the slowness in publication. It now takes longer to publish census volumes than it did in the late nineteenth century. While the principal tables relating to the 1971 census have already been published in bulletin form, only five volumes out of a total of 14 have already been published—that is, five years after the census was taken. The remaining volumes are due at intervals of some months, so that it will possibly be 1978 before the final tables are published. By that time, much of the information will be so out of date as to be of only limited use. To be fair, the CSO will photograph on request tables in advance of publication from the computer returns but the availability of this service is crucially dependent on it not being over used. Unlike previous censuses, some of the 1971 census tables are being printed direct from the computer returns, and this eliminates a lot of double checking and reduces delays. It seems foolish to spend a lot of money conducting a census and then not to devote enough resources to enable the results to be processed and published quickly,

so that the usefulness of the data, when they eventually appear, is greatly diminished.

Special tabulations

2.5. The CSO provides print-outs for District Electoral Divisions and towns at the cost of photocopying. They are reluctant to undertake special tabulations, however, because of the heavy workload of the programming staff. It is very frustrating not to be able to obtain data which in theory are available, and it seems an unnecessary waste to have to resort to special surveys to get data which could be acquired from the census. It is recommended that the Government relax its ban on new public service posts in the case of programming staff in the CSO in cases where the extra cost of the staff could be recouped by charging outside bodies the full cost of their services in preparing special cross tabulations of statistical material.

Classification of households

2.6. To date, the classification of households by type in the census has been based on the relationship of the household members to one another, irrespective of age,* and no figures have been published on a type of household which is of particular interest to social administrators, namely the household with dependent children. Volume VII of the 1971 census will, however, contain classifications involving households by type and number of dependent children under 14 years, and additional tables by number of dependent children under 16 years. The 1965/66 *Household Budget Inquiry* did give details of families with dependent children, but a child was defined as someone aged under 14. Thus a family with children aged 9, 10, 14 and 15 would have been classified as four adults and two children rather than the common-sense description of two adults and four children. It is understood that a somewhat older cut-off point will be used in presenting the results of the 1973 *Household Budget Survey*.

Definition of dependent child

2.7. Most social services take account of a person's family circumstances in determining entitlement to benefit, or the rate of benefit to

*Cf. *Census of Population 1971*, Bulletin No. 39, Table 9.

be received. It is therefore very important to know the number of families by number of dependent children in different groups in the population. The problem is that different definitions of child dependants are used for different services. In determining full eligibility for health services, dependent children are taken as those under 16 years. For children's allowances, eligible children are those under 16 years, and those between 16 and 18 who are in full-time education, apprenticed, or handicapped. This upper age limit is 21 under the Income Tax Acts. For other social welfare schemes, the age limit is 18, irrespective of whether the child is earning or not. This limit is extended to 21 in the case of those children of widows and other single parents who are in full-time education. In planning any one of the above services, it is necessary to know the number of families with children as defined for that service. It would obviously be very unwieldy to publish figures corresponding to each different definition, but *it is recommended that these figures be produced from the census data for circulation to the relevant authorities and any interested member of the public.*

Financial dependency

2.8. The classification of families by numbers of dependent children under 16 which is to be published for the 1971 census, will be a great improvement on the previous situation. Nevertheless, it is not completely satisfactory. There are, for example, some 75,000 16 and 17 year-olds still at school. It is suggested that the most appropriate definition of a child is one who is financially dependent on his parents. This definition could be derived from census returns by looking at persons under 21 who are not gainfully occupied. *It is recommended that in future tables based on this definition of a child should be published, if necessary replacing those based on a child defined as someone under 16.*

Cross classifications of households by number of dependent children

2.9. *It is recommended that the classification of households by number of dependent children should be cross classified as follows: by age, sex and marital status of head; by occupation and employment status; and by social group.* The sort of use which would be made of these classifications would be to cost out measures such as the proposed extension

of social insurance to the self-employed, changes in the personal income tax code, or an extension of the health services available to those with limited eligibility.

Classification by stage of the family cycle

2.10. It has also been suggested that a classification of families by stage of family cycle could be useful, for example, showing families with children under four, families with all schoolgoing children, etc. In addition to the interest such a classification would have for sociologists, it would be of use for calculating the availability of married women for work outside the home, and using that to predict participation rates.

Marital status

2.11. At present it is not possible to use the census to measure the number of separated or divorced people. These constitute a group which may have particular problems. *It is recommended that an additional marital status category be included in the census to cover the separated and divorced, and those whose marriages have been annulled.*

2.12. Research workers at present have great difficulty in getting suitable sample frames. *It is recommended that the possibility of allowing access to census data, with due precautions about confidentiality, should be examined, with a view to providing sample frames for drawing samples in survey work.*

2.13. The preparation of a public use tape based on a sample of say 5,000 or 10,000 individuals, with names deleted, could enable a great deal of useful micro-analysis to take place. While the tape would contain all the personal information about any individual, with the name removed, it would not be possible to identify anyone, and confidentiality would be preserved. *It is recommended that this suggestion be carefully examined by the CSO.*

Conclusion

2.14. The first priority must be to return to a pattern of five yearly censuses. The next priority is to make better use of what is already collected by speeding up publication, and by presenting special tabulations of the available data, rather than to collect more information.

Chapter 3

EXPENDITURE DATA

Main sources

3.1. Information for the public sector is contained in the annual *Budget Booklet*, the *Estimates Volume* and the *Appropriation Accounts*; in the *Returns of Local Taxation*; and in the accounts of departmental funds such as the Social Insurance Fund. An analysis of public social expenditure in national accounts classification is published in *National Income and Expenditure*. Some information on private spending on such services as education or health care is contained in the *Household Budget Inquiry*. Information on spending by private bodies and institutions involved in social services is almost totally lacking.

Expenditure classified by purpose

3.2. Financial data are normally categorised into spending on wages, materials, grants to other bodies, etc., rather than by purpose. The introduction of programme budgeting opened up the possibility of classifying central Government expenditure by purpose, and allocating administration costs to individual services. Central Government expenditure forecasts in programme budget format were prepared in respect of 1975 for all departments, and full programme budgets were drawn up in a selection of departments including Education. *Whether departments operate a programme budget system or not it would be desirable if the accounts branches of the different Government departments apportioned costs, e.g. administration costs, common to two or more services over these services, so that the overall cost of an individual service could be arrived at.* It would be useful if such classifications of expenditure were published; there is nothing confidential about historic data or current estimate figures classified in this way.

Central Government voted expenditure

3.3. Appropriation Accounts of central Government voted expenditure must be submitted to the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Department of Finance within four months of the end of the financial year. The 31st October is the statutory date for publication of the volume containing the audited Appropriation Accounts and the Report thereon but in recent years it has been published roughly a year later. Subheads represent the statutory basis for accounting for voted expenditure so that the Appropriation Accounts contain a great deal less detail than the Estimates volume, and outturn figures on subdivisions of a subhead must be got by direct inquiry to the relevant accounts branch. An example is the Social Welfare subhead for Social Assistance Allowance, where Part III of the Estimate gives a breakdown between Deserted Wife's Allowance, Unmarried Mother's Allowance, Prisoner's Wife's Allowance, etc., while they are all grouped together in the outturn figures. This makes it very tedious to extract a series of figures for such services and even more so to try to get totals covering a number of sets of figures. It is also tedious to compare an estimate provision with the actual outturn. *It is recommended that the Appropriation Accounts volume include as an appendix to each Appropriation Account a statement giving the same level of detail as in Part III of the Estimates.* This should create no difficulty since departments will have prepared figures giving this detail for audit purposes. While the Department of Finance see procedural difficulties in accounting for services in this level of detail in the Appropriation Accounts proper, it is felt that if such difficulties could be overcome it would be a neater solution to the problem.

Departmental funds

3.4. The accounts of departmental funds* are audited separately from the various Votes, and are published separately. The most important of these is the Social Insurance Fund; in addition to this there are the Redundancy Payments Fund, the Occupational Injuries Fund and the Supplementary Unemployment (wet-time) Fund. These take somewhat longer to complete than the main Appropriation Accounts—around six

*i.e., funds whose principal income is not voted by the Dáil. The Redundancy Payments Fund is administered by the Department of Labour; the other funds mentioned, by the Department of Social Welfare.

months for final figures in the three smaller funds, and for provisional figures for the Social Insurance Fund, and about nine months for final figures for the Social Insurance Fund. *The accounts for these funds should be published along with the main central Government figures in the Appropriation Accounts volume.* While the Social Insurance Fund figures may not always be ready or audited in time this is a problem which could be overcome. In any case adequate figures for statistical purposes corrected to the nearest £1,000 should be available. It would be much easier for anyone compiling statistics on total central Government social expenditure if all these figures were contained in the same volume.

Local Authority Accounts

3.5. Up to now, the estimates of expenditure of local authorities as approved in striking the rate have not been published together. Arising from the changeover by local authorities with effect from 1976 to a programme form of estimates, the Department of Local Government is examining the feasibility of compiling a volume of local authority estimates for 1976. After an initial trial period the question of publication of an annual volume of these estimates will be considered.

3.6. In examining the availability of local authority accounts, it is important to distinguish between estimates of expenditure and actual outturn. Unlike central Government, local authorities have no supplementary estimate procedure—that is, the elected representatives cannot vote an increase in income during the year by increasing the rates. However, the availability of bank credit means that local authorities are able to spend, if necessary, significantly different amounts to those contained in their official estimates, although there are strict controls where an increase in expenditure is involved. In addition, although the total actually spent is usually close to the estimate provision, the components of this total may vary widely, and it is often these components which are of interest. The slowness in publishing outturn figures cannot therefore be considered unimportant even though the time lag in obtaining estimate figures is not very great.

3.7. The latest full local authority accounts published relate to 1971/72. Summary estimate figures up to 1975 are included. The 1972/73 volume

is expected in the early half of 1976. This delay in publication prevents an up-to-date analysis of total public spending on social services, and of expenditure on individual services in which there is local authority participation. In addition the lack of up-to-date local authority figures in national accounts terms is a serious hindrance to economic forecasting.

