



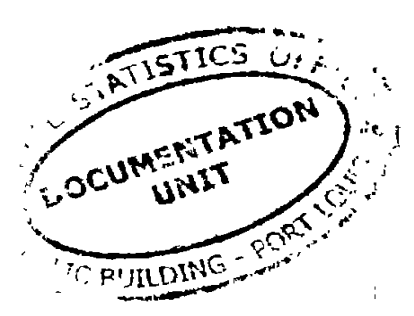
COLONY OF MAURITIUS

**Annual Report**  
OF THE  
**Central Statistical Office**  
for the year 1949

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# Annual Report of the Central Statistical Office for the year 1949

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## Functions

The Central Statistical Office was created in July 1945, in consequence of a recommendation made by the "Commission of Enquiry into the disturbances which occurred in the North of Mauritius in 1943." The primary function of the Office is to collect, improve, co-ordinate and analyse statistical information regarding every branch of the economic activity of the Colony—agricultural, industrial and commercial. Its scope is, however, wider than this, for it also studies the demographic, vital, health, educational and other social aspects of the life of the Colony.

These functions embrace the compilation of statistics for a Year Book ; the periodic computation of cost of living indices and of retail price levels ; the preparation of statistical reports for submission to the Colonial Office and the U.N.O. ; the taking of a decennial population census ; and the carrying out of research on material furnished to the department.

## Staff

The Staff of the department consists of—

- The Director of Statistics,
- A Senior Statistician,
- An Assistant Statistician,
- A Senior Compiler,
- Five compilers and
- One Typist.

## Staff Movements

Mr. L. Honoré, Senior Statistician, who had been awarded a scholarship under the Development and Welfare Fund, left for London by air on the 22nd July 1949, to pursue a course of two years' study in Economics and Statistics at the London School of Economics. Mr. Honoré, before he left, was already holder of an Intermediate degree in Economics.

Consequent on the departure of Mr. Honoré, Mr. M. Etienne, Assistant Statistician, was appointed Acting Senior Statistician and Mr. F. Empeigne, one of the Compilers, was appointed to act in the place of the Assistant Statistician:

In June, the Director was invited to a Conference of Statisticians to be held in London in December, 1949. The Conference was subsequently postponed to March, 1950.

## Location

In March, intimation was received from the Secretary of the Board of Beau Bassin-Rose Hill that the upper wing of the building of the Town Hall occupied by the Central Statistical Office since 1946 had to be vacated on or before the 31st May, 1949.

After consultation with the Director of Public Works and Surveys, the Office leased a building at 8, Reverend Lebrun Street, Rose Hill, and has since been established in these premises.

A request was subsequently made by the Director of Statistics for the construction of suitable offices to accommodate the Central Statistical Office on a plot of Crown Land, situated in Rose Hill, already occupied by a number of Government Departments. Plans have been submitted according to the Director's suggestions for the new building which will also comprise a suitable Census Office.

## **WORK OF THE CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE DURING THE YEAR**

### **Development of Civil Aviation in Mauritius**

For the first time, a complete analysis of the air traffic to and from Mauritius was carried out by the Central Statistical Office early in the Year. This analysis covering passenger, cargo and mail traffic was comprised in ten statistical tables and forwarded to the Secretary of State for the information of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

### **Resident Population of Mauritius**

Owing to the disturbing effect of migration of military personnel during the war, certain errors and uncertainties had crept into the computation of the resident population by the Registrar General. Careful search by the Central Statistical Office for records, to which the Military Headquarters graciously contributed, enabled a satisfactory re-establishment of the correct estimate to be arrived at. A re-adjustment was accordingly effected in the resident population for mid-year 1949.

The Central Statistical Office has taken this opportunity to draw and publish a table showing the population trend over the past 25 years.

### **Year-Book of Statistics**

By the end of September, the Year-Book of Statistics for 1948 was ready for distribution. Like the previous issues the requisite number of copies were produced in the Central Statistical Office on a duplicating machine. The issue for 1948 was increased to 300 copies on account of the very large demand from local firms, from Government Departments and from abroad.

### **Computation of the Cost of Living Index**

In January, June and December, the cost of living indices for clerical and upper classes were re-computed according to price-levels ruling during these months. The cost of living index for labourers was re-computed at the end of each quarter according to budgetary distribution furnished by the Labour Department. In addition certain special cost of living computations were made for Arbitration Courts.

