Regards à l'étranger

LA STATISTIQUE AU ROYAUME-UNI

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INSEE

Direction de la Coordination Statistique
et des Relations Internationales

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Véronique Alexandre

Ce document, rédigé en septembre 1997, peut être utilement complété par une lecture du rapport "Organisation de la statistique dans les États membres de la Communauté Européenne" rédigé par Georges ALS pour Eurostat (1993) car il se présente à la fois comme une actualisation du rapport et comme un regard de l'Insee sur son homologue étranger.

Sommaire

" Many of the executive Departments naturally have set up and developed their own statistical branches...
It is essential to consolidate and make sure that agreed figures only are used. The utmost confusion is caused when people argue on different statistical data. I wish all statistics to be concentrated in my own branch as Prime Minister and Minister of Defence, from which alone the final authoritative working statistics will issue. The various Departmental statistical branches will, of course, continue as at present, but agreement must be reached between them and the Central Statistical Office.
Pray look into this, and advise me how my wish can be most speedily and effectively achieved. "

Ce message écrit par Winston Churchill le 8 novembre 1940 à l'attention de Sir Edward Bridges fut à l'origine de la création de l'office central de la statistique britannique :

Le **CSO** " ***Central Statistical Office*** " fut ainsi créé le 27 janvier 1941 (Harry Campion[1] en fut le directeur jusqu'en 1967), avec pour tâche première d'harmoniser les définitions et de garantir le " bon chiffre " entre ceux émanant des différents ministères[2], et de rassembler des statisticiens. À partir de 1947, les statisticiens commencèrent à être reconnus comme une catégorie professionnelle séparée de fonctionnaires.

Le second directeur, Claus Moser de 1967 à 1978, était auparavant professeur de statistiques à la *London School of Economics*. Au cours de cette période, la revue *Economic Trends* fut lancée en 1953, l'OPCS " *Office of Population Censuses and Surveys* " fut établi en 1970 par fusion (voir paragraphe spécifique plus loin) et la publication annuelle *Social Trends* lancée à son tour la même année, symbolisant la priorité accordée aux statistiques sociales. Le nombre de statisticiens professionnels était alors passé de 150 en 1966 à 550 en 1978.

Le troisième directeur, John Boreham de 1978 à 1985, avait pris la tête du CSO après un parcours de statisticien en ministères (Alimentation et Agriculture, puis de 67 à 71 Technologie) et au *General Register Office*. Une sévère critique faite en 1980 (rapport Rayner[3] de décembre 1980) contraignit à réorienter le service comme producteur de statistiques pour le gouvernement plutôt que pour d'autres clients et à restreindre les

1 - Anciennement membre du service central d'information économique du gouvernement

2 - Comme en France, des services statistiques du gouvernement existaient déjà pour certains, depuis longtemps (1830 pour le ministère du commerce, fin du XIXe siècle pour ceux de l'emploi et de l'éducation)

3 - Voir annexe II et P. 127-128 du rapport ALS pour Eurostat.

enquêtes imposées à l'industrie (le budget du service statistique gouvernemental fut ainsi amputé d'environ 25 %).

Une nouvelle remise en question se manifesta en 1986-87 (non-adéquation des statistiques économiques à la structure de l'économie britannique en évolution rapide) alors que Jack Hibbert était directeur depuis 1985 (formé à la *London School of Economics*, il fut, outre un parcours classique, également consultant à l'OCDE puis à Eurostat). Un bilan, fait en 1988, donna lieu à 30 recommandations (rapport Stephen Pickford[3] de 1989).

3 - Voir annexe II et p. 127-128 du rapport ALS pour Eurostat .

C'est ainsi qu'au milieu de 1989, le " *Business Statistics Office* " (BSO) de Newport, soit une grande partie des deux divisions du bureau central du *Department of Trade and Industry*, ainsi que la division des statistiques travaillant sur les prix à la consommation et l'enquête sur les dépenses des ménages de *l'Employment Department* fusionnèrent avec le CSO dont l'effectif crût de 200 à 1000 personnes. C'est le point de départ de la période actuelle.

Le CSO fut ensuite transformé en agence exécutive[4] en novembre 1991. Son rôle consistait principalement à collecter, compiler et diffuser une partie des statistiques officielles, à coordonner les services statistiques décentralisés ainsi qu'à assurer la représentation du Royaume-Uni dans les organisations internationales. Par exemple, dans le cadre de l'établissement des comptes nationaux, et notamment les estimations du PNB, de la balance des paiements et des comptes détaillés par secteurs, le CSO avait pour mission de coordonner les données en provenance des autres ministères (soit 40 000 séries environ). En 1995, le CSO employait 1300 personnes sur deux sites (Londres, et Newport, port d'attache du BSO).

4 - C'est-à-dire un organisme public évoluant dans un cadre de directives politiques larges, autonome par une sorte de contrat du point de vue du personnel et du budget, et indépendant dans sa gestion quotidienne (démarche qui pourrait être comparée à celles proposées dans la fonction publique française comme les centres de responsabilités).

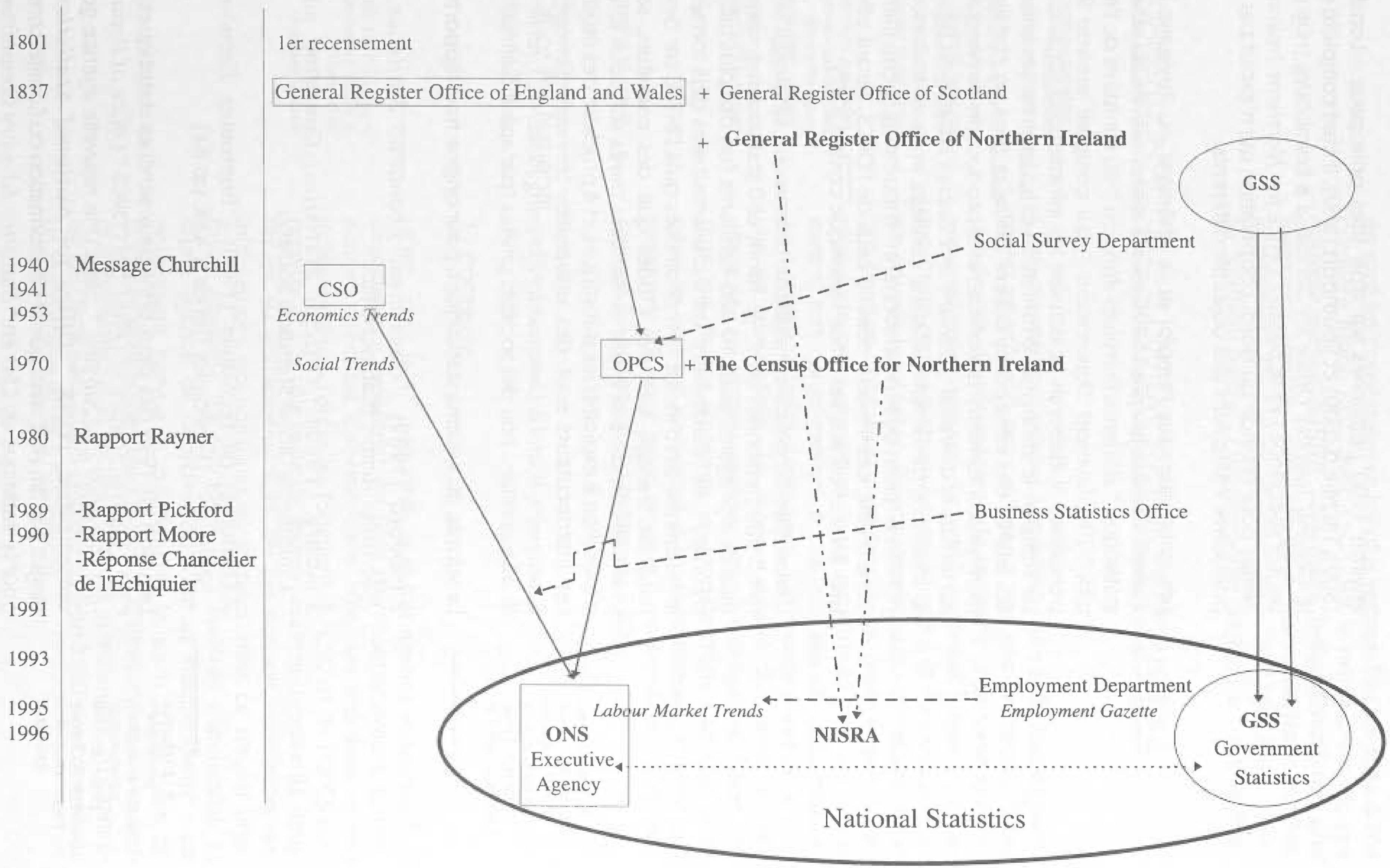
L'***OPCS " Office of Population Censuses and Surveys*** " avait été créé en 1970 par fusion du " *General Register Office* " (créé en 1837) avec le *Social Survey Department*. Son directeur, Michael Reed, était également par fonction *registrar general for England and Wales*[5], c'est-à-dire responsable de l'enregistrement systématique des naissances et des décès en Angleterre et au Pays de Galles. L'OPCS fut également candidat pour des statuts d'agence exécutive en 1991 et son directeur rattaché directement au secrétaire d'Etat pour la santé.

5 - Le *General Register Office* fut notamment en charge du recensement de 1841 en Angleterre et au Pays de Galles

Ses missions consistaient à fournir une information et des analyses de qualité dans les domaines démographiques (RP notamment), sociaux et médicaux, à permettre l'estimation du nombre et de l'état de la population ainsi que leur évolution dans le temps, à aider à la décision politique, également à veiller au respect des lois sur le mariage et tenir le registre d'événements tels que naissances, décès[6]. En 1995, l'OPCS employait

6 - En effet, au Royaume-Uni, ce travail est assuré par des bureaux indépendants et non par les mairies comme en France (où il y a donc potentiellement plus de 36 000 centres d'enregistrement!)

PERSPECTIVES HISTORIQUES



environ 1900 personnes sur trois sites principaux : Londres (500), Titchfield (800) et Southport (600). Il était complété par le *General Register Office for Scotland* à Edimbourg (régi par un *Act* spécifique) et le *Census Office for Northern Ireland* à Belfast pour l'Irlande du Nord, coopération qui n'exclut pas de poursuivre également des objectifs différents.

Les statistiques sur l'emploi et le chômage au Royaume-Uni étaient réalisées jusqu'en 1995 sous la responsabilité du service statistique " *statistical services division* " du Ministère de l'emploi " *Employment Department* " qui comptait environ 250 personnes. Il élaborait et diffusait les informations statistiques sur l'emploi, le chômage, la formation et les salaires. Les enquêtes auprès des entreprises étaient réalisées dans un établissement situé à Runcorn. La collecte et la production de l'enquête sur les forces de travail (*Labour Force Survey*) dont avait besoin le ministère de l'emploi étaient confiées en sous-traitance à l'OPCS en raison de son personnel en enquêteurs (permanent). Dorénavant, ces travaux, comme ceux de l'OPCS, seront effectués au sein du nouvel office statistique central (ONS).

L'ensemble du système statistique britannique employait environ 5 000 personnes en 1995 (dont 650 statisticiens), soit un taux de 0,9 agents pour 10 000 habitants (un des plus faibles d'Europe). Le recrutement vient d'universitaires déjà formés à la statistique avec moins d'économistes qu'à l'INSEE car beaucoup de travaux, tant des études que des enquêtes, sont sous-traités c'est-à-dire soit en services payés soit sous forme d'incitation à exploiter les statistiques et à produire des études. Les interlocuteurs sont des universités (*London School of Economics, Social & Community Planning Research, Université de Manchester*...) ou des sociétés privées (par appel d'offres).