3.8. The delay in producing local authority accounts does not seem justified. Under the Public Bodies Order, local authorities are obliged to submit their accounts to the Department of Local Government within three months of the end of the financial year, but this is not always adhered to. To exercise any degree of financial control, expenditure figures are presumably available within local authorities in the detail which is eventually published, shortly after the end of the financial year. The delay in publication is attributed first to the delay in obtaining returns from a small number of the smaller local authorities, and second, to the time involved in reprocessing and cross classifying these accounts. As regards the first problem, it seems reasonable to ask that bodies which receive a large proportion of their income from public funds should account for their expenditure within the legally required period. *It is recommended that the Department of Local Government should enforce the Public Bodies Order more strictly, if necessary withholding a portion of the coming year's grant until the previous year's expenditure has been accounted for.* The length of time taken to process a complete set of returns for publication—six to nine months—would seem to point to a need either to allocate more staff to this job, or to mechanise the process. *It is recommended that steps be taken by the Department of Local Government to reduce the time lag between the end of the financial year, and the publication of accounts of expenditure for that year, to a maximum of one year.*

3.9. The format of the *Returns of Local Taxation* up to now has not been particularly satisfactory to use. From 1976, the accounts will be in a revised format, with expenditure allocated among eight programme groups. Up to now, the summary table contained very little detail, so it was necessary to add totals for county councils, borough councils, urban district councils, and town commissioners, netting out where appropriate, in order to get aggregate figures for an item such as

expenditure on supplementary housing grants. This could be a tedious procedure, particularly when constructing a series covering a number of years. However, it is understood that a more detailed aggregate table will be included from now on.

Health Boards

3.10. The accounts of the individual health boards are not aggregated and published together. An abstract of each Board's accounts is sent to the Department of Health and can be inspected there, but even these abstracts are very much in arrears; 1972-73 is the latest year for which some of these abstracts are printed. To get more detailed information on the spending on individual services such as meals on wheels, or grants to voluntary organisations, it is necessary to contact the individual health boards. In the preparation of its annual estimates each board goes into great detail for individual services, and the expenditure figures generally show the allocation of money to each service in the current and the previous year, but not the amount actually spent. *It is recommended that the accounts of each health board should be published in one volume by the Stationery Office, together with tables giving aggregates for all health boards, somewhat on the lines of the Returns of Local Taxation.* In addition, a volume similar to that of central Government Estimates should be published, showing the estimates of each health board as approved, with corresponding figures for the previous year.

Classifications of total social expenditure

3.11. A number of different classifications of total social expenditure are in official use, and this leads to a certain amount of confusion. One set is published with the Budget; the *Third Programme for Economic and Social Development*, and subsequent issues of *Review and Outlook* used another; the *European Social Accounts* use yet another classification, and finally there is the classification published by the CSO in *National Income and Expenditure*. The first two are different combinations of the expenditure of the main Government departments involved in social policy; the third is simply expenditure on health and social security and covers the private as well as the public sector; and the fourth is based on the exhaustive examination of each subhead and subdivision of Government and local authority expenditure, in order to

classify it as "social" or otherwise. The major drawback in using the CSO classification (which is the most comprehensive) is that the latest year for which figures for total public expenditure are available is 1971-72 because of the delay in obtaining local authority figures. This situation would improve if the recommendations concerning the local authority accounts in paragraph 3.8 were implemented.

Private expenditure

3.12. Regular statistics are not collected on such items of private spending on social services as annual payments of occupational pensions, spending on sick pay, or spending by voluntary organisations. Figures on sick pay and on pensions are important since they are used in the *EEC Social Accounts* and *Social Budget*. The EEC practice if no figures are available is to assume that spending is zero, thus our total social spending in EEC comparative tables is somewhat understated. Figures of total spending on sick pay would be extremely difficult to obtain, since the public service and much of the private sector do not distinguish wages paid to employees who are on sick leave. The Council does not feel that the value of such statistics on sick pay spending would be worth the trouble and cost of collection.

3.13. Figures on pensions should be easy to collect, both from the pension funds, and from the relatively small number of firms which provide pensions directly for their employees. *It is recommended that details of total expenditure on occupational pensions should be collected each year.* This would be useful not only for the EEC tables but also in order to monitor levels of activity of the pension funds.

Grants to outside bodies

3.14. A certain amount of social expenditure consists of grants to non-statutory bodies rather than direct expenditure by Government departments or agencies. Examples are spending on primary and secondary schools, and health board grants to voluntary hospitals. The result is that information is difficult to get on how exactly this money is spent—on wages, equipment, and so on. More information would be desirable for cost control and for tracing exactly what services within these institutions are State aided. To gather this information would be an enormous job because account keeping by such grant-aided bodies is

not always in an appropriate format and because it is difficult to define which activities are financed by public money and which by their other sources of finance. The accounts of these bodies would give interesting information on private spending on social services by those institutions which are aided. *It is recommended that each department or body which partly finances other institutions active in the social area should begin collecting an abstract of accounts from each of those outside institutions, and should try and move towards presenting annual tables summarising the total income and expenditure of all the institutions with which they deal.*

Conclusion

The main priority is faster publication of local authority accounts. The purpose of the other main recommendations is to ensure that published accounts are presented in a way which is more convenient to use.

Chapter 4

HOUSING

Main Sources

4.1. The main sources of published statistics on housing are the Department of Local Government's *Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics*, and the *Census of Population*. The *Quarterly Bulletin* includes details of new house starts and completions, prices of new houses, and the sums lent to their purchasers, local authority housing activity, and a summary of statistics published elsewhere. The Department also publishes an annual review of the building and construction industry. The Census Volume on housing covers the number and size of dwellings, size of family, age of house and amenities, and tenure. In addition, the *Household Budget Survey* gives some information on average expenditure on housing, classified by size of family, income range, household tenure, size of town and social group. The CSO collects information on the construction industry as a whole, on earnings, employment, inputs and outputs, but the response from the industry is not very satisfactory. Sources of unpublished information include records of the Department of Local Government, the local authorities and the various financial institutions. These latter also have additional statistical information collected for internal management purposes from which statistics can be compiled as the need arises.

4.2. The coverage of housing statistics is therefore fairly thorough. A high proportion of the statistics collected is published, and with the exception of census data, there is very little delay. The production of statistics on housing compares favourably with the best European practice. Nevertheless, there are a number of gaps in the statistics, and a number of instances where a slightly different way of collecting or presenting data might lead to more useful figures.

New building

House construction and work in progress:

4.3. It is important to have accurate and up to date records of housing activity. First, they are necessary to assess progress in meeting housing need. Second, building and construction is a crucial economic sector, with high labour content and a low import content. Therefore, the building industry can be used as a short term regulator of the economy. It is necessary to know how the house building industry is likely to respond at any given time to an injection of finance. Such injections can lead both to an increase in employment, and increased production of a socially desirable product, while at other times they may just lead to a rise in costs and prices.

4.4. While an output series on local authority house building is not published, sufficient data are contained in the *Annual Reports of the Department of Local Government*, the *Local Authority Monthly Progress Reports* and the *Quarterly Bulletin on Housing Statistics* published by the Department of Local Government to enable such a series to be compiled. *It is recommended that such a series should be commenced as soon as possible.* With regard to private house building there is at present insufficient data available to produce an output series, but *it is recommended that such a series should be commenced because of the necessity to have an accurate and appropriate indicator of the level of private house building activity at any point in time.* The output of private house building cannot be adequately measured by such proxies as houses begun or authorised, houses completed or sales of raw materials such as cement.

4.5. The series on houses begun or authorised is particularly difficult to use as any measure of housing activity since it is so dependent on factors relating to house grants, and the timing of grant applications. For example, the number of private houses for which grants were allocated in the last quarter of 1972-73 was strongly influenced by the efforts of builders to have grants allocated before the introduction of a scheme of price control in February 1973. The partial abolition of new house grants from 1 January 1976 will probably reduce greatly the information on house starts anyway. This is because houses which do not qualify for grants but which qualify for rates remission under the

new arrangements will generally only be inspected and recorded at the completions stage, so that there will not be the same records of when these dwellings were begun or authorised as heretofore.

4.6. There are two ways of approaching the compilation of an output series for the private house building industry. One is to collect the information from the industry but the poor response rate of that sector to present statistical inquiries suggests that the results of such an exercise would not be sufficiently representative to produce a reliable output series. The other method is to use an administrative approach to produce information on private house building output similar to that available in relation to local authority housing referred to above. The information obtained in either fashion together with the data already available in respect of local authority house building would enable a comprehensive output series to be produced for the house building industry. Such a series would be a more sensitive indicator of house building activity than either house starts or house completions and as such would highlight peaks and troughs at an earlier stage in the building cycle thereby helping to ensure that injections of finance are made at the appropriate times. *It is recommended that consultations take place between the Department of Local Government and the building industry in order to establish the most efficient method of collecting the necessary information.*

4.7. One of the main difficulties about collecting statistics on output in the private housing sector is the poor response of the industry to present statistical inquiries. The Committee on Statistical Priorities identified this as the main problem in construction statistics, and attributed it partly to the fragmented nature of the industry, and the lack of a complete register of building firms. Clearly, the long term solution is to increase the flow of information from the building industry itself to the CSO. It is expected that building regulations to be introduced in EEC countries by 1978 will result in an improvement in the coverage and response of the private sector. In the meantime to supplement what information is available on output and activity in the industry, *it is recommended that greater use be made of the knowledge of current conditions in the building industry acquired informally by departmental inspectors in the course of their work. It is recommended that these*

inspectors should send in a short monthly report on the general state of the house building industry in their areas. It is not envisaged that such reports would add any major investigation of trends in the building industry to an already heavy workload for these inspectors. Rather it is believed that already the inspectors know a great deal about the conditions in the industry in their areas, and it is a question of using this knowledge as it stands to interpret what developments might lie behind changes in the figures.

House completions

4.8. Statistics of house completions have been the subject of some controversy between the Department of Local Government and the Construction Industry Federation. Some of the confusion and controversy results from an implicit use of the completions figures as a measure of output, when of course output also depends heavily on changes in the volume of work in progress. As a result, there is now a working party consisting of the Department of Local Government, the Department of Finance and both sides of the industry examining the alternative ways of compiling these statistics. This Committee is also seeking ways of improving the methodology used in the annual review of outturn and the assessment of prospects for the building and construction industry as a whole. Statistics of completions are based on the statistics of final grant payments in the case of new private houses, and on returns from local authorities in relation to local authority dwellings which are ready for occupation. Estimates are made of non-grant housing, and of conversions.

Private house completions

4.9. It is difficult to see a better alternative to basing statistics of private house completions on grant payments or a similar administrative system such as applications for rates remission. But naturally problems arise since grant activity will not always correspond to the situation on building sites. For example, some of the apparent increase in completions during 1973 was due to a speeding up of the final grant payment following a reorganisation of the grant section of the Department of Local Government. It is important to ensure that at times when the level of completions is high, the statistics of completions do not just correspond to a full workload for the grants section. The time lag

between the completion of a dwelling and the final grant payment can vary considerably for reasons on the builder's part. There may be variable delays in notifying the department that the house is ready for final inspection. The final grant payment is withheld in a number of cases for minor defects in a house which the builder is slow to remedy; a house may therefore be occupied for a number of years before it is recorded as completed. The Department of Local Government keeps a record of the time lags between completion of a dwelling and the final grant payment. At present, the average time lag is around three months, although there is a certain dispersal around this average. A lagged series on final grant payments would have produced a series on house completions which would have corresponded more closely with the termination of building activity in respect of private houses.