### **Price level indices**

The current prices of a large number of articles of consumption were surveyed periodically as previously. Price level indices were computed for 69 main articles of food and beverages, 38 articles of clothing and textile and 37 of household goods, including fuel items.

### **Employment and Wages**

Bi-annual statements of employment and of wages paid to artisans and skilled personnel were obtained from the sugar estates and factories which together form the main employing concern of this Colony. As regards labourers and unskilled personnel, the wages (including allowances and bonuses) are fixed by a Minimum Wage Ordinance. The larger sugar estates, plantations and factories, however, furnish quarterly statements of all unskilled labour employed. For the smaller plantations, estimates have been made. Compilation and computations of all labour returns for 1948 were prepared in the Central Statistical Office.

### **Sugar Industry Statistics**

The Central Statistical Office is receiving periodically complete returns on specified schedules, of information relating to the Sugar Industry. Compilation of the whole statistical material for 1948 (with the exception of the analysis of the financial data) was completed in April. Particular attention was given to the compilation of cultivation machinery on sugar plantations. Copies of the crop results are circulated to the Department of Agriculture, the Chamber of Agriculture and the Agricultural Bank.

### **Cane Yield of the very small plantations**

Thanks to the kind assistance of the Co-operative Credit Societies some 5,000 returns for 1947 and 1948 from small planters were analysed and published. This put an end to a controversy which had long existed concerning the probable yield of the small plantations.

### **Meteorological Statistics in relation to the Sugar Industry**

In December, the Director was invited to give his views and advice on a project of Mr. P. Halais of the Sugar Industry Reserve Fund Laboratory. The project was to give effect to the publication at 5-day intervals of essential meteorological statistics from which drought and other effects on sugarcane can be correctly assessed.

### **Economic Survey of the Colonial Empire**

In April a request was received from the Secretary of State for submission of a report on the economic structure of the Colony for inclusion in the publication: "Economic Survey of the Colonial Empire".

The Survey for Mauritius to which several Departments contributed was finally compiled in the Central Statistical Office.

### **Trade Statistics**

In collaboration with the new Comptroller of Customs, a complete recast of the Customs Tariff List was effected in March. The new classification is in accordance with the present practice of the Board of Trade and will greatly facilitate the compilation of import statistics in the Customs Department.

To satisfy the need of the Economic Survey for Mauritius which was mentioned in the preceding paragraph, the trade of the Colony for 1947 and 1948 was analysed so as to show the differences of imports and exports between sterling and hard currency areas.

### **Agricultural Census 1950**

In August, preparations were initiated for the taking of an Agricultural Census in 1950. A preliminary meeting presided by the Director of Agriculture was held early in September, to which the Director of Statistics, Senior Officers of the Agricultural Department, the Land Settlement Officer, the Executive Officer of the Food Production Board, and the former Statistician of the Department of Agriculture took part. At this meeting decisions were taken concerning the general plan of the Census. Details were entrusted to a sub-committee which consisted of the Director of Statistics as Chairman, the Senior Agricultural Officer, the Senior Veterinary Officer and the Statistician of the Department of Agriculture.

The outcome of the work of the sub-committee was

- (a) Production of a series of excellent maps for the enumerators ;
- (b) A bill conferring statutory powers to the Director of Agriculture or his delegate for carrying out the Census ;
- (c) Appropriate schedules and instructions.

By the end of the year all the details of the Census had practically been settled.

### **London Conference of Statisticians**

A long series of notes pertaining to certain items of the agenda which was to form the subject of the Conference were drawn up and forwarded to London in September.

### **Miscellaneous other activities**

The Office had during the year to reply to a large number of enquiries of a private nature from individuals and institutions both local and abroad, in addition to enquiries of an official character. Among the latter may be mentioned Statistical Reports for the United Nations Organisation and for the British Consul in Madagascar. Numerous revisions of statistical tables for a number of foreign periodicals were also undertaken.

Monthly and quarterly returns of statistics are now being compiled and forwarded to the Chief Statistician of the Colonial Office.

### **OFFICE EQUIPMENT**

A number of valuable books were added to the Library during the year. A much needed portable adding machine ordered during the year has not yet been received.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I have much pleasure in recording here my appreciation of the good work done throughout the year by every member of the Staff.

M. HERCHENRODER,  
*Director of Statistics.*

*20th February, 1950.*

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