La refonte du système statistique a pour origine trois rapports[7] :

∠ Pickford (1989) : *Goverment Economic Statistics, a Scrutiny Report* (Cabinet Office)

∠ Moore (1990) : *Official Statistics, Counting with Confidence* (Royal Statistical Society)

∠ Chancelier de l'Echiquier (1990) : *Improving Economic Statistics*[8] (Economics Trends n°448, pp.84)

La fusion en 1996 des deux principaux services statistiques, le CSO " *Central Statistical Office* " et l'OPCS " *Office of Population Censuses and Surveys* ", dans une nouvelle agence gouvernementale, l'***ONS " Office for National Statistics "***, dirigée par Tim Holt, ainsi que la transformation du Comité-conseil pour la statistique du CSO en " *Statistics Advisory Committee* ",

7 - Voir les textes successifs qui ont suivi ces rapports en annexe I et le rapport ALS pour Eurostat p. 129-130

8 - En réponse notamment à quarante questions parlementaires posées en 1990 par le Dr. Bray sur l'organisation de la statistique.

en sont les conséquences les plus visibles. Elle fait suite à une première fusion (BSO avec CSO). Sur le même principe, une nouvelle agence, ***NISRA " Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency***", est créée pour l'Irlande du Nord en 1996, incorporant "*The General Register Office*" et "*The Census Office for Northern Ireland*" (180 personnes dirigées par Edgar Jardine).

II - ORGANISATION ACTUELLE DU SYSTÈME STATISTIQUE BRITANNIQUE

C'est un système d'architecture éclaté entre différents départements ministériels[9], entre différents lieux géographiques[10] pour des raisons d'aménagement du territoire (voir carte ci-joint), entre différents niveaux d'identité nationale[11], mais curieusement sans réseau d'observateurs régionaux et dans un contexte de pouvoir local faible, donc naturellement centralisateur. Les britanniques ont toujours été fiers de ce système mais la dernière réforme correspond à un recentrage vers un niveau central fort conjointement à des mesures de rationalisation (une seule division du personnel...), d'économies et de recherche de productivité. Le *Review* annuel doit prouver cette efficacité. Au modèle antérieurement américain succède, depuis une dizaine d'années, un modèle d'une part plus européen se référant davantage à un style français, d'autre part fortement influencé par le modèle australien (marque du passage de Bill McLennan[12] à la tête du CSO).

9 - 30 services statistiques indépendants du service central.

10 - Notamment en ce qui concerne l'ONS : Londres, Newport, Runcorn, Titchfield en Angleterre, complété par Cardiff, Edimbourg, Glasgow et Belfast pour les autres nations du Royaume-Uni

11 - 5 notions différentes : Angleterre, Angleterre+Pays de Galles, Grande Bretagne= Angleterre+Pays de Galles +Ecosse, Royaume-Uni= Grande Bretagne +Irlande du Nord, puis les îles Britanniques

12 - Voir sa déclaration en annexe I

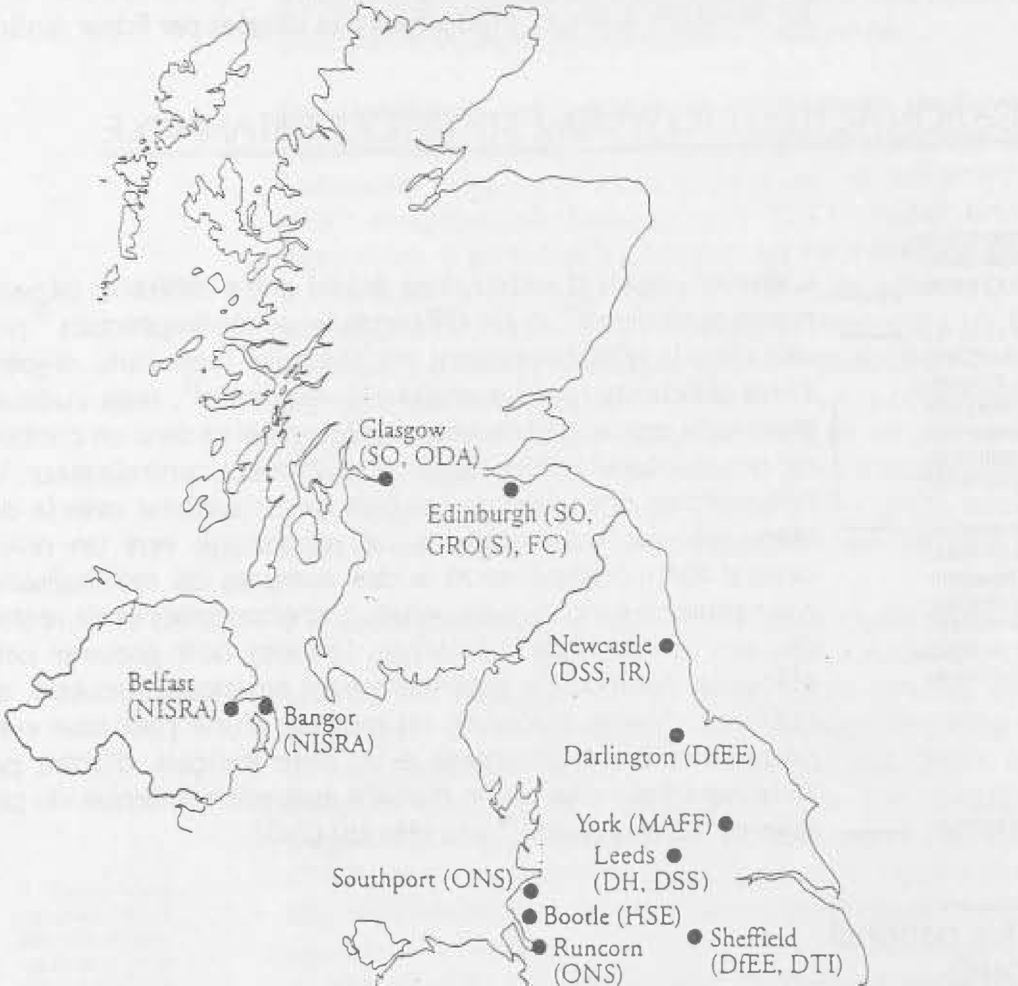
A] L'Office for National Statistics (ONS)

1) contexte

L'ONS, créé le 1er avril 1996, à la fois agence exécutive[13] et département ministériel, est doté d'un contrat avec le gouvernement précisant clairement son rôle, ses fonctions et son indépendance. Toutes les fonctions du CSO et de l'OPCS sont reprises et son rôle reste de fournir des renseignements statistiques au gouvernement et de promouvoir l'utilisation des informations économiques et sociales, mais ce nouvel organisme combine les avantages d'un système décentralisé et d'une agence de coordination forte et indépendante : est notamment prévue la création (et le suivi) d'une base de données centralisée regroupant les chiffres-clés de la statistique économique et sociale. Rattaché directement au Chancelier de l'Echiquier, l'ONS emploie environ 3200 personnes avec un budget annuel de £125 millions.

13 - Un *Framework Document* illustre le "contrat" de l'agence avec le gouvernement.

GSS Locations



Source : Government Statistical Service : Annual Report 1996-97

2) Objectifs et moyens

Les principaux objectifs de la réforme sont : une plus grande cohérence et compatibilité des statistiques gouvernementales (fiabilité et harmonisation des sources et des données), une amélioration de la présentation (avec analyses et commentaires) et de l'accès pour le public, et une aide à l'élaboration de la politique gouvernementale (cf. le Livre blanc de 1993). Le terme " *Wider Agenda* " est utilisé pour décrire l'ensemble des stratégies liées à cette démarche "qualité" qui se traduit notamment par l'établissement d'une base de données-clés de l'information économique et sociale, l'exploitation des formes de communication électroniques, l'harmonisation des classifications et définitions utilisées dans les sources administratives. C'est ainsi qu'un groupe statistique interministériel a développé des questions harmonisées pour les enquêtes sociales et s'efforce de promouvoir leur utilisation et d'accroître la comparabilité entre les résultats des différentes enquêtes.

14 - Loi n°51-711 du 7 juin 1951 modifiée sur l'obligation, la coordination et le secret en matière de statistique (consultable au bureau du CNIS).

- Il n'existe pas au Royaume-Uni de **loi-cadre pour la statistique** à l'égal de la loi de 1951 pour la France[14], mais un petit nombre de lois statistiques particulières dont chacune énonce des règles et des sanctions en matière d'obligation et de secret statistiques, soit en particulier :

∠ la loi de 1920 sur le recensement (*the Census Act* 1920)

∠ la loi de 1947 sur l'agriculture (*the Agriculture Statistics Act* 1947)

∠ la loi de 1947 sur les statistiques industrielles et commerciales (*the Statistics of Trade Act* 1947)

∠ la loi de 1952 sur les droits de douanes et les taxes (*the Customs and Excise Act* 1952)

∠ la loi de 1960 sur les statistiques de population (*the Population Statistics Act* 1960)

15 - Ce document a aussi servi de référence à la reflexion menée à l'Insee (Joël Allain, dont le correspondant à ce sujet a été John Pullinger).

- Le nouveau système est structuré par le texte " ***Official Statistics Code of Practice*** " (consolidation des pratiques du CSO et de l'OPCS). Le code de déontologie[15] du projet de service est bâti sur des normes de qualité et insiste sur :

⇒ l'intégrité du statisticien, le respect de la confidentialité, une juste mesure,

⇒ la consultation des intéressés, des chiffres commentés, l'accessibilité pour le public,

⇒ la pertinence de l'enquête, le perfectionnement des méthodes, un contrôle des coûts.

Bilan 1994 sur les enquêtes gouvernementales auprès des entreprises (voir page 35 la méthode de calcul)

Department	*Compliance Cost* (£1000)	Nombre de formulaires	Nombre d'enquêtes		Type d'enquête	
			régulières	ad hoc	volontaire	statutaire
HM Customs & Excise	32 250	434 824	10	14	21	3
Central Statistical Office (ONS)	15 600	796 700	87	3	38	52
Department of Education (now DfEE)	8 556	36 609	17	4	10	11
Employment Department (now CSO)	6 949	959 737	6	2	3	5
Department of the Environment	5 475	282 720	53	66	96	23
Department of Transport	4 319	297 426	15	13	21	7
The Scottish Office	2 113	153 145	131	39	103	67
Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries Food	1 545	281 637	66	14	51	29
Weslh Office	1 370	53 252	127	8	113	22
Department of Health	1 107	112 235	21	5	26	0
Northern Ireland departments	765	108 284	51	17	35	33
Health and Safety Executive	579	7 264	1	6	7	0
Department of Social Security	554	26 517	4	9	13	0
Department of Trade & Industry	363	27 373	12	29	39	2
Employment Department (now DfEE)	206	20 624	3	31	34	0
Office of Science & Technology	130	6 500	0	1	1	0
Inland Revenue	83	39 405	43	6	49	0
Office of Population Censuses & Surveys (dorénavant ONS)	65	403	1	0	0	1
Forestry Commission	41	4 713	2	6	8	0
Ministry of Defence	25	250	0	1	1	0
Home Office	18	4 350	0	2	2	0
Overseas Development Administration	6	513	1	1	2	0
HM Treasury	5	108	0	1	1	0
TOTAL	**82 121**	**3 654 589**	**651**	**278**	**674**	**255**

- Les **clients** de l'ONS sont notamment le gouvernement, les responsables industriels et commerciaux, les universitaires, les commentateurs et analystes, et plus largement l'ensemble de la population. Et les engagements de l'ONS sont officiellement précisés à leur intention comme suit :

∠ vis-à-vis du gouvernement : être hautement professionnel et internationalement reconnu, suivre un planning mutuellement approuvé, utiliser les méthodes qui présentent le meilleur rapport coût-performance, coopérer en cas d'évolution des besoins, et fournir les données statistiques de base nécessaires à l'élaboration d'une politique.

∠ vis-à-vis des entreprises : rendre disponible l'information qui leur est nécessaire pour maintenir leur compétitivité, s'assurer que les données fournies sont suffisantes et de bonne qualité et les formulaires qu'elles doivent remplir aussi simples que possible.

∠ vis-à-vis du public : rendre les statistiques de l'ONS plus conviviales, plus accessibles à la lecture, et inciter les autres statisticiens gouvernementaux à faire de même.