4.10. The modification of the grants system from 1 January 1976 is not expected by the Department of Local Government to significantly diminish the information on completions of what have up to now been grant-type houses. This view is not unanimously held within the construction industry. However, it should be noted that while relatively few new private houses will continue to qualify for grants, it is expected that almost all of what were formerly grant-type houses will continue to qualify for rates remission, and will therefore undergo inspection procedures and price control similar to those for grant-aided dwellings. Therefore an administrative record of such houses would continue to be kept by the Department of Local Government. The approval of such dwellings for rates remission would correspond broadly to their completion, in a somewhat analogous manner to the grant payment. It is to be expected that the statistics of completions which could be collected from rates remission applications would differ in their timing from present statistics based on grant payments.

Demand for Housing

4.11. The projection of the demand for housing involves a projection of the demand arising from demographic change, and of the accumulated need for housing represented by unfit or overcrowded dwellings, involuntary sharing, and needs arising on compassionate or medical grounds, and from increased industrial development. The projection of demand for housing due to changes in the structure of the population

is generally done by projecting headship rates. This technique has been unnecessarily difficult to use in Ireland up to now because headship rates have been given cross classified by age and sex, and by conjugal condition and sex of head, but not simultaneously by age, sex and conjugal condition of head.* The CSO are now preparing the required cross tabulation for 1971 at the request of the NESC.

Internal Migration

4.12. An important factor in the demand for housing is internal migration, and the related question of people moving house within a given area. The 1971 Census asked a question on the address in the previous year, which gives both movements from county to county, and movements within a county. The Department of Local Government are examining the feasibility of instituting a special inquiry of loan applicants. This inquiry (which is discussed more fully in paragraph 4.25 below), would give, *inter alia*, some measure of the extent of filtering, and would give some indication of the factors which are important in the decision to buy a house or move house.

4.13. The forecasting of internal migration will be made very difficult by the lack of a census in 1976. Migration movements in 1970–71 cannot simply be extrapolated since internal migration is very sensitive to job availability, and this is constantly changing. Even if the national total of new dwellings needed can be accurately forecast, it is on local forecasts that the actual planning and building decisions are made. It is difficult to see how local authorities, especially in the cities, can plan adequately in the medium term without conducting special inquiries into migration. A better solution would be to go back to a five yearly census.

Overcrowding

4.14. The census gives detailed figures of households classified by number of persons and number of rooms for counties and for each ward of Dublin City. This gives a general guide to the extent of overcrowding but has the defect that no information is available on the function or size of rooms, or the age of or relationship between the persons involved. Thus, while occupancy of two or more persons per room is generally

*cf. Tables 17 and 18: *Census of Population 1966*, Volume VI.

considered overcrowded, there can be cases of overcrowding at densities well below this. For example, a family of four living in a four roomed dwelling may not seem overcrowded, but when one room is the kitchen, and another the living room that leaves only two bedrooms for four people. This creates problems when the children are of different sexes. The 1966 Housing Act contains a definition of statutory overcrowding with standards related to the age and sex of children, cubic feet of rooms, etc. but figures are not available relating to the extent of statutory overcrowding. Local authorities do classify their waiting lists into those who seek accommodation because of overcrowding—Dublin Corporation, for example, gives the size of family, whether overcrowded or not, and whether the applicant is a subtenant in a Corporation dwelling—and this should cover a significant number of cases of statutory overcrowding. The collection of this data is a major job. The last full assessment was carried out in 1967 and the next assessment which was due in 1972 under the 1966 Housing Act was postponed by many local authorities pending full availability of the results of the 1971 Census.

Involuntary sharing

4.15. No adequate information is available concerning the extent of involuntary sharing as distinct from physical overcrowding. The census does give numbers of households which have two or more family units. The view of the White Paper, *Housing in the Seventies*, was that few of such households constituted cases of involuntary sharing. However, no data exist to show how many households which consist of one family unit plus other persons constitute involuntary sharing. It is interesting that in 1972 in Dublin 1,178 families on the Corporation waiting list were subtenants in Corporation houses—and this must indicate a significant amount of involuntary sharing. Because involuntary sharing cannot be precisely measured, it is more appropriate to estimate it through survey research rather than the routine gathering of statistics.

Fitness

4.16. Another factor in the demand for new housing is the need to replace dwellings which are structurally unfit. The census gives some indication of the structural quality of the housing stock by collecting information on age of houses, and on the possession of amenities such

as running water or bathrooms, which tend to be highly correlated with the structural condition of the dwelling. In addition, An Foras Forbartha conducted a sample survey for the Department of Local Government of 2,270 dwellings to see how many were unfit and how many of these could be economically reconstructed. This study is useful and would be worth repeating at a later date. The overlap between unfit and overcrowded dwellings is not at present tabulated. *It is suggested in order to get this information that in future a table should be prepared in the census giving the distribution of houses without a fixed bath or shower by density of occupation.*

Reconstruction

4.17. It would seem that a great deal of reconstruction work is not recorded anywhere. The Department of Local Government publishes figures of reconstruction grants paid by county, and these are frequently quoted in relation to the fitness of the housing stock. At present these figures are not classified in a way which would show whether the reconstruction work was for improvement of an unfit dwelling or for relief of overcrowding, or both, although in theory this information could be got by examining the original returns. *It is recommended that in future the returns should be classified in this way.*

Local authority housing

4.18. There are two main sources of information at present on the demand for local authority housing. The first is the numbers on the official waiting lists. The second is the assessment of total housing needs within their areas which local authorities are obliged to carry out every five years under the 1966 Housing Act.* There are difficulties involved in using waiting lists as an indicator of demand, and in using aggregated waiting lists as a measure of national demand. Not all local authorities keep a waiting list. The waiting list contains only the articulated demand for local authority housing—many people in need of rehousing by the local authority, for example old people living in unfit dwellings, do not apply to join the waiting list. The criteria for inclusion in the waiting list can vary from one local authority to another—for example, in the subjective area of what constitutes an unfit dwelling.

*No. 21, 1966, S. 53.

In practice, the distribution of resources between one local authority and another is not made simply on the size of the housing list in different areas, but on an assessment of relative need, on an increasingly centralised and uniform set of priorities and based on the accumulated knowledge of the Department of Local Government about local housing conditions, and regular visits to different areas by officers of the Department.

4.19. The first detailed assessment of housing needs as required by the 1966 Act was carried out in 1967. Some authorities did a further assessment in 1972–73, but many authorities have been waiting for detailed results from the 1971 Census first. As can be understood, this assessment is an enormous job. If this assessment was done in sufficient detail, it is more than likely that the results would be out of date by the time they are available.

4.20. There is a need for more public information on the size and composition of the demand for local authority housing, in order to assess the relative priority to be given to it as against other services, and in order to assess the effectiveness of existing policy in coping with ongoing demand and in reducing any backlog. It is important that the public should be able to assess also the success of the policy of allocating money to different local authorities on the basis of relative need. *It is recommended that notwithstanding the difficulties associated with using housing list information, the Department of Local Government should make available the aggregate information which it collects on the size of the housing lists and their composition by family size, in order to show the order of magnitude of the demand for local authority housing, and in order to give a broad guide to the areas of greatest need.* It is considered that the publication of this information, with the reservations about its interpretation made explicit, would serve a useful purpose, and would be an improvement on the present situation, where information on the total size and composition of the demand for local authority housing is not readily available to the general public. *It is recommended also that information on the family size and composition of those being allocated local authority dwellings be published.* This would show any disparities between different local authorities, and would show how acute the existing situation was at any given time,

e.g. if only very large families were succeeding in being allocated local authority dwellings.

Information on house costs and house prices

4.21. Information on the cost of housing is used to calculate the expenditure needed to implement any housing programme. It is also necessary in planning how such a programme should be financed—both the finance for construction and for house purchase. It is important to know the price of housing facing individual households, in order to assess how many could afford to provide or purchase their own homes, and how many would have to rely on the local authority. It is also necessary to know the range of weekly or monthly housing costs in order to assess the adequacy of incomes to meet these costs which for an individual household are fixed in the short run.

Second-hand house prices

4.22. The *Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics* gives average gross prices of new houses for which loans were approved by the principal financial institutions. A limited index of second-hand house prices was kept but this has been discontinued since 1970. *It is recommended that a series of figures for second-hand house prices should be gathered from loan application data, since new house prices describe only a part of the total housing market.* While this series would not cover second-hand houses bought outright, this would not be a particularly serious omission since the main social interest is in those who cannot afford to buy outright. Such a series would give valuable data on house prices particularly in areas where there is little or no new building.

New house prices

4.23. Data on new house prices are available from loan applications, from the official House Building Costs Index, and from the scheme for Certificates of Reasonable Value. The series of new house prices in the *Quarterly Bulletin* is published with the qualification that there may be changes in the mix of housing from quarter to quarter or from area to area which affect comparability. This problem could be overcome by collecting price data on a standard product, for example, a three bedroom centrally heated 'semi'. Since the revision of the house size provisions of the grants scheme in 1970, practically all new house

building is built in two or three standard sizes, at the upper margin of the relevant grant size-class, so that new houses are a fairly standard product. Since the main interest in private house prices is in the price facing the consumer, *it is recommended that statistics of net rather than gross house price should be kept.*

4.24. At any given time, the most variable element in the cost of different houses is the cost of the land. *It is recommended that the house price statistics should distinguish between houses where the site is provided by the purchaser and those where both house and site are bought, giving the number of houses involved in each case.*

4.25. The Department of Local Government are examining the feasibility of instituting a special inquiry of loan applicants. The questions it is hoped to include are the location, size, type and price, and whether new or second hand, of the house they are purchasing, with similar questions about the house they are leaving, and in addition whether this is owned or rented. It is also hoped to collect information on the range of income of the applicants, their occupation, age, marital status and family size. This would be an extremely valuable exercise.

Regular weekly expenditure on housing

4.26. Since the cost of housing for almost all groups except the private rented furnished sector is either related to historic cost or heavily subsidised, average current expenditure on housing is completely misleading. The cost of a modest three bedroom house may vary from 50p a week for a local authority or a rent controlled tenant to £18 a week for someone who took out a mortgage in 1975. The 1965–66 *Household Budget Inquiry* figures gave average figures of expenditure for broad groups of the population but this was too general to be of use for policy making purposes without a knowledge of the range of variation. The provision of information on the distribution of expenditure on housing, classified by the characteristics of the household—size, tenure, income, income source (e.g. social welfare payment), social group and area of residence—is badly needed. Because of the importance of such information, *it is recommended that future Household Budget Surveys should include a table showing the number of households classified by the level of weekly spending on housing.*

Housing expenditure and income maintenance policy

4.27. There is an immediate need for information on expenditure on housing in connection with the rent supplementation proposals for the new Supplementary Welfare Allowance to replace Home Assistance. It is impossible to cost this scheme or to set the level at which rents will be supplemented without knowledge of the distribution of rent levels among the target group. The subsidisation of building society interest rates (now being discontinued) and the tax relief on mortgage interest are policies which cannot be properly assessed without a knowledge of the incomes and level of spending on housing of those who benefit. Income maintenance policy generally should be formulated in the light of this most variable element of household expenditure. Unemployment benefit of £10.90 a week may be adequate for a single person living at home—it is not adequate for someone paying a typical £5 a week for a bedsitter. The Household Budget survey data could be reprocessed to give a frequency distribution of the level of housing expenditure rather than average expenditure. *Since social welfare recipients are such an important group in relation to supplementing housing expenditure, it is recommended that a sample survey of social welfare recipients be taken each year to ascertain the level of expenditure on housing.* (See paragraph 5.14.)