∠ vis-à-vis des individus : protéger la confidentialité de toutes les données personnelles et fournir un service d'état-civil efficace.

- Le " ***Statistics Advisory Committee*** " conseille le directeur sur les travaux statistiques de l'Office, sur les objectifs sociaux annuels et sur ses responsabilités comme chef du GSS (rôle du CNIS à l'INSEE). Constitué de 20 membres utilisateurs ou fournisseurs de données du monde des affaires, des médias, des institutions, des ministères et autres corps publics[16], il se réunit 3 fois par an.

16 - Pour tout complément d'information, s'adresser au *Director of Policy and Planning at ONS* (Jenny Church).

- L'ambition affichée est de faire du système statistique britannique l'un des meilleurs du monde dans un contexte de réduction des effectifs et des coûts. En effet, l'accent est mis dans tous les services statistiques sur le calcul de coûts, la recherche d'économies et de progrès de productivité suivant un **plan de réduction des coûts**. Une table de calcul dite " *Ready Reckoner* " sert de base à la facturation -suivant un décompte principalement du temps mobilisé, du type de tâche effectuée, et du niveau hiérarchique impliqué- qui est appliquée y compris entre deux services statistiques[17].

17 - Mais dans le cas où le service est interne à l'ONS, le décompte exclut les frais généraux.

En ce qui concerne les entreprises, un " *Compliance Plan* " (1996), visant à réduire les charges pesant sur elles (dont le coût a fait l'objet d'une évaluation), a été introduit et des objectifs affichés :

⇒utilisation de progiciels comptables pour collecter les données requises.

⇒utilisation de nouvelles technologies pour être plus efficace.

⇒amélioration des méthodes d'échantillonnage et du registre des entreprises (permettant à qualité égale de réduire l'échantillon).

⇒mise en place d'un dispositif spécial pour fournir un point de contact unique pour les grandes entreprises et réduire les chevauchements d'enquêtes.

⇒fusion des enquêtes sur l'emploi à court terme et des statistiques d'entreprise.

⇒utilisation des sources administratives à des fins statistiques avec harmonisation des concepts.

C'est ainsi que, du fait des coûts calculés et des montants globaux imposés à chaque département ministériel, la réduction du poids des enquêtes gouvernementales devrait atteindre 30 % entre 1994 et 1999. Mais l'enquête INTRASTAT coûte très cher (près de £33m) et ne peut être modifiée (comme d'autres projets européens) sans accord au niveau européen.

3) Organigramme

Il est bâti sur 6 *groups* (équivalent des directions INSEE) composés de *divisions* (départements INSEE) réparties en *branches* (divisions INSEE) et *units*, plus une division (*Policy and Planning*) directement rattachée au directeur. L'organigramme actuel est formé par restructuration du CSO, de l'OPCS, et absorption de travaux statistiques du ministère de l'emploi. Une présentation simplifiée est présentée ci-joint (niveaux *group* en grisé et *division* en blanc). Au niveau *branch* ou *unit*, quelques exemples thématiques choisis au sein de chaque *group* sont donnés ci-dessous (•) :

Policy & Planning : • GSS Policy (Nigel Edison) et • International Unit (Alwyn Pritchard) par exemple.

BSG

• Business Registers (*John Perry*)

• Overseas Trade in Services (*Andrew Allen*)

• Distribution and Services Inquiries (*Peter Isam*)

• Employment Information & Analysis (*James Partington*)

• Stats Data Collection (*Ian Cope*)

• Index of Manufacturing/Production (*Dave Watts*)

MESAG

• Business Management (*Anna Brueton*)

• Consumers' Expenditure (*Tim Andrews*)

• Trade in Goods (*David Ruffles*)

• National Accounts Revisions & Balancing, & Satellite Accounts (*Uzair Rizki*)

• RPI International & Special Indices (*Geoff Tily*)

SESAG

• Regional Accounts (*Dev Virdee*)

• Database Development (*Alan Hewer*)

• Reconciliation and integration of Labour Market Statistics (*Penny Pease*)

• Labour Force Survey Operations (*Richard Laux*)

• Labour Market Trends (*Barry Mortimer*)

CPHG

• Data Capture & Processing (*Rod Massingham*)

• Census Operations and Support Services (*Alex Clark*)

• Population Estimates (*Roma Chappell*)

• Demography & Health Longitudinal Study (*Jillian Smith*)

• Joint Secretary to the Boundary Commission (*Bob Farrance*)

SSSG

• Central Methods (*John Charlton, Patrick Heady*)

• Social Survey Methodology Unit (*Amanda White*)

• National Travel Survey (*Stephenie Freeth*)

• Harmonisation of Survey Concepts (*Tony Manners*)

• Labour Force Survey[18] (*Cathy Gibbins*)

• Security, Policies & Quality of Information Systems (*Andy Bradbury*)

ASRG

• NHSCR National Health Service Central Register (*Adrian Read*)

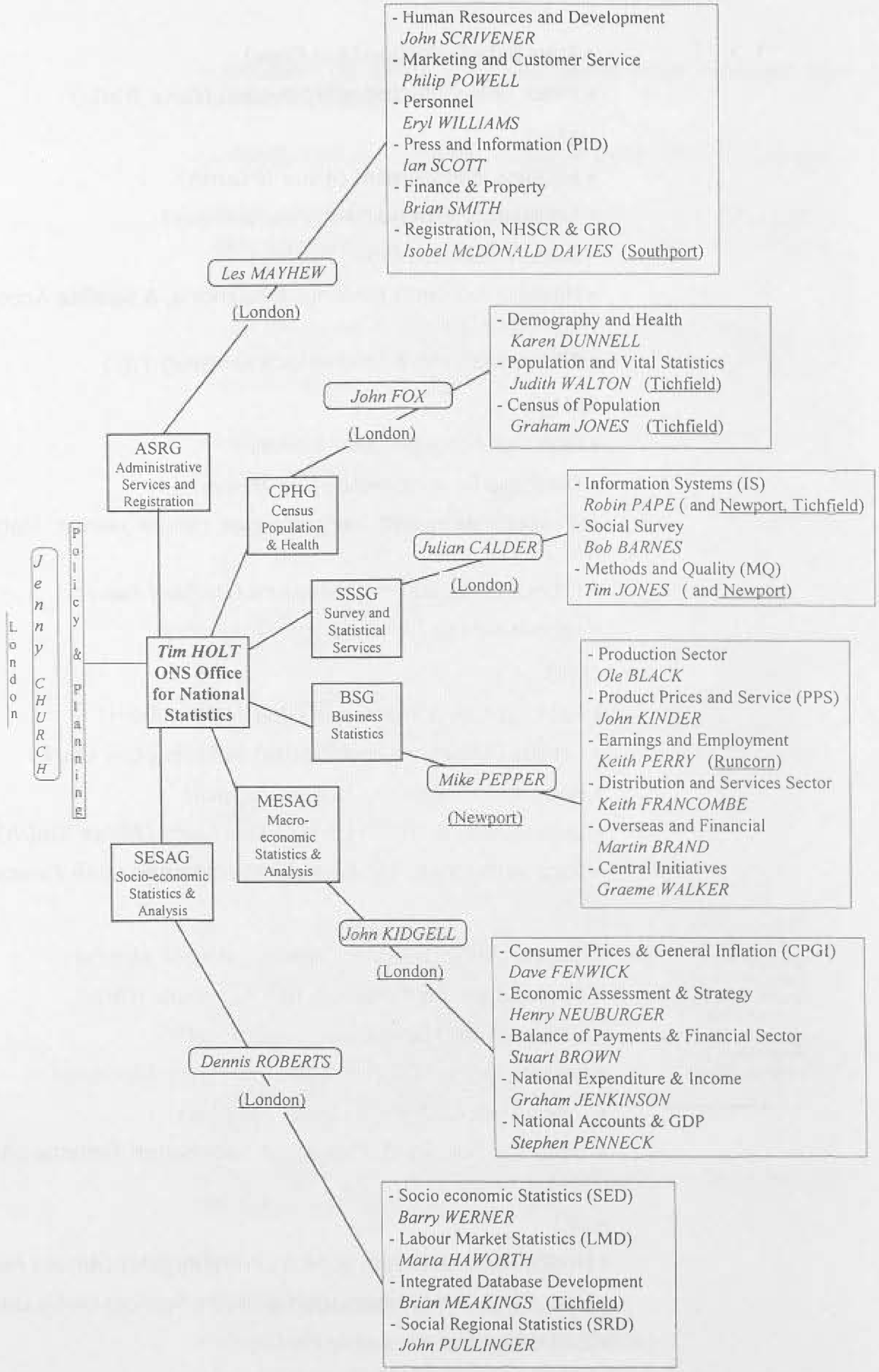
• National Statistics Information & Library Services (*John Birch*)

• GSS Personnel (*Bronwyn Butler*)

• Publications (*Jane Williams*)

• GSS Training & Development (*Peter Collinson*)

18 - L'enquête LFS est donc gérée dans 2 groupes différents (SSSG, division SSD, et SESAG, divisions LMD et SES) ce qui diffère sensiblement de l'organisation Insee.



- Human Resources and Development
John SCRIVENER
- Marketing and Customer Service
Philip POWELL
- Personnel
Eryl WILLIAMS
- Press and Information (PID)
Ian SCOTT
- Finance & Property
Brian SMITH
- Registration, NHSCR & GRO
Isobel McDONALD DAVIES (Southport)
Les MAYHEW
(London)
- Demography and Health
Karen DUNNELL
- Population and Vital Statistics
Judith WALTON (Tichfield)
- Census of Population
Graham JONES (Tichfield)
John FOX
(London)
ASRG
Administrative Services and Registration
CPHG
Census Population & Health
- Information Systems (IS)
Robin PAPE (and Newport, Tichfield)
- Social Survey
Bob BARNES
- Methods and Quality (MQ)
Tim JONES (and Newport)
Julian CALDER
(London)
London
Jenny CHURCH
Policy & Planning
SSSG
Survey and Statistical Services
Tim HOLT
ONS Office for National Statistics
BSG
Business Statistics
- Production Sector
Ole BLACK
- Product Prices and Service (PPS)
John KINDER
- Earnings and Employment
Keith PERRY (Runcorn)
- Distribution and Services Sector
Keith FRANCOMBE
- Overseas and Financial
Martin BRAND
- Central Initiatives
Graeme WALKER
Mike PEPPER
(Newport)
MESAG
Macro-economic Statistics & Analysis
SESAG
Socio-economic Statistics & Analysis
John KIDGELL
(London)
- Consumer Prices & General Inflation (CPGI)
Dave FENWICK
- Economic Assessment & Strategy
Henry NEUBURGER
- Balance of Payments & Financial Sector
Stuart BROWN
- National Expenditure & Income
Graham JENKINSON
- National Accounts & GDP
Stephen PENNECK
Dennis ROBERTS
(London)
- Socio economic Statistics (SED)
Barry WERNER
- Labour Market Statistics (LMD)
Marta HAWORTH
- Integrated Database Development
Brian MEAKINGS (Tichfield)
- Social Regional Statistics (SRD)
John PULLINGER

B] Les services statistiques du gouvernement (GSS)

1) Composition et articulation avec l'ONS

L'ensemble du service est constitué d'environ 30 départements ministériels et agences, géographiquement en partie centralisés et en partie décentralisés, élaborant de façon autonome les statistiques requises par leurs champs d'application respectifs[19]. L'ensemble du système est schématisé ci-contre. Chaque organisme a sa propre équipe de statisticiens, avec éventuellement des caractéristiques professionnelles fonctions du champ couvert par le ministère, et une mobilité interministérielle possible : le recrutement du personnel, plus que son *management* ensuite, est centralisé. Les méthodes, programmes et priorités sont d'abord définis en fonction des ministres : les statisticiens participent au développement de la politique par leurs conseils et leurs expertises. Puis, une diffusion est prévue pour les autres utilisateurs : public, universitaires, autorités locales, entreprises et syndicats.

19 - Les programmes de travail annuels, mettant en évidence les réalisations de l'année écoulée et les principaux objectifs pour l'année à venir, sont publiés chaque année dans un rapport (Annexe II).

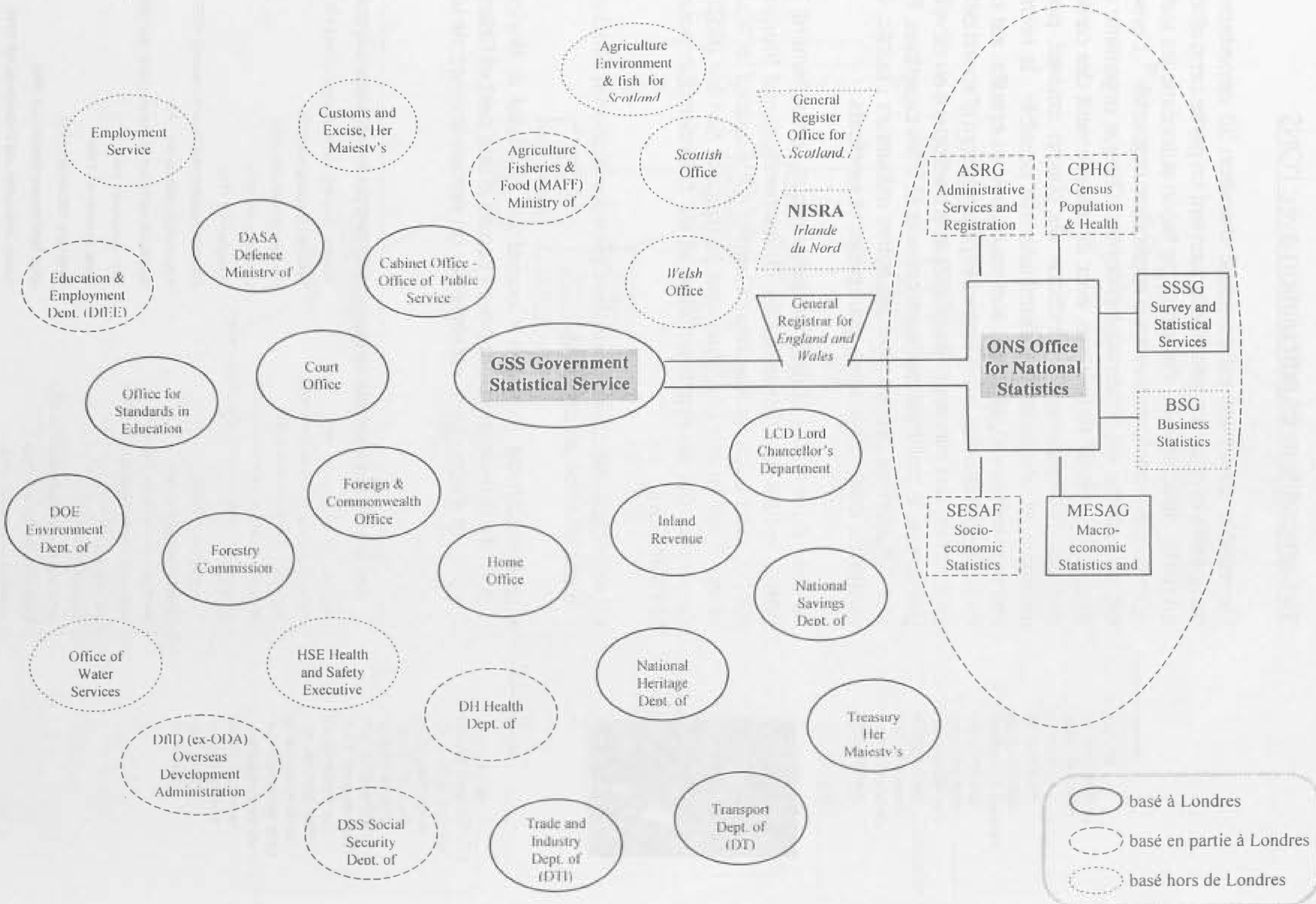
Le chef du système statistique britannique, actuellement **Tim Holt**, a le titre de *Director of the Office for National Statistics* (ONS), mais aussi de *Registrar General for England & Wales*, et de *Head of the Governement Statistical Service* (GSS). Il assume le rôle de représentation et de coordination pour le Royaume-Uni.

- La fonction de *Director of the Office for National Statistics* a été étudiée au point **A**].
- La fonction de *Registrar General for England & Wales*[20], dont il existe l'équivalent pour l'Ecosse d'une part et l'Irlande du Nord d'autre part, est régie par un certain nombre de lois :

20 - Il existe environ 420 "*registry offices*" en Angleterre et au Pays de Galles. Chaque district d'enregistrement (en moyenne 4 à 5 par comté) a un office principal et, en fonction de la taille géographique et de population, un ou plusieurs sous-offices ou même "*out stations*"

ACTS SETTING OUT REGISTRAR GENERAL'S FUNCTIONS ON REGISTRATION MATTERS	
Non Parochial Registers Act 1840	Marriage (Registrar General's Licence) Act 1970
Places of Worship Registration Act 1855	Merchant Shipping Act 1970
Marriage and Registration Act 1856	Friendly Societies Act 1974
Births and Deaths Registration Act 1858	Legitimacy Act 1976
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Army) Act 1879	Adoption Act 1976
Savings Banks Act 1887	Parochial Registers and Records Measure 1978
Foreign Marriage Act 1892	Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978
Marriage with Foreigners Act 1906	Disuded Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981
Births and Deaths Registration Act 1926	Civil Aviation Act 1982
Marriage Act 1949	Social Security Act 1986
Shops Act 1950	Family Law Reform Act 1987
Births and Deaths Registration Act 1953	Local Government Finance Act 1988
Registration Service Act 1953	Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990
Foundling Hospital Act 1953	Social Security (Administration) Act 1992
Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages Act 1957	

LA STATISTIQUE PUBLIQUE AU ROYAUME-UNI



OTHERS ACTS DIRECTLY AFFECTING THE REGISTRAR GENERAL	
Census Act 1920	Population Statistics Act 1960
Population Statistics Act 1938	
Public Records Act 1958 (and Lord Chancellor's Instrument)	Census (Confidentiality) Act 1991

• La fonction de ***Head of the Government Statistical Service*** consiste à être le conseiller du gouvernement en matière de statistiques en coordonnant l'ensemble des services statistiques ministériels (avec conseils et arbitrages le cas échéant), en assurant la qualité, l'intégrité et l'efficacité du service, l'accessibilité et la fiabilité des données, ainsi que la représentation au niveau international. Ses responsabilités sont décrites dans l'*Annual Report to the Prime Minister by the Head of the Government Statistical Service* (le premier du genre a été réalisé pour 1995/96).

Deux publications[21] synthétiques illustrent cette configuration :

∠ " *Government Statistics - A Brief Guide to Sources* " du GSS par ministères.

∠ " *Guide to Official Statistics* " du CSO puis de l'ONS par thèmes.

Elles visent de plus à faciliter l'accès d'un large public aux statistiques officielles.

2) Rôle et travaux dans chaque ministère

Les principaux organismes[22] sont les suivants[23] :

• Le " ***General Register Office for Scotland*** ", version écossaise de l'OPCS, basé à Edimbourg et sous la direction de James Meldrum *(Registrar General for Scotland)*.

• Au " ***Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food*** ", dit ***MAFF***, les services statistiques, sous la responsabilité de John Slater (*Director of Economics and Statistics*), se composent de 4 divisions, basées à York et Londres, dont les pièces maîtresses sont respectivement :

∠ le recensement agricole du mois de juin[24] dont les résultats sont d'abord publiés dans les publications statistiques ministérielles, puis par l'imprimerie officielle dans *Digest of Agricultural Census Statistics,*

∠ l'enquête trimestrielle *National Food Survey,*

21 - Les publications (papier ou CD-Rom) tant de l'ONS que du GSS sont disponibles à l'adresse suivante : NSILS (National Statistics Information and Library Service), 1, Drummond Gate, London, SW1V2QQ (ou via Internet).

22 - Extrait de la présentation faite dans le rapport annuel 95/96 du GSS publié en 1997 (annexe II).

23 - Le nom officiel suivi du nom du directeur (ou responsable) est utilisé ici, mais une traduction est disponible dans le tableau de la page 21 qui donne les effectifs de chaque service statistique ministériel. Sauf précision contraire, l'organisme mentionné est basé à Londres.

24 - Recensement conduit annuellement depuis 1866 et sur lequel s'appuient toutes les autres enquêtes.

∠ les dépenses alimentaires des consommateurs et l'indice de production industrielle pour la chaîne alimentaire (contributions aux comptes nationaux et à l'indice de production industrielle coordonnés par l'ONS) ainsi que l'enquête *Farm Business Survey*,

∠ l'industrie de la pêche à travers *UK Sea Fisheries Statistics.*

∠ réponses aux questions parlementaires.

. • Au "*HM Customs and Excise*", basé à Londres et à Southend on Sea, le travail statistique est réparti entre le T&SO (*Tariff and Statistical Office*) et l'ESD1 (*Economics and Statistics Division1*) sous la responsabilité du Dr. Mike McDowall (Controller) [25].

25 - Grade spécifique à cet organisme (correspondant probablement en France à l'inspection des douanes).

∠ le premier service fournit à l'ONS des données du commerce : statistiques douanières d'un côté[26] et statistiques basées sur la balance des paiements de l'autre. Il utilise sa nomenclature (disponible à l'ONS) pour tous les biens importés ou exportés hors de l'Union européenne et la nomenclature Intrastat (ICN) sinon.

26 - Les plus détaillées (divulgables) étant fournies par le secteur privé par l'intermédiaire d'agents commerciaux.

∠ l'autre division produit les données et analyses nécessaires pour suivre l'évolution de la situation, notamment la TVA, et agir en conséquence, et contribue aux publications statistiques ministérielles et nationales telles que *Annual Report of the Commissioners of HM Customs and Excise, Financial Statistics, Monthly Digest of Statistics.*

• Au "***Department for Education and Employment***", dit ***DfEE***, les services statistiques[27], sous la responsabilité de Denis Allnutt (Director of Analytical Services), sont situés au sein de *l' Analytical Services Branch*, à Darlington ainsi qu'à Londres et Sheffield, et travaillent en collaboration avec différents organismes, dont *Further Education Funding Council, Higher Education Funding Council, Higher Education Statistics Agency* et l'ONS, pour produire l'information et les analyses nécessaires pour le développement, la mise en oeuvre ou l'évaluation des politiques de l'éducation (de l'école maternelle au troisième cycle universitaire) et de l'emploi (emploi des jeunes et formation continue).

27 - Une partie du Staff GSS de *l'Employment Department* y a été transféré le 5 juillet 1995.

• Au "***Ministry of Defence***", le service statistique, *Defence Analytical Services Agency* (***DASA***), est sous la responsabilité de Paul Altobell (Chief Executive DASA), et couvre trois secteurs -effectifs, économie et finances, et logistique- avec une fonction d'aide à la décision politique et une publication annuelle *UK Defence Statistics.*

• Au " ***Department of the Environment*** ", dit ***DOE***, les divisions statistiques, sous la responsabilité de Hilary Hillier (Head of Profession), se répartissent entre différentes directions, chacune rattachée à un directeur, et sont en contact avec les autorités locales et les groupes écologiques. Les principales publications sont :

- *Digest of Environmental Protection and Water Statistics*
- *the UK Environment*
- *Local Gouvernment Financial Statistics*
- *Land Use Change*
- *Development Control Statistics*
- *Housing and Construction Statistics (+ Local Housing Statistics)*
- *Digest of Data for the Construction Industry*
- *State of the Construction Industry*

• Au " ***Department of Health*** ", dit ***DH***, (pour l'Angleterre et Pays de Galles uniquement) cinq branches statistiques, sous la responsabilité de Rosemary Butler (*Director of Statistics*), définissent, collectent, traitent, analysent, conseillent, dans le domaine de la santé publique (hôpitaux et docteurs) et des services sociaux. Trois branches appartiennent au *NHS Executive* (2 à Leeds et 1 à Londres) et les deux autres font partie du ministère au sens large (à Londres).