Housing Finance

4.28. The *Quarterly Bulletin of Housing Statistics* gives an average size of loan, income of borrowers and the gross price of new houses for the three main lending agencies: local authorities, building societies and insurance companies. Similar figures from the commercial banks will be added in respect of the new scheme of long-term house purchase loans. The income figures are not very useful as the income bands have become outdated with inflation and the vast majority of borrowers now fall into the £3,000 and over category. *It is recommended that these income figures be grouped into more meaningful income bands such that not more than a fifth of the borrowers are in the last open ended category. It is also recommended that the income bands used be revised as frequently as is needed, as general money incomes rise.*

House Deposits

4.29. The average size of deposit paid may be calculated by deducting the average loan and the State and supplementary grants (where

applicable) from the average gross price. As already stated net price is a more meaningful figure, and if statistics on net rather than gross prices were kept, there would be no need when calculating the deposit to make any adjustment for grants. It is also important to know about supplementary finance in addition to the basic mortgage. For example, in the second quarter of 1975 the average gross price of houses bought with local authority loans was £7,639; the average loan was £4,453, leaving a gap after state and local authority grants of about £2,500 to be met by borrowers with an annual income of under £2,350. These figures suggest that some sort of supplementary loan must have been taken out by a large number of these house purchasers.

4.30. Information on house deposits is of the very greatest importance. There is evidence that it is the size of the deposit required rather than the monthly repayment or the actual price which is crucial in the decision (and also the ability) to buy a house. For regulating the supply and demand for mortgage finance and the appropriate size of such long-term loans it is necessary to know the size distribution of house deposits and how these are being financed. *It is recommended that the Department of Local Government should examine the feasibility of doing a survey to get a breakdown of the size and source of house deposits as follows—personal savings; loan or gift from relatives; profit on sale of previous house; loan from finance house, bank, credit union, etc.: other sources.* It is appreciated that there are many problems attached to the collection of this information. First there is the problem of getting any additional statistical forms filled in with a sufficient degree of accuracy. Second, there is the problem of confidentiality, where many people would be naturally reluctant to disclose how their house deposit was financed if they thought it would prejudice their chance of a mortgage.

4.31. Private loan agencies providing housing finance need to have better information on the sources of their funds and their likely behaviour over time, in order to avoid where possible the sort of slowdown or stoppage of loan finance which can and does lead to recession in the building industry. They need to know to what extent the supply of funds will be sensitive to changes in the interest rate. They need to know the time structure of outstanding loans, in order to assess the effect of any

changes in the method of housing finance. They also need to know what proportion of their funds consists of deposits being accumulated for house purchase, as these funds are liable to be withdrawn and used whenever lending policy becomes easier.

4.32. It would also be useful if the societies published the number of loans and the proportion of loan finance going to first time house purchasers.

Private rented sector

4.33. Coverage of the private rented furnished sector in the Census is generally believed to be poor. The 1971 figure for this sector of 31,836 households seems to be an underestimate, particularly with official figures for conversions now running at 650 a year (and this figure is acknowledged to be cautious). This is quite serious, because it is difficult to design any policies for this sector if the numbers involved are in doubt.

Quality

4.34. Any assessment of progress in housing policy is based on measurable characteristics of the housing stock and of new housing, for example size and possession of amenities such as bathrooms or central heating. There is no way in which the quality of houses in terms of design and physical setting can be statistically measured, and the monotonous estate building of which all too much is seen looks as well in statistical terms as buildings of a similar structural quality which are well designed and create a pleasant environment. In all social services quality is difficult to measure, but it is especially difficult in housing where aesthetics and environment are so important.

Conclusion

4.35. The main priority areas in housing statistics are better information on current progress in the house building industry, the publication of local authority waiting list data, and information on the distribution of weekly or monthly spending on housing.

Chapter 5

INCOMES AND INCOME MAINTENANCE SERVICES

Income distribution

5.1. The data published to date on this topic have been extremely patchy and have been collected and published for purposes other than giving a picture of income distribution. The main sources are the *1965-66 Household Budget Inquiry* (urban household incomes); the *Farm Management Survey* reports (farm enterprise income from farming); computer returns from the Revenue Commissioners' income tax files (income of individuals above the tax threshold); and the earnings surveys in the *Census of Industrial Production* discontinued since 1968 (individual employee earnings in industry). The Department of Health's uniform national income standard for medical cards means that national and regional figures of the numbers below this standard are available, but the degree to which people's incomes are below is not known. None of these data sources cover the whole population, and as this was not their main purpose, they do not satisfactorily show the distribution of income.*

Household Budget Survey

5.2. The results of the 1975 Household Budget Survey should be available in computer print-out form early in 1976. Computer programmes have been specially designed to allow the production of special cross-classifications of results not intended for publication. Previous inquiries covered urban households only; the 1973 survey extended over the whole country. A small-scale continuing Household Budget Survey was also initiated in 1974 and will continue until the next large-scale national survey is undertaken. These small-scale annual surveys would not give detailed reliable figures of income distribution, but may allow the material from the large-scale inquiries to be up-dated.

*cf. *Income Distribution: A Preliminary Report*, NESC No. 11.

A special analysis of the data collected in the 1973 survey is being conducted by the CSO to show the redistribution effects on income of taxation and social welfare benefits along the lines of studies done in the UK.* The results of this analysis should become available late in 1976.

Revenue Commissioners' data

5.3. The Revenue Commissioners' data on income distribution are of little use at present because of the restricted coverage. The figures cover those taxpayers who are on the computer files, and these do not constitute a random sample. It is not known exactly how many taxpayers are in each subgroup covered—Schedule D earned, Schedule E, etc.—so that figures for the different groups cannot be grossed up and added together reliably. Information is almost completely lacking on people with low incomes, who should be the prime object of social concern, since their incomes are below the tax threshold and they do not appear systematically on the Revenue files. In addition to low earners generally, farmers and social welfare recipients are virtually excluded from the Revenue records. There is the problem of distinguishing low earners from people such as school leavers who were only in the labour force for part of the year, and whose earnings in the tax year would be low. A cross check of the 1971–72 Revenue data against the Census of Population showed a significantly different sex and marital status distribution to that among the working population as a whole, and showed a serious gap in the coverage of income earners with children.

5.4. The Revenue data are of great potential value because the basic unit is the individual and his dependants which is the most common unit used in social administration, and because the income data for individuals are generally more accurate than those gathered through survey research. It is worthwhile taking trouble to exploit this data source to the full.

Working Party on Income Distribution Statistics

5.5. *It is recommended that a working party with representatives of the Revenue Commissioners, the CSO and the Departments of Finance,*

*cf. Nicholson, J. L., "The Distribution and Redistribution of Income in the UK" in D. Wedderburn (ed.) *Poverty, Inequality and Class Structure*, Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Health and Social Welfare and users of these statistics should be established to examine the question of income distribution statistics. To avoid the establishment of this group being an excuse for further delay, it is recommended that a time limit of six months be placed on its deliberations. It is further recommended that in the first instance this working party should be charged with designing a new set of tables to be extracted from Revenue data. These new tables should cover those below the income tax threshold as well as those above, and a more detailed family status breakdown going up as far as families with ten or more children is needed. Basic cross classifications would be by occupation, industry group, employment status and region. This working party should examine the gaps in information on farm incomes which would still remain and which might be filled partly from the 1973 *Household Budget Survey* which covered farm families for the first time, and partly by data coming from the new farm account keeping under EEC regulations. The gap in knowledge about the income of social welfare recipients could be filled by the special inquiry proposed in paragraph 5.14 below.

Equivalence scales

5.6. In other countries, attempts have been made to calculate the cost of maintaining families of different size and composition in terms of a unit, the single adult. Such comparisons are not precise, as they depend on tastes and preferences, and value judgements about what are necessities for each type of family. These scales are not fixed but change over time—for example, a shift in the price of prams, other things being equal, will only affect costs for families with small children. Given all these qualifications, it would, nevertheless, be a useful exercise to attempt to calculate equivalence scales for Ireland, based on Irish consumption patterns. Various methods of constructing equivalence scales have been devised.* One way to go about this might be to assume that families who have a similar standard of living in one area of consumption such as food or housing have a similar standard of living overall, and to work out weights based on the total expenditure of these families of different size and composition. Such a scale would be useful in evaluating and planning the wide range of

*cf. S. J. Prais, "The Estimation of equivalent adult scales from family budgets". *Economic Journal*, Volume 63, 1953.

social services where eligibility or rate of benefit is differentiated by family status. It would also serve as a guide for looking at income distribution tables covering families of different composition. *It is recommended that an exercise to derive an equivalence scale be carried out on the 1973 Household Budget Survey data, and that this scale be subsequently up-dated each quarter by reference to changes in prices, and in taxes.*

Different prices facing different households

5.7. When the income of two individuals is compared, it is usually assumed that income will buy the same amount of goods and services for each. This is not generally the case. There are different price levels prevailing in different parts of the country, and in small shops and out-of-town supermarkets. Transport costs for the basic journey to work differ. But probably the main cause of variation in the standard of living enjoyed on a given income is the level of expenditure on housing. Because spending on housing is largely related to historic cost, unadjusted for inflation, except in the private furnished or non-controlled rented sector, the cost of an ordinary three bedroomed house may vary from 50p a week for a rent controlled tenant to £18 a week for a new purchaser or tenant. It is essential, therefore, to have a distribution of rent/housing payments, comprehensively cross classified. It would be useful to process the Household Budget figures into bands of household income, net of expenditure on housing.