• Au " ***Health and Safety Executive*** ", dit ***HSE***, au statut d'agence, les membres du GSS, sous la responsabilité de Anne Wheatcroft (Head of Profession), sont répartis entre l'unité de services statistiques (SSU de l'*Executive Support Branch*) et l'unité de statistiques épidémiologiques et médicales (EMSU *de la Technology and Health Division*), toutes deux basées à Bootle. La première unité s'occupe principalement des statistiques (collecte et diffusion) sur les accidents du travail et la seconde des statistiques (production et analyse) sur les maladies professionnelles ou les risques professionnels.

• Au " ***Home Office*** ", les services statistiques occupent trois divisions au sein du *Research and Statistics Department* (***RSD***) dirigé par Chris Nuttall (*Director of Research and Statistics*), et font paraître plus de 30 bulletins statistiques concernant la justice criminelle (crimes, victimes, criminels, peines, prisons) ainsi que des statistiques sociales sur les sujets tels que la désintoxication, l'immigration, les élections, les minorités ethniques etc.

• Au " ***Inland Revenue*** ", *le Statistics and Economics Office*, dirigé par Reg Ward (*Director of Statistics*), fournit les estimations, modèles, analyses, prévisions et conseils en la matière (taxes) principalement à partir de sources administratives. Outre les contributions apportées à *Financial Statistics et Economic Trends*, les principales publications sont :

- *Inland Revenue Statistics (IRS)*
- *Finance Statement and Budget Report (FSBR), publié par le Treasury.*
- contribuent par leurs données au *Blue Book* de l'ONS.

• Au " ***Lord Chancellor's Department*** ", dit ***LCD***, restructuré depuis la création du *Court Service* en 94/95 avec son propre service statistique intégré à la *Forecasting* and *Analysis Branch*, la section statistique appartient à l'*Information Policy Branch (IP)* dirigée par Andy Maultby (Head of Profession) et publie principalement *Judicial Statistics* (annuel) et *Time Intervals Statistics in the magistrates' courts* (3 fois par an) ainsi que des séries de bulletins, guides et rapports.

• Au " ***Department for International Development*** dit ***DfID*** (ex-ODA : Overseas Development Administration ", le département statistique, dirigé par Tony Williams (Chief Statistician), comprend deux groupes : le *Aid Statistics Group* a en charge la coopération avec les pays en voie de développement, et le *Statistics Advisers Group* a une fonction de conseil (pour les aspects statistiques) sur les programmes de modernisation des systèmes statistiques des pays d'Europe de l'est et de l'ex-Union soviétique ainsi que d'autres pays en transition en particulier en Afrique. Les statistiques du programme britannique de coopération sont publiées et communiquées au comité d'aide au développement de l'OCDE.

• Au " ***Scottish Office*** ", basé à Edimbourg, les services statistiques, dirigés par Colin R MacLean (Chief Statisticien), sont plutôt centralisés et produisent de l'information sur la plupart des aspects de la vie en Ecosse tant pour le Parlement et les dirigeants écossais que pour le public. La plupart des informations proviennent des autorités locales. Un comité consultatif de liaison statistique entre les services statistiques et les autorités locales se réunit deux fois par an. Outre les publications régulières telles que *Scottish Abstract of Statistics ou Scottish Environment Statistics*, plus de quarante bulletins sur des sujets spécifiques sont produits chaque année.

• Au " ***Department of Social Security*** " (***DSS***), les membres du GSS appartiennent à l' *Analytical Services Division* (ASD), dirigée par David Stanton (Director of Analytical Services), située à Londres (en majorité), à Newcastle et Leeds. Les principales séries statistiques sont[28] :

28 - Les bases de données des deux premières sont disponibles pour les analyses externes.

- *Households Below Average Income (HBAI)*
- *Social Security Statistics*
- *Family Resources Survey*
- *Income Support Annual and Quarterly Statistical Enquiries*
- *Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Summary Statistics*
- *Residential Care Nursing Home series*
- *Personal Pensions Statistics*
- *Take up statistics*

• Au " ***Department of Trade and Industry*** " (*DTI*), les statisticiens, en se servant à la fois des données chiffrées et de leur connaissance du champ ministériel, conseillent directement ministres et directeurs sur la signification des indicateurs (performances, prix, compétitivité...) en particulier de l'industrie, de l'énergie, du commerce et des petites entreprises. Chaque direction a son service statistique avec cependant une coordination assurée par Janet Dougharty (Chief Statistician). Certains statisticiens sont en outre détachés auprès d'organismes tels que l'*Office of Fair Trading* (OFT), l'*Office of Telecommunications* (OFTEL) et la *Monopolies and Mergers Commission* (MMC). Ces statistiques sont communiquées à l'ONS, Eurostat, l'OCDE, l'ONU, et l'Agence internationale de l'énergie.

• Au " ***Department of Transport*** " (*DT*), la direction des statistiques, dont Richard Butchart est en charge (Director of Statistics), consacre 60 % de son budget[29] à des dépenses externes : sous-traitance de collectes et analyses de données et achat, à fin d'analyse par la direction, de données collectées par d'autres ministères. Le travail statistique couvre tous les types de transport comme en rend compte annuellement Transport *Statistics Great Britain* complété par des publications thématiques détaillées.

29 - Par exemple, le coût net du travail entrepris par la direction en 1994/95 s'élève à £7.9 millions

• Au " ***HM Treasury*** ", le travail du GSS, sous la responsabilité de Allen Ritchie (Chief Statistician) était concentré sur deux secteurs, les statistiques sur les dépenses publiques et les statistiques sur le personnel. Les statisticiens fournissaient également des analyses en réponse aux questions parlementaires et certains se consacraient aux prévisions budgétaires, à l'analyse des structures de salaires ainsi que des postes administratifs et informatiques. A la suite du *Fundamental Expenditure Review of the Treasury*, les principales fonctions de l'administration, y compris les statistiques du personnel, ont été tranférées à l'" ***Office of Public Service and Science*** " le 1er avril 1995.

• Au " *Welsh Office* ", basé à Cardiff, la direction statistique, sous la responsabilité de Richard Alldritt (Chief Statistician), collecte, traite, interprète et publie l'information sur les conditions économiques et sociales au Pays de Galles tant pour le Secrétaire d'Etat pour le Pays de Galles que pour les besoins nationaux et internationaux (i.e. en respectant les normes communes). Les chiffres clés sont disponibles dans *Digest of Welsh Statistics et Welsh Economic Trends.*

• L'agence pour l'**Irlande du Nord** (NISRA déjà mentionnée page 8) ne fait pas partie du GSS, mais travaille en étroite collaboration avec les collègues statisticiens de Grande-Bretagne.

Enfin, d'autres organismes travaillent en étroite collaboration avec le GSS :

Bank of England
British Geological Survey
British Telecom
Building Societies Commission
Civil Aviation Authority
Civil Service College
Energy Technology Support Unit
Equal Opportunities Commission
Further Education Funding Council
Government Actuary's Department
Higher Education Funding Council for England
House of Commons Library
Monopolies and Mergers Commission
National Audit Office
National Statistical Institutes
Northern Ireland Departments
Office of Fair Trading
Office of Manpower Economics
Office of Telecommunications
Post Office
Registry of Friendly Societies
Scottish Health Service, Information and Statistics Division
Statistical Officers of International Organisations
GSS Directory Distribution Contacts
GSS Directory Amendment Co-ordinators
Heads of Units at Eurostat (SOEC)
GSS Detached National experts at Eurostat

• A la " ***Bank of England*** ", qui est indépendante, la *Monetary and Financial Statistics Division* (***MFSD***) dirigée par Philip Turnbull, ne fait pas partie du GSS mais fournit des données à l'ONS aux termes d'un accord validé annuellement sur les comptes nationaux, ainsi qu'aux organismes internationaux (FMI, OCDE, IME..). Les publications statistiques sont essentiellement *Banking Statistics, Statistical Abstract*, et une contribution au *Quarterly Bulletin*.

30 - C'est le cas par exemple pour les enquêtes FES (*Family Expenditure Survey*), *Health Survey* (pour l'Angleterre en 1994) et la collecte des prix pour l'indice des prix de détail (*Retail Price Index*). Ces agences travaillent alors en lien étroit avec le ministère concerné.

Une partie du travail statistique est effectuée à l'extérieur des services statistiques étudiés dans ce rapport, soit dans des agences non gouvernementales[30], soit dans les universités, et l'accent est alors mis davantage sur l'analyse et l'interprétation que sur la collecte. Ces organismes ainsi que les instituts de recherche fournissent également des consultants. Le GSS est en effet entouré de nombreux comités consultatifs qui observent les modalités statistiques dans leur domaine particulier et font des propositions d'évolution, notamment pour tenir compte de besoins nouveaux ou pour des raisons d'harmonisation comme c'est le cas par exemple pour les statistiques régionales (point C]).

3) Profil du personnel

La plupart des ministères emploient leurs propres statisticiens[31] bien que la gestion de leur carrière soit centralisée (notion de corps des statisticiens et gérée comme celle des statisticiens de l'ONS par le directeur commun). Cependant les profils peuvent varier, en raison des besoins spécifiques des différents ministères, pour des postes aux fonctions équivalentes. L'évolution de carrière et la mobilité ressemble beaucoup à ce qui se passe en France entre l'INSEE, les services statistiques ministériels et d'autres organismes intéressés (statisticiens mis à disposition ou détachés).

31 - Ils sont responsables de la production et la publication de statistiques sur des sujets particuliers, et fournissent un avis statistique à leurs ministres.

Grades pour le personnel des services statistiques (par ordre hiérarchique descendant)

grade 1 : directeur, président	Puis assistant statisticien ou sinon les titres de la fonction publique(avec parfois une mention spécifique comme social survey officer)
grade 2 : directeur adjoint	SEO : senior executive officer
grade 3 : directeur de « group »	HEO : higher executive officer
grade 4 (*intermédiaire*)	EO : executive officer
grade 5 : directeur, responsable de « division »	AO : administrative officer
grade 6 (*intermédiaire*)	AA : administrative assistant
grade 7 : responsable de « branch », principal	puis les secrétaires et le personnel de sécurité.

C'est le schéma classique sur lequel peuvent être apposés, en référence à certaines professions, des titres spécifiques tels que : juristes, économistes, scientifiques, statisticiens, officiers de la presse /de l'information..., et qui, par voie de consé-

32 - Le terme recouvre des cadres ayant au moins 25% de statistique dans leur diplôme universitaire (3 ans après le A-level)
33 - En équivalent plein-temps, au 1er avril 1995, sans compter les statisticiens en poste à l'extérieur du GSS. L'ONS emploie également 615 équivalents plein-temps dans ses activités d'enregistrement.
34 - A fusionné depuis avec celui de l'éducation (en 1995).

quence, dégagent des filières spécifiques. Chaque ministère a son système de paie, mais cette organisation est aussi en voie de révision pour faciliter la reconnaissance des mérites et orienter le système vers une reconnaissance de la tâche plutôt que du grade (c'est parfois un artifice) : l'ONS remplace actuellement le classement par grades par une classification en tranches de paie. Ainsi, quand un poste est créé, c'est la " difficulté " du poste qui est évaluée et il est affecté à quelqu'un de la tranche correspondante. En 1995, il y avait environ 600 statisticiens œuvrant dans l'ensemble des services ministériels avec environ 4400 administratifs et personnel d'appoint. Le personnel de l'ONS comprend actuellement environ 3000 personnes dont 200 sont des statisticiens. La répartition du personnel au sein du GSS est la suivante :

Ministères et autres organismes employant des membres du GSS (état au 1er avril 1995 et actualisations)

Source : ONS

		Statisticiens[32]			Personnel total GSS[33]		
Organisme	**Sigle**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**	**1995**	**1996**	**1997**
Ministère de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'alimentation	MAFF	26	25	22	164	168	158
Douanes et droits indirects	HMC&E	7	5	5	519	519	509
Ministère de la défense	MOD	22	19	19	128	124	116
Ministère de l'éducation	DfEE	25	42	40	135	166	176
Ministère de l'emploi	(voir note [34])	49	-	-	302	-	-
Ministère de l'environnement	DOE	42	43	38	170	174	150
Ministère des affaires étrangères (et Commonwealth)	FCO	1	1	1	3	3	3
Eaux et forêts	Forestry Commission	1	2	2	4	4	3
Bureau d'état civil d'Ecosse	GRO (Scotland)	4	5	5	56	56	67
Inspection du travail	HSE	10	12	11	25	27	28
Ministère de la santé	DH	52	45	48	253	224	196
Ministère de l'intérieur	HO	32	31	26	164	159	142
Ministère du développement international	DfID (ex-ODA)	9	7	9	20	16	26
Fisc	IR	24	23	22	130	49	46
Ministère de la justice	LCD	2	6	5	6	12	13
Patrimoine national	DNH	1	1	2	4	3	4
Epargne nationale	DNS	2	3	1	6	7	7
Office économique sur l'emploi	OME	6	8	6	14	12	7
Office National de Statistique dont	**ONS (depuis 1996) dont**	-	**131**	**172**	-	**2661**	**2551**
- Office statistique central	**- CSO (jusqu'en 1996)**	**121**	-	-	**1357**	-	-
- Office du recensement et de la démographie	**- OPCS ......(jusqu'en 1996)**	**28**	-	-	**1007**	-	-
Office de la fonction publique et de la science	OPSS	4	4	2	14	11	13
Office d'harmonisation du système éducatif	OFSTED	2	2	4	13	12	15
Office de l'eau	OFWAT	2	2	2	2	2	2
Office d'Ecosse	SO	34	33	34	130	128	103
Ministère de la sécurité sociale	DSS	33	38	40	55	129	138
Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie	DTI	32	45	35	88	96	85
Ministère des transports	DTp	29	26	17	114	105	92
Ministère des finances	HMT	14	12	10	42	38	34
Office du Pays de Galles	WO	23	22	22	65	57	57
TOTAL		**642**	**593**	**595**	**4990**	**4922**	**4743**

C] Aspects territoriaux[35]

35 - Extrait en grande partie du texte de J.S. Virdee (ONS) présenté au séminaire sur les statistiques régionales de Baden en 1996.

Les régions statistiques standard (SSRs) sont au nombre de 11 : 8 pour l'Angleterre (9 si on compte séparement Londres au sein de la région *South East*) auxquelles s'ajoutent le Pays de Galles, l'Ecosse et l'Irlande du Nord. Dans la nomenclature européenne, c'est le niveau NUTS 1.

North	South East	
Yorkshire&Humberside	South West	Wales
East Midlands	West Midlands	Scotland
East Anglia	North West	Northern Ireland

Mais il n'y a pas de services déconcentrés au sens de relais en régions[36] : ce sont des services centraux (de ministères ou d'agences) qui sont délocalisés en région comme le montre la carte ci-joint en ce qui concerne l'ONS et les services statistiques ministériels.

36 - A l'exception de certains ministères tels que l'agriculture ou la santé (voir plus loin la présentation de ces ministères).

L'Ecosse, le Pays de Galles et l'Irlande du Nord, qui sont donc ainsi à la fois des pays et des régions au sein du Royaume-Uni, ont leurs propres ministères, dénommés *Scottish Office*, *Welsh Office* et *Northern Ireland Departments*, qui sont en même temps ministères au niveau du gouvernement central. Mais il n'y a pas de représentation administrative du gouvernement au niveau (NUTS 1) des autres régions (partition de l'Angleterre).

Ainsi, le Royaume-Uni fait figure d'exception en Europe avec une organisation locale réduite : les deux principaux échelons géographiques étaient jusqu'en 1991 les comtés (47), niveau NUTS 3, et les districts (402), niveau NUTS 4. Seul le niveau "*county* " subsiste officiellement après la réforme du gouvernement Major. Le niveau NUTS 2 peut être indifféremment des comtés ou des regroupements de comtés mais il n'y a pas non plus de structure administrative à ce niveau.

"L'administration locale réside plus dans une libre administration, c'est-à-dire le libre choix des moyens de mise en oeuvre des politiques nationales, que dans la détermination d'un espace local du politique [mais l'Etat définit des standards de prestations assez stricts qui encadrent l'exercice de ces compétences] ; elle ne saurait générer de grands notables locaux, à l'instar des maires de nos principales villes ou des présidents des exécutifs départementaux ou régionaux. La présidence de conseils élus est dévolue le plus souvent annuellement et le titre de mayor délivré par charte royale ou de lord mayor accordé par lettre patente n'a qu'un caractère purement honorifique. Les carrières politiques nationales se font à l'intérieur des partis et non à parti de mandats locaux[37] .../

37 - Extrait de l'article de Jean-Philippe Bras dans "*Administration*" N°169 d'octobre/décembre 1995

.../"On peut ajouter qu'il n'y a pas de possibilités de cumuls d'un mandat local et d'un mandat national, ni d'un mandat politique pour un fonctionnaire et que beaucoup de services qui en France relève des collectivités locales sont depuis les années 70 confiées à des agences ayant leur propre découpage géographique (eau, santé) ou à des organismes indépendants (transport, logement, établissements scolaires et même certains services de police ou de lutte contre l'incendie).

Les délimitations peuvent alors varier en fonction de la tutelle, on peut citer : Health Authorities, Gas regions, Water Company areas, Electricity Company Areas, National Rivers Authority areas, Tourist Board regions, Television regions... (voir page suivante). Cependant, une réflexion a été menée par le *GSS committee on Regional Statistics* depuis 1993, en particulier pour trouver un accord sur un découpage géographique standard pour la présentation de statistiques régionales, sur la base de la nomenclature européenne des unités territoriales pour la statistique. De nouvelles antennes gouvernementales ont été créées : *Government Office Regions* (GORs) à un niveau intermédiaire entre les régions statistiques standards (SSRs) et le niveau NUTS 2. Ce niveau a été créé en avril 1994 par amalgame des offices régionaux des ministères de l'environnement, du transport, du commerce et de l'industrie, de l'éducation et de l'emploi.

Leur rôle consiste à fournir un point d'accès unique aux services gouvernementaux pour être en mesure de réaliser une reconstitution plus cohérente et adaptée au suivi du développement économique. Ces offices travaillent en partenariat avec les organismes locaux pour améliorer la compétitivité et la qualité de vie dans ces régions. Au sud-ouest, les délimitations sont à peu près les mêmes que les régions statistiques standard (SSRs), il n'y a pas de changement pour le pays de Galles, l'Ecosse et l'Irlande du nord, mais des différences plus importantes apparaissent à l'est[38].

38 - Voir *Regional Trends* n°32 (1997), publication de l'ONS.

Après consultation publique, il a été décidé, avec effet au 1er avril 1997, que les GORs deviendrait la classification de base pour la présentation des statistiques régionales[39] à la place des SSRs, ce qui a des conséquences sur toutes les enquêtes du GSS qui fournissent des données régionales, notamment *Labour Force Survey, New Earnings Survey, Annual Employment Survey*, car si la série correspondante est dorénavant publiée sur cette base, l'autre série doit être entretenue (elle est disponible sur demande) pour les besoins des utilisateurs, en particulier les rétrospectives. Une table d'équivalence a été établie :

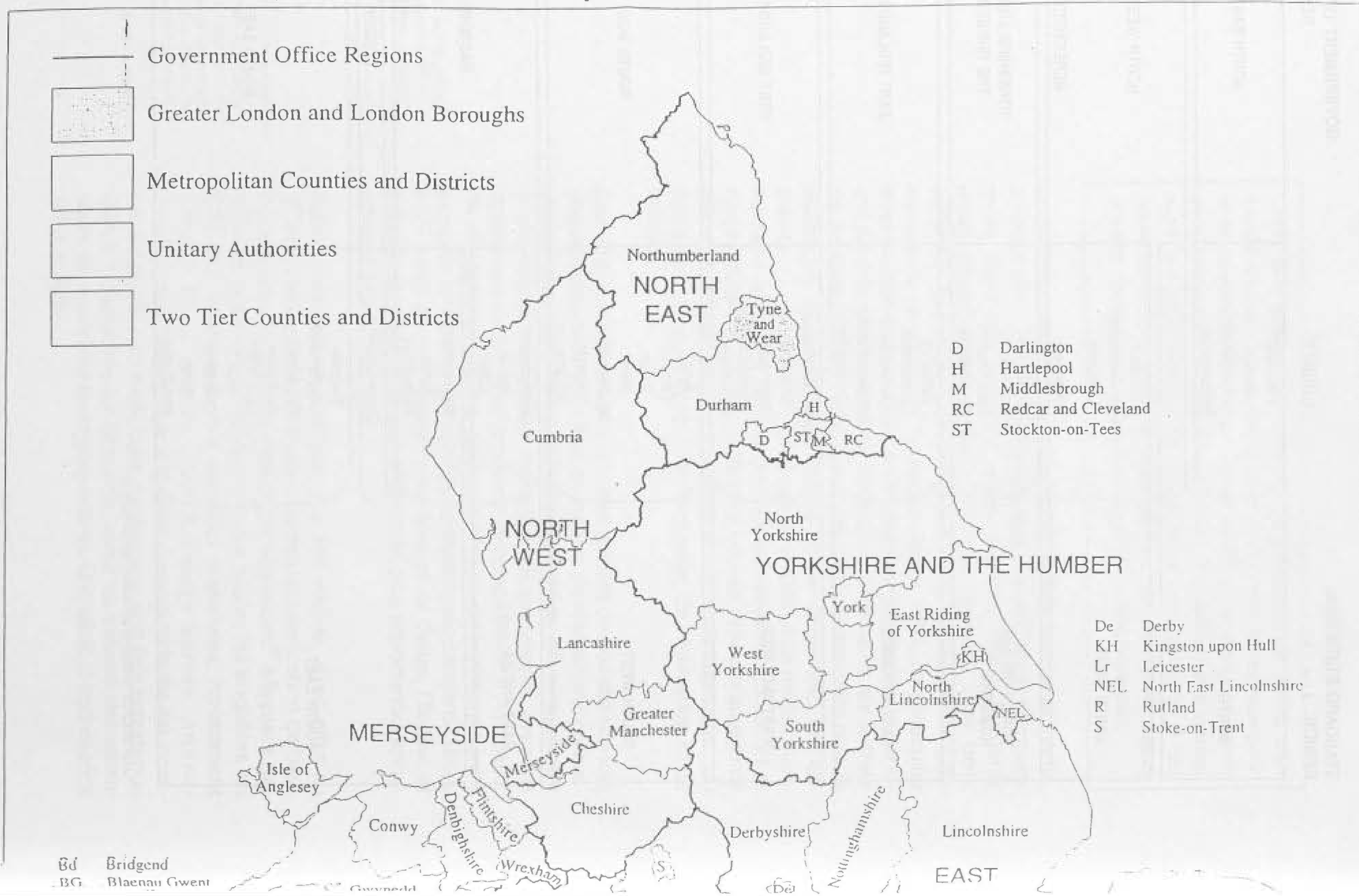
39 - Voir "*Labour market statistics : the move to Government Office Regions*" in *Labour Market Trends*, June 1997.

STANDARD STATISTICAL REGION	COUNTY*	GOVERNMENT OFFICE REGION
NORTH	Cleveland* Durham Northumberland Tyne and Wear	NORTH EAST
NORTH	Cumbria	NORTH WEST
NORTH WEST	Cheshire Greater Manchester Lancashire	NORTH WEST
NORTH WEST	Merseyside	MERSEYSIDE
YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE	Humberside* North Yorkshire* South Yorkshire West Yorkshire	YORKSHIRE AND THE HUMBER
EAST MIDLANDS	Derbyshire Leicestershire Lincolnshire Northamptonshire Nottinghamshire	EAST MIDLANDS
WEST MIDLANDS	Hereford and Worcester Shropshire Staffordshire Warwickshire West Midlands	WEST MIDLANDS
SOUTH WEST	Avon* Cornwall Devon Dorset Gloucestershire Somerset Wiltshire	SOUTH WEST
EAST ANGLIA	Cambridgeshire Norfolk Suffolk	EASTERN
SOUTH EAST	Bedfordshire Essex Hertfordshire	EASTERN
SOUTH EAST	Greater London	LONDON
SOUTH EAST	Berkshire Buckinghamshire East Sussex Hampshire Isle of Wight* Kent Oxfordshire Surrey West Sussex	SOUTH EAST

* Counties prior to local government reorganisation.