Income maintenance services

5.8. Fairly detailed statistics of the operation of the Department of Social Welfare's income maintenance services are contained in the report of the Department which is published about every four years, and the next issue of which can be expected sometime during 1976. This report gives details of expenditure on each scheme, the number of recipients, and their family status. Further details and more frequent and up-to-date information are available from the Department on request. When drawing up a new scheme or modifying an existing one, the Department does special surveys through its records. For example, two surveys of home assistance recipients were carried out by a special questionnaire to public assistance personnel in connection with the new scheme of Supplementary Welfare Allowances. The Department of

Health have statistics on the schemes they administer of Disabled Person's Maintenance Allowance and Infectious Diseases Maintenance Allowance. *This information should be published at quarterly rather than four yearly intervals in a Departmental bulletin.*

Total income of social welfare recipients

5.9. The Department of Social Welfare collects some information on the means of recipients of non-contributory benefits. With means under £6 per week now disregarded for most benefits, this information is a lot less detailed than when little or no means allowance existed, and no breakdown of means between £0 and £6 is now available. No statistics are collected on the additional incomes of recipients of contributory benefits including such income in kind as the value of board and lodging. This information is naturally not needed in the case of individual recipients as title to benefit is based on the insurance record, not on a means test. However, information on the incomes of recipients of insurance benefits as a group would be very useful for making policy in relation to rates of benefit, in seeing whether insurance benefits function largely as a supplement to other income, or as the main income source. This gap in information will become more serious as the numbers receiving insurance benefits increases with the extension of the coverage of the social insurance system. *It is recommended that the necessary information should be collected in the special survey of social welfare recipients proposed in paragraph 5.14 below.*

Age distribution of social welfare recipients

5.10. Information on the age structure of social welfare recipients is not generally collected, except in the case of unemployment benefit and assistance. This information would be of value in relating changes in social welfare expenditure to changes in the population structure. It would also be useful in examining the breakdown between insurance and assistance recipients among people in a particular category, e.g., widows, and in forecasting how this balance may change over time. The age structure of the recipients of a service is also important in deciding what kind of a service is needed and in examining the type of problems the people have—for example the problems of a young widow with children will be very different from those of a widow of eighty.

Take-up of benefits

5.11. It is generally believed that the take-up of home assistance is poor, and that of other benefits good, but no figures are available. The Welfare Rights project which is to be conducted by the National Committee on Pilot Schemes to Combat Poverty (the Poverty Committee) should show the extent to which this is a problem. In designing such a project there is a problem in that the Department of Social Welfare cannot usually make available the numbers receiving specified benefits in a given area. Thus, it is difficult to measure the effectiveness of such a project by reference to the situation which had existed previously.

Standard of living on benefits

5.12. The adequacy of social welfare benefits and pensions should be assessed regularly by calculating what goods and services the pension can buy, and by surveying what goods and services are actually bought. This survey would show what the problems of living on a pension are, and whether they are best met by diet education, by rent supplementation, or by increasing the pension. The present Government policy of maintaining the real value of social welfare benefits and calculating increases in benefits on an across-the-board percentage increase involves no fundamental assessment of the basic adequacy of the benefits. Progress is at present assessed by the increase in the level of expenditure on social welfare, not on whether the benefits provide adequately for the recipients.

Poverty Line

5.13. Related to the adequacy of benefits is the question of drawing a poverty line. Apart from Rowntree's studies of York* at the beginning of the century, the main work done has been in the US where an official poverty line exists but it is fairly crudely calculated as three times the cost of a standard food budget. Abel-Smith's and Townsend's† work in Britain on counting the poor has used the Supplementary Benefits scale as a poverty line. It is rather circular for a Government body to define a poverty line as being the rate of benefit it provides where these rates are fairly arbitrarily set. The possibilities of drawing up a scientific income

*B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty, A Study of Town Life*, Macmillan 1903.

†Abel-Smith, B. and Townsend, P., *The Poor and the Poorest*, Bell, 1965.

line which forms the borderline of poverty must be treated with some scepticism—there are too many variations in costs and spending patterns, and too many variations in subjective views of what is necessary and what is not in a minimum budget. It is, however, worthwhile to examine the actual budgets of some typical welfare recipients, and to calculate how the cost of these budgets changes over time. It is also worth examining the income distribution statistics to see how many people are living below the income they would receive if they were receiving a social welfare benefit—this would give an indication of the level of poverty among the working population.

Proposed survey

5.14. *It is recommended that a sample of social welfare recipients be carried out each year to show*

- (i) *age, sex, family status, occupation or previous occupation, social group and region;*
- (ii) *type of benefit;*
- (iii) *length of time in receipt of benefit;*
- (iv) *income from other sources;*
- (v) *previous earnings;*
- (vi) *expenditure on various commodity groups:—food, rent, clothing, fuel and light, transport, household durable goods, household non-durable goods and miscellaneous.*

The Department of Social Welfare might examine the feasibility of making this a panel study, with the same people sampled each year. This would show how the circumstances of individuals would change in line with changes in social welfare policy.

Private Social Security Provision

5.15. Very little information is available on private social security provision such as occupational pensions and sick pay. Some information on pensions to employees is collected in the Census of Industrial Production, and some, (but more limited), information has been collected in connection with drawing up proposals for a national

income-related pension scheme, but there remains a large area of guesswork. It is not known how many people are receiving occupational pensions, what size these pensions are, what are the provisions for post-retirement inflation, and whether provision is made for the pensioner's widow. Likewise, no information is available on the number of the working population covered by occupational pensions schemes and what benefits are provided. The importance of collecting information—and the kind of data required—on occupational pensions in the future will depend to some extent on the significance of these in the light of the forthcoming proposals for the income-related pension scheme, and so no detailed recommendation is made here. There is a similar lack of information on occupational sick pay. *Consideration should be given to ways in which more details of the nature and scope of occupational sick pay schemes can be collected.* The co-operation of employers and trade unions in providing information about different sectors of the economy may be the easiest way of collecting such data.

Regional social statistics

5.16. While the Department of Social Welfare was able to provide a breakdown of its expenditure on a county by county basis in connection with county income estimation,* it cannot now provide a breakdown of recipients of different benefits by county. This is basic background data for any community based research. This gap is met to a limited extent in the Eastern Health Board area, where the number of recipients of old age pensions in geographical areas as small as parishes are on computer file from medical card records. The proposed survey of social welfare recipients would give a general idea of the geographical spread. *For specific detailed information on particular counties, or other units of area, it is recommended that the Department of Social Welfare should collect this as the need arises in response to research inquiries, making a charge for the cost in time as necessary.*

Conclusion

5.17. The existing statistics on income distribution have all been produced as a by product of something else. A working party is needed to examine the need for specific tables on income distribution from the

*Miceal Ross, *The methodology of county income estimation*, ESRI Paper No. 63, 1971.

point of view of the user of these figures, and to ensure that the need for these figures is built into the design of the relevant inquiries. As a first task, it should examine the question of more useful returns from the Revenue data. On the income maintenance side, the main priority should be the recommended survey which would provide valuable information on the needs of the client population of the Department of Social Welfare and how these needs are being met.

Chapter 6

HEALTH

6.1. The main published sources of statistics on health matters are the *Report on Vital Statistics* and the *Report of the General Medical Services Payments Board*. The vast bulk of the statistical information available in relation to health and the health services is not published systematically at present. Work is currently in progress on establishing a comprehensive management information system in the Department of Health and the various health boards, and an extremely comprehensive and detailed set of records exist or are now being compiled on all aspects of their activities. These include monthly returns on each item of costs and expenditure in great detail; details of visits and prescriptions for the General Medical Services; number of patients; duration of hospital stay and average cost per patient in different hospitals; details of attendances at out-patient clinics and of waiting lists; numbers availing of special services such as blind welfare or maternity services; and details about the medical card population. The VHI also keeps reasonably good records of its members, and the cost and duration of their hospital treatment. The Hospital In-Patient Inquiry which is presently being undertaken by the Medico-Social Research Board and which, it is hoped, will eventually cover all hospitals, is collecting information on the characteristics of hospital in-patients, and the diagnoses. Since the statistical systems in use have been so recently revised by those involved in order to provide better management information, there are few really major gaps in the statistics.

6.2. What is actually published at present from the vast wealth of information is very meagre. The Department of Health hope to publish in 1976 statistical tables on the lines of the report *Statistical Information on the Health Services* circulated to Dáil deputies in connection with

the 1975 estimates. The health boards likewise generally prepare some statistical information annually in connection with their estimates. *This should be published annually in a report*. A simple stencilled report would be sufficient. In most cases this would involve simply running off another couple of hundred copies of a report which has already been prepared, so that the extra cost and trouble involved in this recommendation should not be great.

Limited eligibility for medical services

6.3. The total number of people with limited eligibility for health services is not known. Estimates range from 70% to 90% of the population having either limited or full eligibility, that is between 35% and 55% of the population have limited eligibility only. The main reason for this very wide range of estimates and the lack of precise knowledge arises from the very confused situation about the criteria for limited eligibility following the abolition of the income limit for social insurance for non-manual workers in April 1974, and the postponement of plans for a free-for-all hospital service.* The numbers paying health contributions do not give an adequate guide to the numbers with limited eligibility since in the present confusion, some people are paying health contributions who should not be doing so, and conversely, some people are not paying the contribution when in fact they are entitled to do so. Furthermore, the number of dependants of those paying contributions is not known. Calculating the number of dependants would not be a problem if the classification of households by number of dependent children, as suggested in Chapter 2, was available. The statistical problem of counting the numbers qualifying for limited eligibility services must depend on a rationalisation of eligibility conditions for its solution.

Chronically ill and disabled

6.4. Statistics on the numbers of chronically ill, disabled, or handicapped, are patchy. The numbers of blind people or mentally handicapped can be assessed fairly readily from the numbers availing of the services provided for these groups, and a recent census has been taken, for example, of mentally handicapped children. Voluntary

*cf. Jim Murray, Director, National Social Service Council, "Complexities, anomalies, and inequities of health services", *Irish Times*, 11/11/1975.

organisations concerned with specific groups of handicapped, such as multiple sclerosis sufferers, can usually provide an estimate of the numbers in their group. However, no national totals exist of the numbers of handicapped, nor of the numbers whose mobility is impaired to differing degrees. The numbers receiving an Invalidity Pension give some estimate of the numbers of the chronically sick among the insured population, but the figures for recipients of Disabled Person's Maintenance Allowance are no real guide to numbers of disabled since many of the recipients are not disabled, but simply do not qualify for any other sickness or other benefit.

6.5. It would be useful to know the number of people with different kinds of handicap, classified by age and by sex, since a comparison with figures for other countries could show us to what extent the incidence of these handicaps might be reduced. The different categories of disabled and handicapped have many needs in common, such as sheltered employment, transport needs, and help towards special diets, medicines or equipment. In designing new schemes to meet these needs, it helps to have figures of the total numbers involved.

6.6. The above are the main gaps in statistics on the health services. The gaps discussed below are considered of lesser priority.