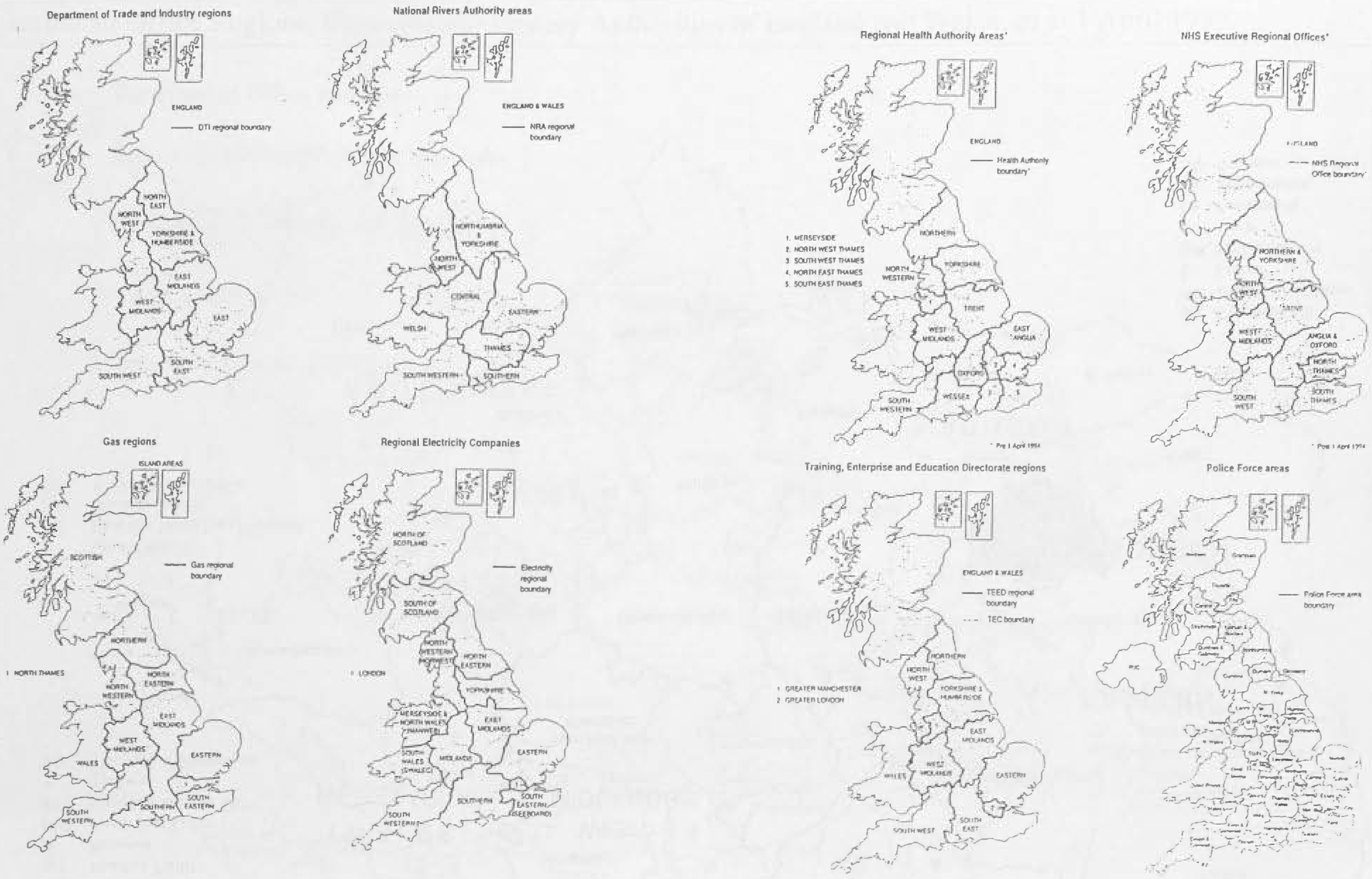
Source : ONS

Government Office Regions, Counties and Unitary Authorities of England and Wales, as at 1 April 1997



Produced by NATIONAL STATISTICS IDD GIS Unit, November 1996

Examples of different functional regional boundaries



Source : Regional Trends, Office for National Statistics, Crown copyright 1998.

III - MÉTHODES COMPARÉES

Les relations que l'INSEE entretient avec les instituts statistiques européens ont été rendues plus fréquentes du fait des groupes de travail Eurostat, où les représentants français rencontrent régulièrement leurs homologues, et ont conduit l'INSEE à s'intéresser aux similitudes et différences de contextes et de méthodes, aux avancées et réticences des uns et des autres, dans le but à la fois de jouer un rôle moteur dans la construction statistique européenne, et de repérer des voies d'évolution de ses propres méthodes compatibles avec une comparabilité européenne, voire internationale.

40 - Le Royaume-Uni est le premier pays ainsi étudié.

C'est pourquoi le regard porté sur chaque institut statistique à tour de rôle[40] sélectionne, en regard des méthodes françaises, les particularités de chacun dans les domaines qui intéressent l'INSEE. En ce qui concerne le Royaume-Uni, seront présentés successivement quelques remarques d'experts puis quelques thèmes d'actualité en matière de comparaisons. Pour aller plus loin dans la comparaison et envisager une démarche conjointe de coopération entre experts, des propositions d'études concluront, avec mention de quelques articles de référence, chaque sujet.

A] Quelques orientations britanniques spécifiques (constantes ou en évolution)

1) Nomenclatures et concepts

• La vision britannique des **nomenclatures** (d'activités économiques) diverge de la nôtre essentiellement sur deux points :

∠ l'intitulé de poste peut être très long (c'est pratiquement un commentaire)

41 - Le correspondant d'Émile Bruneau (division concepts et nomenclatures) est David Knight.

∠ la notion d'unité économique couvre environ 28 800 unités (de 20 employés ou plus) très bien repérées contre 400 à 500 000 en France. Les britanniques cherchent moins que les français à coordonner des activités économiques et abordent aussi différemment la notion de produits[41].

• L'unité d'activité économique (UAE) correspond à leur unité d'observation, ce qui rend le règlement européen de 93 plus facilement applicable au Royaume-Uni qu'en France. Ainsi, par exemple, le **concept** d'activité plutôt que de production prime dans l'approche britannique de l'IPI : au niveau de chaque UAE, les ventes sont déflatées par un indice de prix composite (PVI et prix à l'exportation). Mais il n'y a pas de correction des stocks pour aboutir à une estimation de la production à un niveau fin de nomenclature[42] et elle se fait à l'aide d'une enquête trimestrielle (seulement par grandes industries) ce qui rend la correction mensuelle impossible.

42 - Voir le compte rendu de mission (avril 95 et juin 96) d'André de Los Santos dont le correspondant fut Mike Pepper (homologue de M. Hébert).

→ Thème d'étude : si la notion d'UAE est théoriquement séduisante, comment est-elle utilisée dans la pratique (gestion des enquêtes, rapport entre UAE et répertoire d'entreprises[43], etc) ? En effet, d'une manière générale, les discussions se font plus sur les concepts que sur les pratiques.

43 - Voir le registre d'entreprises IDBR décrit page 36-37.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *Population Units in the Major Business Surveys*, Jones T (Statistiscal Methods and Quality Reports MQ006, November 1994)
- *Compte rendu de la réunion du groupe de travail sur les unités statistiques du 14 mars 97*, Germaine Brudieu (INSEE, Département Système Statistique d'Entreprises)

2) Comptes nationaux

• Les trois approches utilisées pour le PIB (production, demande, revenus) se sont révélées contradictoires au Royaume-Uni, notamment parce que la base des comptes est trimestrielle et non annuelle[44]. En France, l'approche " revenus " est déduite des deux autres dans les comptes trimestriels. La méthode britannique de partage volume-prix dans les **comptes nationaux** est en voie de refonte[45]. Une certaine rigidité à la révision des comptes de la part des comptables nationaux est due aux contraintes de justifications à fournir en cas de dépassement des seuils autorisés : un " projet d'entreprise " (prémisse d'une démarche assurance-qualité) affiche le niveau de qualité (délai et précision) souhaitable pour chaque évaluation d'une même grandeur[46].

44 - Voir le compte rendu de mission (février 94) de Stéphane Gregoir (division comptes trimestriels à l'époque).

45 - Commentaire post-mission dans le cadre du groupe de travail Eurostat (avril 96) de Jacques Magniez (division concepts et nomenclatures).

46 - Exemple : pour le PIB (long terme, prix constants), 3 révisions sur 4 se rapportant à l'année de référence doivent être inférieurs à 0,75.

Les comptes de secteurs sont essentiellement construits à partir d'enquêtes réalisées par le bureau central des statistiques ou sous-traitées à des entreprises privées, et de données administratives. En France, on interroge seulement sur l'évolution des stocks et non sur les profits ni sur les émissions d'actions ou les investissements. Les britanniques mesurent des volumes et des valeurs (chiffre d'affaires). Pour obtenir des volumes (le cas échéant), ils déflatent un indice de valeur par un indice de prix.

Un travail sur les indicateurs avancés (*Monthly Indicator of GDP*) avait été entrepris au Royaume-Uni en collaboration avec des universitaires (par synthèse d'informations à une date donnée, on prévoit l'évolution) mais il vient d'être abandonné : le programme de l'ONS n'autorise pas ces prévisions et beaucoup d'organismes privés en font. En France, on exploite essentiellement les enquêtes de conjoncture.

→ Thème d'étude (en cours de réalisation) : étude du système de comptes intégré de l'ONS (mission de 24 mois de Philippe Ravalet à partir de l'automne 97).

Pour en savoir plus :

- *The UK sector accounts*, Philip Turnbull (CSO), in Economic Trends n° 479, Sept.93
- *Handling Revisions in the National Accounts*, Wroe D, in Economic Trends n°480, Oct. 93
- *Measuring the Accuracy of the National Accounts*, Rizki U, Statistical Methods & Quality MQ001, Dec. 93
- *Quarterly integrated economic accounts - the United Kingdom approach*, in Economic Trends n°520, March 97
- *Rapport de la Task-Force " Partages volumes-prix dans les comptes nationaux "*, version Rev.1/709/D250, Philippe Domergue (INSEE, Département des Normes Statistiques et Comptables)

3) Indices

• La méthodologie en usage pour les **indices du commerce extérieur** (en valeur et en volume) avait fait l'objet d'une étude critique en 1992 et par suite d'une révision avec mise en place d'une nouvelle approche[47] (introduisant pour déflater la notion de prix " véritable " suivi par les EPIs/IPIs : export/import price index) en mai 96. Les principaux problèmes identifiés provenaient d'inexactitudes dans les données quantitatives (à cause par exemple d'unités de mesure inappropriées), d'incohérences dans la couverture des opérations (notamment avec Intrastat, soit par exemple un prix variable suivant le pays destinataire), d'insuffisances dans la nomenclature de produits (produits chimiques par exemple) ou de différences de qualité dans la définition des produits. De nombreuses révisions étaient alors nécessaires.

47 - Voir le compte-rendu de mission (janvier 96) d'Henry Tyrman (division échanges extérieurs) dont le correspondant fut Kevin Williamson.

Depuis janvier 95, les britanniques ont adopté une méthode mixte de calcul des déflateurs du commerce extérieur, en recourant pour une partie des produits à des enquêtes de prix, et en conservant la méthodologie des indices de valeur unitaire

48 - Les Britanniques travaillent en prix et volumes et les Français plutôt en prix et quantités.

pour le reste. Cette nouvelle méthodologie, intéressante et peu coûteuse, a des implications sur le calcul de l'IOP (*index of production*, IPI en France) et du GDP (*gross domestic product*, PIB en France). L'objectif affiché par l'ONS est d'une part d'étendre la collecte d'EPIs, et d'autre part d'utiliser les données et indices des autres pays (quand ils sont disponibles)[48].