Morbidity

6.7. While the hospital in-patient inquiry is building up information on hospitalised illness, we know very little about illness which is not hospitalised. The Department of Social Welfare can provide a breakdown of their disability benefit claims by duration but not generally by age of recipient or by type of illness. This type of data has been interestingly analysed by Dr. Deeny.* Since these records are now computerised, it should be possible to use them to obtain a better picture of illness among the working population. The General Medical Services records do not cover type of illness. This would probably be difficult to get and there would be a lot of extra work in recording the precise diagnoses needed for statistical records, since such detailed diagnoses are not usually necessary in normal general practice. A better knowledge

*Deeny, James: *The Irish Worker*; Institute of Public Administration, 1971.

of the general pattern of illness in the population and of the way it is changing could help in the control of costs in the health services and could highlight areas where spending on preventive medicine would yield results. It is felt, however, that the collection of a great deal of data on non-hospitalised illness would be very cumbersome and would not add significantly to management control. It would, of course, be useful for medical research but that is not the primary concern of this report.

6.8. The success of health care programmes must ultimately be measured by the general level of health of the population. At present, this is measured by such statistics as life expectancy or infant mortality, which refer to fatalities but not to non-fatal illness or "positive" health. However, since these measures are highly correlated with the general level of health of the population, the need to obtain independent information on this does not seem a pressing reason for collecting more data on the general incidence of illness.

Private medical care

6.9. A great deal less is known about the medical treatment which is provided and financed privately than about that financed by the public sector. More information is needed for policy decisions concerned with extending the cover of the health services. To assess whether the present system involves hardship for those without full cover, it is necessary to know the distribution of expenditure on private medical care. This could be obtained by reprocessing the information collected in the Household Budget Inquiry, which at present only shows average expenditure for different groups. To measure the cost of any extension of the health services, it is necessary to know how the ineligible population may differ from the eligible population in such matters as doctor visiting rate, age or level of health.

6.10. The overall conclusion must be that health statistics are reasonably adequate and generally accessible. The main priorities are the improvement of statistics on the limited eligibility health scheme and on the chronically ill and disabled.

Chapter 7

MANPOWER AND UNEMPLOYMENT

7.1. The main published sources of information are the Census of Population, the quarterly industrial inquiry and the Census of Industrial Production, the monthly employment survey of the private building industry, the annual census of males engaged in agriculture, the weekly Live Register figures, and the monthly and quarterly analyses by region, occupation and duration and the Trend of Employment and Unemployment. The IDA carries out an annual survey of employment in manufacturing industry which is not published. Further information will come from the EEC Labour Force survey carried out in 1975 by the CSO, which covers 35,000 households, with detailed questions on employment (main and subsidiary, and part-time work), availability for work, and job seeking. It is hoped to repeat this survey at two-yearly intervals.

7.2. The Committee on Statistical Priorities has already examined the question of manpower statistics. The Department of Labour has now published a Manpower Information Unit, and there is an interdepartmental committee examining unemployment statistics in detail. Since problems are being examined by the bodies more directly involved, comments will not be completely comprehensive, and will be brief.

Unemployment and labour force

The data available at present are the census data, up-dated by the figures shown in the quarterly industrial inquiry and elsewhere, to give a picture of the labour force in the different sectors of economic activity. For social planning more detail is required, particularly on age, sex and marital status. These data will be available at two-yearly intervals from the Labour Force survey; in the

intervening year, data on age and sex could be got for employees from a sample of insurance cards. The lack of data on age and sex for the labour force makes it difficult to infer whether changes in the labour force are due to changes in participation rates or in migration behaviour.

Employment in Services

7.4. While quarterly data on employment in manufacturing industry is collected in the Census of Industrial Production, corresponding quarterly data are not collected for the services sector. There would seem to be no great problems involved in collecting this information at least for the public service, broadly defined, and agencies such as banks and insurance companies.

Female Unemployment

7.5. Women have been under-represented in the Live Register Statistics because of their very limited entitlement to unemployment assistance. The new scheme of Supplementary Welfare Allowances being introduced to replace home assistance will entitle women whose means warrant it to receive benefit at a rate equivalent to rural unemployment assistance. This will, in effect, entitle all women to unemployment assistance although they will receive it under a different heading. Those who qualify for this benefit may in fact be required to register for employment. If women who are unemployed and who apply for the new benefit were allowed unemployment assistance instead, there would be no cost to public authorities as a whole, although under existing financing arrangements it would mean a transfer of the cost from the local authority to the Exchequer.

Prime Unemployment Rate

7.6. The Live Register cannot be regarded as a very accurate guide to the unemployment rate. While it includes those receiving certain benefits, it excludes some unemployed people who are not entitled to benefit or assistance, and at the same time includes others who, while entitled to benefit, are not strictly speaking available for work. The total employment figures are affected by variations in the numbers in this last group which have nothing to do with the unemployment situation. An instance of this is the steady decline in the number of persons over 65 on the register due to the introduction of retirement pensions and the lowering

of the qualifying age for the old age pension. *In order to establish underlying trends in unemployment, it is recommended that in addition to the existing method of calculating the unemployment rate a prime unemployment rate be calculated, giving the rate of unemployment among male non-agricultural workers* aged between 18 and 65, as a percentage of total employee labour force in this category. It is recommended that this rate be published together with the weekly unemployment figures.* This group is already distinguished in the weekly Live Register list; to complete the calculation it would be necessary to get the numbers of this group in the insured population. This could be done once a year in the sample of insurance cards which was suggested in paragraph 7.2 above.

Age Distribution of Unemployed

7.7. Each September an analysis is carried out of unemployed men resident in the principal towns, by age and duration of employment in the previous year. *It is recommended that this analysis should be extended to cover all registered unemployed in all areas.* This could roughly treble the workload, but since the usefulness of the inquiry as it stands is very limited, it would be well worth while. Most of the extra work would fall on those employment exchanges whose claimants come from both urban and rural areas, but who only analyse their urban claimants at present. If the urban exchanges can analyse all their claimants at present, the extra burden should be manageable for the rural exchanges. This information on age and duration of unemployment would obviously be available classified by area, and would be invaluable as a guide to the type of employment policies appropriate to each area, different approaches being needed in areas where unemployment was recent and concentrated among the young, and in areas where the unemployed were mainly older people who had been unemployed for a long time.

Movements into and out of Live Register

7.8. At present, the net movements in and out of the Live Register are known but not the gross flows of which these are the result. While some

*This group is distinguished as "others" in the Unemployment Benefit Category in the weekly Live Register Statistics.

inferences can be made from the quarterly data on duration of continuous registration, more frequent data on gross flows would be useful in interpreting what lies behind short run trends in unemployment.

Job Losses

7.9. No satisfactory series is available on job losses. The job loss data prepared by the IDA bear no relationship to the redundancy figures. It is important to have job loss data for all sectors of the economy. It would also be important to distinguish in publishing such figures between job losses in grant-aided industry and those in other industry.

Presentation of seasonal variation

7.10. Because unemployment is subject to strong seasonal variation, the crude weekly unemployment figure is not very meaningful on its own as an indicator of the underlying level and trend of unemployment. Public comment tends to focus on the actual numbers out of work and the change from the previous week. Seasonally adjusted figures are published in the Trend of Employment and Unemployment, but this is published too infrequently to affect the general level of comment on unemployment statistics. It is understood that the CSO propose to publish seasonally adjusted unemployment figures more frequently. *It is recommended that a seasonally adjusted figure should be published with the weekly unemployment statistics.*

Conclusion

7.11. Despite the amount of material already published, there are still some serious deficiencies in labour force and unemployment statistics. There may well be a case for trading off the frequency of publication of weekly unemployment statistics against the collection of a broader range of manpower statistics.

Chapter 8

EDUCATION

8.1. The main source of information on current educational activity is the Department of Education's Statistical Tables, which are published every two years or so. The census volume on education examines the level of education received by the population as a whole. Further statistical information has been published in connection with special studies of education policy such as *Investment in Education* and the *Intermediate Certificate Examination Report*.

8.2. In recent years, the intervals between the publication of reports from the Department of Education have become longer, and consequently the data are more out-of-date when they become available. This creates problems for those concerned with such data. *It is therefore recommended that the Department of Education return to an annual statistical publication, if necessary using a more informal format to speed publication.* It is felt that a delay of one year should be the absolute maximum for such a report.

8.3. The Department of Education has a long established Statistics Branch headed at a senior level. Most of the basic statistical framework has been established, and the Department is aware of the gaps and deficiencies for its own internal purposes. The major need in this basic framework is for better statistics on student flow. Statistics of net flow are collected but these are not adequate as indications of gross flows at certain critical ages, as there are significant gross flows in both directions at these ages. It is hoped to obtain better information on student flows by collecting information on the sector of origin of new entrants to educational institutions.

8.4. It is difficult to separate data on second level and third level education because the regional technical colleges and the Dublin Colleges of Technology cover both levels and it is a complicated job disentangling figures related to one sector only.

8.5. Statistics on class size are published for primary schools but not for second level schools. The primary school figures show a distribution of class sizes up to classes with 45 or more pupils, but as this group formed a fifth of all classes in 1971, it would be useful to have it further broken down. It would be useful to publish what information there is on class size by standard (e.g. first class, second class), since overcrowding is probably more serious at earlier ages. A regional breakdown of class sizes is available, and *this should appear in the published tables.*

8.6. No information is at present collected on the use of teacher time at second level, and it is hoped to start soon with a study for vocational schools. Since teacher costs dominate total education costs, it is obviously important to know how teacher resources are being used. This information would be useful in deciding on guidelines for pupil teacher ratios at second level.

8.7. No information is gathered on private nursery schools catering for children under the age of six, and these are not subject to Government regulation or control. Since it appears that a growing number of children are attending these schools, partly in response to large primary school classes, it would be useful to collect information on standards and numbers attending. It is necessary to know the numbers attending these schools to complete the picture of educational participation in the relevant age groups. The Department of Education tend to divide primary education into pre-compulsory and compulsory groups (as for example in the programme budget), and this distinction tends to play down the pre-compulsory sector in the collection of information. This distinction is outmoded when based on a compulsory schooling age as high as six years. In view of the importance attached to learning in the early years, the collection of more information about the position of this age group should be given some priority.

8.8. First and second level education are intended to be free, but the method of financing primary and secondary schools by capitation grants, and the problems of financing school building, mean that there is often a gap between the actual cost of providing free education and the State contribution. This is usually met by "voluntary" parental contributions. In order to measure the success in achieving the aim of free education, it is necessary to know how widespread this practice is, the range of contribution for which parents are asked, and the cost of eliminating it.

8.9. The need for statistics on third level education has been examined by an advisory group of the Higher Education Authority,* and a set of annual statistical returns has been designed. An important need which these returns will meet is to provide information on the costs of different courses of study, which will show up the degree of cross-subsidisation within third level institutions.

8.10. Total demand for school places can be forecast from Census figures and population projections, supplemented by information on births. A problem here is that the CSO present a range of population projections to Government Departments, and no one projection is agreed as the best one on which to base planning decisions. School facilities may therefore be planned on one set and the provision of dwellings on another. Agreement on a common set of assumptions is a basic requirement for planning.

8.11. It is not easy to forecast the need for school places in individual areas, particularly in rapidly growing suburbs. The Census units are too large for use in forecasting the need for primary schools to be sited within walking distance of the families they serve. Second level school places can be forecast from statistics of numbers in primary schools. But for forecasting the demand for primary schooling there seems to be no alternative to local surveys of families to ascertain the number of pre-school children. These surveys could be done cheaply with the co-operation of existing school managers and local tenants' and residents' groups, and if early details could be submitted by local authorities

*Higher Education Authority, *Progress Report 1974*, Chapter 3.

of the size of families being allocated tenancies in their new estates. In many cases this type of survey is already being organised.

8.12. While the Census shows a clear link between present socio-economic status and level of education received, statistics are not collected by socio-economic group for those currently in the educational system. It is widely known that here as in other countries educational participation is much lower for working class than for middle class children, but there are no firm figures. If social policy is concerned with the dimension of inequality, and with equality of opportunity in particular, it is very important to measure the extent of unequal schooling for different social classes, and to see whether it is improving or disimproving over time. This is one of the areas frequently encountered in dealing with social policy where the existence of a problem is easy to see, but where widespread public acceptance of this and concern that the position be changed depends on the position being highlighted and quantified in statistical terms.

8.13. While statistics are reasonably adequate on the quantity of education provided—numbers of schools, pupils and teachers—there is no proper measurement of the quality of the education provided. Detailed figures are published on the results of the certificate examinations, but one only has to read the Department's own report on the Intermediate Certificate to be very sceptical about these results as a measure of the absolute level of educational achievement or as a measure of the quality of the educational system. Qualities of the educational system such as its success in broadening its pupils' minds, and developing their potential, are notoriously difficult to measure, and are not a subject for routine statistical measurement. A basic test of the success of the schools in reaching fundamental academic objectives is to measure the level of literacy. This is not too basic to be a reliable indicator; an unpublished study by Professor Desmond Swan of UCD suggests that 30% of entrants to vocational schools had severe reading difficulties. It might be argued that measuring literacy is more research than statistics. However, standard reading tests which classify people by reading age could be administered by teachers, and the results would be suitable for aggregation to give, say, the number of fifteen year olds with a reading age of ten or under. *Statistics on literacy should be*

collected once a year, they should cover at a minimum fifteen year olds, at the minimum school leaving age, and ten year olds, towards the end of primary schooling. Over the years it would be possible to see if any improvement in reading ability had been effected between ten and fifteen for a particular cohort. *These statistics should be classified by area, by socio-economic group, by class size and by whether the pupil is receiving remedial teaching.* These statistics would be useful in assessing the immediate need for remedial teaching and in taking a longer look at the kind of teaching available, and whether it is reaching all social groups, or imparting basic skills for living in the modern world.

8.14. To deal with the gaps in statistics discussed in this section it will be necessary for schools to provide more data to the Department. At present the response to existing statistical inquiries is unsatisfactory, and delays by a small number of schools can hold up the analysis. It is vitally necessary for schools to fill in the statistical forms carefully and accurately, and to return them on time. Indeed, this is a minimum obligation for institutions which are largely financed by public money. If the schools are interested in seeing better educational planning, they must supply the data on which any such planning must be based.

8.15. The main priorities in education information are: data on student flows; the gathering and classification of statistics by socio-economic group of pupils; an annual survey of literacy; and a speeding-up of the collection and publication of the data already available.

Chapter 9

PERSONAL SOCIAL SERVICES

9.1. Statistics are hard to come by in this area since by their nature personal social services do not involve the type of administrative procedures which are the source of so many other social statistics. The important role of voluntary organisations makes it more difficult to gather statistics than in the case of services which are organised on a wholly statutory basis. There are also important problems of agreeing on definitions which must precede the collection of information in a statistical form. The main sources of statistics on the provision of services are the unpublished statistics of the health boards, which show the number of social workers and other personal social service personnel employed, and the expenditure on different services such as the home help service. Statistics on the problems which the personal social services are trying to meet are available in cases where these problems are encountered by other statutory services—for example, statistics on deserted wives can be obtained from the relevant income maintenance services of the Department of Social Welfare; statistics on young offenders can be obtained from court records or the reports of the Garda Commissioner.

Agreement on definitions

9.2. As a prelude to uniform record keeping which would allow aggregate statistical data to be compiled, it is necessary to agree on problem categories. *It is recommended that the Department of Health should organise a conference or a working party to draw up agreed categories, in conjunction with the Irish Association of Social Workers, and relevant Health Board staff.*

The need for data

9.3. Data are needed on individuals and families who have problems or who are at risk. It is necessary to know the numbers with each separate type of problem. This enables services to be planned to meet the needs shown. If no statistics are available, the extent of the need for a service and the need to tackle the underlying causes of a problem may not be sufficiently appreciated. In planning the location and costing of these services, it is necessary to know national and regional totals of potential clients for a service. Clearly, it is not sufficient to know how many people are experiencing a particular type of problem. It is also necessary to get an insight into the causes of these problems, whether they are related to personal factors such as age or family history, or to social factors such as social group. It is necessary to know the intensity of the problem, and the numbers of other family members affected by a problem being experienced directly by one of them. Given the present state of knowledge in this area, it is felt that this type of information is best collected by in-depth research into individual problem areas rather than by setting up a system to provide regular statistical data. The first priority must be to establish a regular flow of information on numbers.

Use of personal social service records

9.4. Social workers, and public health nurses encounter and deal with a great range of personal and family problems. Naturally there will be some families with problems whom they will not encounter, and services will be more complete with some groups, e.g. the aged, than with others. Nevertheless, the records kept by these workers will provide a valuable minimum estimate of the incidence of the problems with which they are trying to deal. At present these records are not kept in a standard format which would allow regional and national figures to be compiled, partly because of the problems of definition mentioned above.

9.5. *It is recommended that each such worker should make a return to the Regional Health Board each quarter giving details of the number of new cases in predetermined categories which had arisen.* This would build up over time into a record of the number of families with different types of problem in each region. Because of the overlap in clients

between social workers from specialised bodies (such as those working with the handicapped) and community based social workers, the possible problems as a result of double counting would have to be worked out. It is envisaged that these statistics would be published by the Department of Health.

9.6. In addition to the records of their professional social workers, the activities of voluntary bodies which rely on voluntary help could also be a valuable source of information on social problems. However, even more so than with records of statutory or professional social workers, such data must be viewed as presenting a minimum estimate of the incidence of the problems dealt with, since few organisations relying on voluntary effort could hope to provide a comprehensive service, and since some people may be reluctant to avail of the help provided by these organisations. An example of the kind of information which they can provide is the number of cases of broken marriages encountered by the Free Legal Advice Centres; this provides a minimum estimate of the incidence of marriage breakdown in the areas in which they operate.

Voluntary organisations

9.7. There are no central records of the activities of voluntary organisations and social service councils. Record keeping by individual organisations is often haphazard, since with a limited number of voluntary workers and even fewer professional workers resources are not devoted to this. Since the objectives of these organisations can change in response to the situations they deal with, there is no completely comprehensive list of the number of voluntary organisations active in each problem area. The sort of information which is needed on the voluntary organisations includes: number of volunteers (preferably classified by the amount of time spent to enable adjustments to be made to "full-time equivalents"), income, including grants from public sources; the distribution of expenditure; and some classification of the client groups dealt with. It is a major task to organise voluntary organisations to prepare and submit this kind of information on a regular basis. The Poverty Committee are beginning research into voluntary organisations, and the knowledge gained in the course of this study on the records at present being kept by these bodies should be used to design an

annual return from them on their activities. Such return should be submitted to the National Social Service Council—the co-ordinating body for these organisations.

9.8. A further data problem in this area is that the numbers in some problem categories are relatively small and they do not show up in sufficient numbers in surveys of the general population to enable any valid statistical inferences to be made. There have been difficulties about getting a suitable sampling frame to study such groups because of a reluctance to give names even to *bona fide* research workers.*

Areas where data is needed

9.9. The following are the major situations on which data are needed: family breakdown; lone-parent families; alcoholism; emotionally disturbed and delinquent children; itinerant families; families on very low incomes or those who are unable to cope financially. The area of family breakdown has come increasingly to the fore in recent years. One way of getting information on this would be to include a marital status category "separated" in the Census of Population in addition to the present categories of single, married and widowed.

9.10. Better statistics are needed on the number of children born outside marriage, as it is not clear whether the rise in such births is due to a basic increase, or to an increasing tendency for girls to have their babies here rather than in Britain. The easiest way to get this information would seem to be a survey of general practitioners. It would be desirable to have information on the number of marriages precipitated by pregnancy, since there is some evidence that a high proportion of these marriages break down. The present form of birth registration has a question on the year but not the date of marriage, so that without changing the form, it would not be possible to get figures of the numbers of births within eight months of marriage. However, reasonable estimates could be made if the *Quarterly Report on Births, Marriages and Deaths* gave quarterly statistics of the number of births by year of marriage.

*cf. Kathleen O'Higgins, *Marital Desertion in Dublin*, ESRI Broadsheet No. 9.

9.11. The Task Force on Child Care has been examining information on children at risk, and has conducted a survey among social workers of new cases with which they dealt in a three month period. No complete figures are available on the number of children in residential care, since there is no registration requirement for private institutions providing such care. Statistics on juvenile delinquency are inadequate, and are not classified to show what is widely known, namely that these children are overwhelmingly drawn from a small number of severely disadvantaged areas such as the inner city. No control is exercised and no statistics are collected on the growing area of child-minding, and it is not known whether or to what extent the increase in this practice may be leading to problem children later on. It is very important to have good information on child deprivation, since it may not be too late to take preventive measures if the problems are known and understood.

9.12. At present statistical information is collected from the point of view of the administrator of a particular service, and not from the point of view of the client. Thus there are separate figures of the numbers who need housing, the numbers of children who are educationally backward, etc. What does not emerge from these figures is the extent to which the disadvantaged in each policy area tend to be the same people. The Poverty Committee is attempting to carry out research into multi-faceted poverty. This is really more a matter for research than statistics. On the statistical side, the presentation of data on different services, classified where possible by area and social group, would show where deficiencies in the service or areas of need were concentrated for different services in the same social groups or geographical areas.

9.13. In addition to the need for cross-section studies of the different kinds of inequality and deprivation experienced by particular groups at a given point in time, there is a need to examine whether the same people remain disadvantaged over time. The National Child Development Study in Britain took a group of all the children born in a particular week, and traced their situation over time. It would be interesting to do a similar study here, to discover the extent to which the objectives of equality of opportunity are being realised in practice.

9.14. A very important potential source of information is the national programme for the developmental testing of children. This programme which is run by the Health Boards is aimed at testing all children at around six months and again at two years for physical and mental development. The forms which the doctors complete are very detailed and include information on the father's occupation which would allow classification of the results by social group. These forms could be processed to provide information on the incidence of various physical and mental handicaps in the children of different social classes, geographical areas, family sizes, etc., and they could be used as the basis for follow-up studies similar to the National Child Development Study in Britain. *It is recommended that the possibility of computerising these records and using them as a basis for studying the progress of a particular generation should be investigated.*

9.15. The main priorities are considered to be the introduction of regular returns from personal social service workers on the number of new cases they meet in different defined categories, and the collection of data on all children in care. A great deal of basic research going further than the collection of primary statistics is also needed.

Chapter 10

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1. The foregoing chapters of this report show the main gaps which exist in the body of social statistics. A general order of priority is indicated at the end of each chapter. The Council would not wish this to mean that non-priority suggestions should be ignored, particularly where these involve only minor changes in present practice.

10.2. The main problems which have been identified—lack of data, lack of access to unpublished data, delays in publication, and a fairly scattered and uncatalogued body of unpublished material—are symptomatic of the relatively low priority which social statistics have received over the years. The main focus of the work of the Central Statistics Office has been economic statistics, and increasingly in recent years, those economic statistics required to be collected under EEC directives. It is interesting to note that the Committee on Statistical Priorities, which reported in November 1974, dealt exclusively with economic statistics, and the need for data on social variables such as incomes or house construction were examined solely from an economic standpoint. The Council feels that this emphasis should now be redressed, and that social statistics should take their place alongside economic statistics in the determination of overall statistical priorities.

10.3. The main conclusions of this report are:

- (i) some major gaps exist in the coverage of social statistics. The most important of these relates to information about income distribution;
- (ii) improvement of the analysis and presentation of statistics relating to social policies would increase their usefulness;

however, not enough consideration appears to be given to the ultimate purpose of social statistics, when systems for collection are being designed;

- (iii) availability of, and access to, existing social statistics is not at present adequate. More thought needs to be given to making such data more easily available;

10.4. The Council's main recommendations with regard to social statistics are set out below. The more detailed recommendations are italicised in the body of the report, and are indexed in Appendix II:

- (i) the emphasis should be shifted from seeking authorisation to release any unpublished data, to allowing full access to those interested, subject to safeguards for genuine reasons of confidentiality;
- (ii) each Government department collecting social statistics should issue a bulletin covering the principal series at least annually; such bulletins should be available with minimum delay, if necessary being informal in character and including provisional rather than final figures;
- (iii) a guide to the unpublished statistics which it collects should be prepared by each Government department, and this guide should be kept up to date and made generally available;
- (iv) the main social statistics should be kept on a centralised computer file, which should be regularly up-dated, on which policy-makers and researchers could draw when necessary. Responsibility for the compilation and maintenance of such a data bank should be given to the CSO, which should be provided with adequate funds and staff for the task;
- (v) responsibility for the co-ordination of social statistics should be vested in the CSO, where a senior official should be assigned to the task. Such a job would not involve the collection of data more appropriately collected by specific departments—for example the Departments of Education, Local Government

and Social Welfare. It would however ensure adequate co-operation and co-ordination between the departments concerned and the maintenance of good standards of statistical practice. It would also enable gaps in statistics to be more readily noticed and filled and should mean that greater attention would be paid to social statistics. The CSO should also be given direct responsibility for social statistics which fall across or outside departmental boundaries;

- (vi) a report should be published at least annually, containing the main statistics concerned with social development. There are a number of models for this type of report in other countries. Such a report would inevitably be somewhat patchy, at least in the beginning. However, as more information becomes available the initial gaps could be filled. The ultimate aim should be the publication of a report which catalogues in as comprehensive a manner as possible the progress being made by social policies and their cost and which interprets the statistics in a way which is easily understood by non-professionals. In the coming year, the Council proposes to complete such a report on a pilot basis: this will cover the last decade and should act as a model for future work. The Council has no doubt that the co-operation of all those responsible for the collection of relevant data will be forthcoming.

10.5. The recommendations in this report will cost time, money and manpower to implement. The Council considers, however, that the results obtained would be worth while when viewed in the context of central Government spending on the social services of an estimated £720 million in 1976. Indeed money spent on improving social statistics and disseminating them more widely would increase awareness of social problems, help in establishing greater public acceptability of the need for social expenditure, and should ultimately lead to better and more efficient social policies.

APPENDIX I
Main Sources of Statistics

Policy area	Title of publication	Frequency of publication	Last available issue*	Date of publication (where available)
Financial information	Appropriation Accounts Returns of Local Taxation National Income and Expenditure	Annually Annually Annually	1974 1969-70 1970-71	October 1975 July 1972
Housing	Census of Population 1966 vol. vi, Housing and Households Census of Population 1961, vol. vi, Housing and Social Amenities (more detail than in 1966 volume) Census of Population 1971, bulletins with summary details on housing No. 38 No. 39 No. 40 Quarterly bulletin of housing statistics Returns of Local Taxation	Every five years (no 1976 census however) This level of detail previously collected 1946, collected 1971 First time summary bulletins published Every quarter Annually	1966 1961 1971 Quarter to Dec. 1975 1971-72	December 1969 1974 September 1973 May 1974 November 1974 February 1976

*As at end March 1976.

APPENDIX I Main Sources of Statistics—continued

Policy area	Title of publication	Frequency of publication	Last available issue*	Date of publication (where available)
Housing (continued)	Irish Statistical Bulletin— (i) quarterly inquiry on earnings and hours worked in the building industry (ii) Census of buildings and construction (iii) Planning Permission Series	Quarterly Occasional	Sept. 1975 1972 1973	December 1975 March 1975 June 1975
Incomes and income maintenance	Household Budget Inquiry 1966 Household Budget Survey 1973 Farm Management Survey Revenue computer print out Census of Industrial Production: distribution of employee earnings Report of the Department of Social Welfare	Previous HBI 1951-52 Annually Annually; discontinued since 1968 Roughly every four years	1966 1974/75 1968 1967-71	August 1969 Expected April 1976 December 1975 1971 May 1973
Health	Report on Vital Statistics Quarterly report on births, marriages and deaths in the principal towns Births, marriages and deaths in the principal towns Report of General Medical Services payments board	Annually Quarterly Weekly [First Issue]	1972 June 1975 Jan. '73-Dec. '74	July 1975 November 1975 About two weeks in arrears November 1975

*As at end March 1976.

APPENDIX I Main Sources of Statistics—continued

Policy area	Title of publication	Frequency of publication	Last available issue*	Date of publication (where available)
Manpower and unemployment	Trend of Employment and unemployment	Annually	1974	One week in arrears
	Numbers on live register in previous week	Weekly		
	Industrial analysis of live register	Monthly	Dec. 1975	
	Live register by area	Monthly	Jan. 1976	
	Occupational analysis of live register	Quarterly	Aug. 1975	
Education	Analysis of live register by duration of continuous registration	Quarterly		
	1971 Census:			
	Vol. 3 Occupations		1971	October 1975
	Vol. 4 Industries		1971	June 1975
	Vol. 5 Occupations and Industries by age and conjugal condition		1971	November 1975
	Tábil Statistici	Annually up to 1968-69; due to the increasing delay, a number of years are now being published together	1968-69—1971-72 1971-72—1972-73	November 1974 November 1975
	Report of Higher Education Authority	Annually	1974	November 1974

*As at end March 1976.

APPENDIX I Main Sources of Statistics—continued

Policy area	Title of publication	Frequency of publication	Last available issue*	Date of publication (where available)
Education (continued)	Census of Population 1966 Vol. VII Education			May 1970
	Census of Population 1971 Bulletin No. 741 (details of scientific and technological qualifications included)	—	1971	August 1975
Personal social services	Report of Garda Commissioner	Annually	Nov. '73-Oct. '74	December 1975
General	Statistical abstract	Annually	1970-71	May 1974

*As at end March, 1976.

APPENDIX II

Summary of Recommendations

What follows gives an indication of the subject of the recommendations concerning information on particular services.

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
I. <i>Census Data</i>	
Additional programming staff for CSO	2.5
Definition of dependent child	2.7; 2.8; 2.9
Additional marital status category	2.11
Access to Census data for research	2.12
Public use tape	2.13
New data on housing fitness	4.16
II. <i>Financial Data</i>	
Overall costs of services	3.2
Expansion of Appropriation Accounts	3.3
Publication of departmental fund accounts	3.4
Enforcement of Public Bodies Order	3.8
Timing of publication of local authority accounts	3.8
Publication of health board accounts	3.10
Expenditure on occupational pensions	3.13
Details of expenditure of grant-aided voluntary bodies	3.14
III. <i>Housing</i>	
Output series of local authority housing	4.4
Output series of private housing	4.4
Reports from building inspectors	4.7
New data on housing fitness	4.16
Reconstruction grant returns	4.17
Further use of data from housing lists	4.20
House price statistics	4.22; 4.23; 4.24
Weekly expenditure on housing	4.26; 4.27
Income of house borrowers	4.28
Size and source of house deposits	4.30

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
IV. <i>Incomes and Income Maintenance Services</i>	
Working party on income distribution statistics	5.5
Equivalence scales	5.6
Publication of statistics on income maintenance schemes	5.8
Survey of social welfare recipients	5.14
Data on occupational sick-pay schemes	5.15
Regional social statistics	5.16
V. <i>Health</i>	
Annual departmental report	6.2
VI. <i>Manpower and Unemployment</i>	
Prime unemployment rate	7.6
Age distribution of the unemployed	7.7
Seasonally adjusted unemployment rate	7.10
VII. <i>Education</i>	
Annual departmental report	1.19; 8.1
Statistics on literacy	8.13
VIII. <i>Personal Social Services</i>	
Problem Categories	9.2
Social work returns	9.5
Records of development testing programme for children	9.14

NATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS

<i>Title</i>	<i>Date</i>
1. Report on the economy in 1973 and the prospects for 1974	April 1974
2. Comments on Capital Taxation Proposals	July 1974
3. The Economy in 1974 and Outlook for 1975	Nov. 1974
4. Regional Policy In Ireland: A Review	Jan. 1975
5. Population and Employment Projections: 1971-86	Feb. 1975
6. Comments on the OECD Report on Manpower Policy in Ireland	July 1975
7. Jobs and Living Standards: Projections and Implications	June 1975
8. An Approach to Social Policy	June 1975
9. Report on Inflation	June 1975
10. Causes and effects of inflation in Ireland	Oct. 1975
11. Income Distribution: A Preliminary Report	Sept. 1975
12. Educational Expenditure in Ireland	Jan. 1976
13. The Economy In 1975 and Prospects for 1976	Oct. 1975
14. Population Projections 1971-86: The Implications for Social Planning—Dwelling Needs	Feb. 1976
15. The Taxation of Farming Profits	Feb. 1976
16. Some Aspects of Finance for Owner-Occupied Housing	

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