→ Thème d'étude : cette solution pragmatique pour le calcul des déflateurs du commerce extérieur mériterait d'être comparée à celle utilisée en France.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *Deflation of trade in goods statistics, derivation of price and volume measures from current price values*, in Economic Trends N°521, April 97, Kevin Williamson and David Ruffles (ONS).

• Ce principe se trouve confirmé par le fait que les **indices de prix de vente industriels** calculés par l'ONS couvrent toute l'industrie, à la fois "prix sortie d'usine" (comme l'IPVI français), mais aussi les prix d'achat par les industriels (input indexes) de matières de base, énergétiques ou non énergétiques. De même, depuis 1995, une extension de l'enquête, trimestrielle et désormais obligatoire, se fait progressivement à davantage de services en vue d'un indice de prix des services avec deux types de prix : prix d'une prestation-type, et coût moyen unitaire d'un élément caractéristique de la prestation supposée être le déterminant du prix du service. L'intérêt de leur méthode réside dans le fait qu'un maximum de procédures sont automatisées telles que l'estimation des prix manquants ou le traitement de l'effet qualité[49]. De plus, une étude très sérieuse est en cours sur le calcul d'indicateurs de précision pour les indices[50], de manière à publier la précision d'un indice en même temps que ses valeurs.

49 - Voir le compte-rendu de mission (juin 95) d'André de Los Santos (département de l'industrie et de l'agriculture).

50 - Une étude préliminaire a été réalisée par des universitaires pour élaborer une modélisation statistique théorique de la pratique de l'enquête.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *ONS plans to extend publication of Service Sector Statistics*, in Economic Trends N°519, January 97, Derek Baskerville (ONS).

- *Mieux prévoir les variations de stocks avec les enquêtes de conjoncture*, dans Economie et Statistique n°307, 1997 (Hélène Eyssartier et Claire Waysand)

• Le suivi des **prix à la consommation** se fait de façon comparable au Royaume-Uni (*Retail Price Index*) et en France avec toutefois, outre l'absence de niveau régional comme en France, deux différences notables : l'utilisation actuelle de la sous-traitance (à un institut privé après cahier des charges et appel d'offre) pour toute la collecte et la saisie alors que l'INSEE a un réseau d'enquêteurs formés, et le traitement des logements et loyers.

La relation bilatérale est bonne et donne lieu à des échanges réguliers de données et de publications (le mensuel de l'ONS est intermédiaire entre Infos-Rapides et le BMS)[51] . Un indice des prix harmonisé constituait un des critères de convergence de Maastricht et cette obligation de comparabilité a abouti le 1er janvier 1997. Cependant la France et le Royaume-Uni sont les deux seuls grands pays européens à chaîner les indices (avec la Suède qui utilise un chaînage de type Edgeworth). Au Royaume-Uni, un doute sur la qualité de cet indicateur servant à l'élaboration de la politique monétaire (cf. un rapport de la Banque d'Angleterre), s'est installé et conduit à se poser la question d'un biais dans l'indice. Un travail simultané a ainsi été réalisé sur le rapport BOSKIN.

51 - L'homologue de Stéfan Lollivier (département des prix à la consommation, des ressources et des conditions de vie des ménages) était Marta Haworth jusqu'à fin 1996 et sera dorénavant Dave Fenwick.

→ Thème d'étude : peut-être un échange sur le calcul des indicateurs de précision pour les indices ?

Pour en savoir plus...

- *The research and development programme for the RPI in the context of the Boskin report*, Michael Baxter, in Economic Trends (à paraitre à l'automne 97).
- *L'indice des prix à la consommation surestime-t-il l'inflation?* dans Economie et Statistique n°303, 97-3, François Lequiller (INSEE, Département des prix à la Consommation jusqu'en mars 97).

4) Recensement

• Le choix de sous-traitance -assez fréquent, de même que le recours aux universités- s'applique aussi au **recensement** (ici à l'université de Manchester). La préparation du prochain recensement est très soignée -compte tenu des problèmes rencontrés lors du précédent- et présentée dans la publication de " *Census News* ". Les recensements britanniques et français sont par nature très comparables : population analogue, collecte par agent recenseur, contrôle par le fichier de la taxe d'habitation, diffusion similaire... L'OPCS envisageait des innovations en matière de collecte et avait des projets de diffusion électronique ambitieux[52], objectifs sans doute repris par l'ONS. La France, de son côté, a un projet global de codification automatique pour 1999.

52 - Voir le compte rendu de la visite des responsables du recensement anglais fait par Michel Jacod le 13 février 1995 (n°7/F101 MJ/SA).

AU ROYAUME-UNI, un test du recensement a eu lieu en Angleterre, en Ecosse et en Irlande du nord en avril 1997. A la suite de celui-ci, un " papier blanc " du gouvernement annoncera les modalités d'une répétition générale en avril 1999 pour le recensement de 2001. Le test britannique sera facultatif et son principal objectif sera d'essayer de nouvelles procédures de terrain pour améliorer le taux de couverture et la qualité des données, ainsi qu'évaluer la réaction du public aux nouvelles questions, à la formulation et aux différents styles de présentation.

EN FRANCE, dans le cadre de la préparation du recensement de 1999, cinq tests se sont déjà déroulés en 1997 :

53 - Les documents de référence du côté français sont les documents de travail F9504 et F9505.

∠ En avril 1994, eut lieu tout d'abord un test de questionnaires (test facultatif - 30 000 répondants) dont l'objectif était de recueillir l'avis du public sur les nouvelles questions (ou formulations) susceptibles de figurer dans les questionnaires du recensement de 1999[53].

∠ Le test d'octobre 1995 (test obligatoire - 55 000 répondants) visait la mise au point de nouvelles procédures de collecte pour une meilleure utilisation du fichier de la taxe d'habitation d'une part et une confidentialité accrue des données de l'enquête famille d'autre part.

∠ En novembre 1996, dans l'éventualité d'une saisie par lecture optique, un test sur une population restreinte (test facultatif - 6 000 répondants) a permis de vérifier la bonne acceptation par le public de questionnaires dont la présentation avait été remaniée pour satisfaire aux exigences de la nouvelle technique de saisie.

∠ Enfin, deux tests étaient prévus en 1997. Le premier, en mars-avril, appelé " collecte massive " (test obligatoire - 300 000 personnes concernées) aura pour finalité de collecter massivement des questionnaires pour constituer les jeux d'essai des chaînes de traitements informatiques. Le second, appelé " répétition générale " (test obligatoire - 100 000 personnes concernées), aura lieu en octobre 1997 et sera l'occasion de rôder l'ensemble des équipes des directions régionales qui participeront au recensement de 1999.

54 - Voir les comptes rendus de mission (hiver 95/96) de Chantal Madinier (division recensement de la population) dont le correspondant fut Alex Clark (venu en France en 94).

→ Thème d'étude : poursuivre après la première étape qui visait à comparer les dossiers de présentation du recensement, les tests, les formulaires[54], les modalités prévues pour la saisie des documents, pour les contrôles de cohérence, pour l'anonymisation des données... (mission de l'équipe de préparation britannique fin août à Paris).

Par exemple, la lecture du questionnaire britannique montre que des questions considérées en France comme trop personnelles sont posées (ethnie, religion, état de santé), que la référence de comparaison avancée dans les questions (adresse, emploi...) est l'année antérieure (en France c'est le précédent recensement), et que, d'une manière générale, le questionnaire est orienté individu au Royaume-Uni alors qu'il est orienté logement en France.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *Looking towards the 2001 Census, OPCS occasional paper* n°46, April 95
- 1997 *Census Test in Horizons* n°2 January 97 (Living in Britain 1995), publications ONS.
- *Propositions pour le plan de diffusion du recensement général de la population de 1999*, document Insee n°1288/RP99, M. Chaleix, C. Madinier et J.F. Royer (Départements de la Démographie et de l'Action Régionale).

5) Diffusion

• Au Royaume-Uni, la **facturation**[55] des publications se fait de manière à en recouvrer le coût total, y compris les frais de commercialisation / maquettage / distribution et les frais d'édition dans la mesure où ils dépassent la part du gouvernement, mais à l'exclusion des coûts de la collecte initiale, du traitement des données et de l'établissement des séries statistiques. L'ex-CSO publiait un flot d'indicateurs économiques[56]. " *First Releases* " ou " *Business Monitors* " présentent des statistiques d'entreprises, " *Social Trends* ", " *Regional Trends* " et " *Social Focus* " fournissent une image des changements dans la société[57]. S'y ajoute, comme pour la France, la demande de l'Union européenne (Eurostat) et de la communauté internationale en matière statistique.

De grands changements sont intervenus à l'ONS depuis trois ans du fait à la fois du passage de Bill McLennan à la tête du CSO et du changement de statut de l'Office. Le statut d'agence exécutive autorise en effet l'ONS à percevoir des rentrées financières soit en raison de contrats obtenus lors d'appels d'offres, soit du fait de ventes de produits (standards ou sur commande). Réciproquement, des publications régulières de l'ONS sont sous-traitées (appels d'offres) et adoptent une présentation résolument grand public (style magazine). La fonction "Marketing" a été considérablement développée[58] et l'ONS semble, comparativement à la plupart des instituts statistiques européens, actuellement chercher à approfondir sa connaissance du marché.

55 - Annexe F de la déclaration d'intention du nouvel ONS (Annexe II).

56 - Indices des prix de détail, des prix à la production, des ventes au détail, de la production industrielle, statistiques du commerce extérieur, etc.

57 - Là aussi, le CSO joue un rôle clé en coordonnant les données émanant des différents départements ministériels.

58 - Philip Powell a le titre de *Director of marketing and customer services* avec une formation commerciale du type HEC.

59 - Projet élaboré lors d'une mission en janvier 96 de Paul Champsaur accompagné de Daniel Lerner pour cet aspect diffusion.

60 - Voir en Annexe I les différentes propositions : l'Insee préférant la formule simplifiée (page 55)pour cette première expérience.

61 - Outre ceux communiqués systématiquement en un exemplaire au titre de l'accord d'échange de 1988 : Le Courrier des statistiques, Insee Première, Infos Rapides, Bloc-Notes, Annuaire statistique de la France, Insee Résultats,Economie et Statistique,le Bulletin Mensuel de la Statistique.

62 - Cependant, jusqu'à présent l'échange était déséquilibré en faveur du Royaume-Uni.

63 - Le correspondant britannique de Mme Gouet est Mark Harris.

64 - Référence : le "*Data Protection Act*" de 1984 et le "*GovernmentStatistical Service Code of Practice on the Handiling of Data Obtained from Statistical Enquiries*" présenté au Parlement en juin 84.

65 - Et soutenu, outre l'université, par l'ESCR (Economic and Social Research Council) et le JISC (*Joint Information Systems Committee*).

66 - Voir les annexes I et II.

• Un protocole de **diffusion** spécifique[59], sur le principe que chaque institut contribue à la diffusion des produits du catalogue de l'autre, est, en 1997, en cours de signature[60] entre l'INSEE et l'ONS.

Les titres diffusés seraient choisis par l'ONS[61] parmi : *Données Sociales* (éd.96), *Tableaux de l'Economie Française* (96/97), *Annuaire statistique de la France* (éd.96 papier et CD ROM), *La France et ses régions* (éd.97), *La France des services, Chiffres clés de l'industrie française du SESSI* (ministère de l'industrie). La vente des produits de l'ONS serait assurée par Insee Info Service ainsi qu'une ou deux directions régionales, et la vente des produits de l'INSEE sera assurée par l'ONS à son libre choix (ONS ou recours à des librairies privées). Ces produits seront inclus dans les plans de promotion et les catalogues respectifs, et le principe de partage des recettes est retenu[62]. Chaque partenaire désigne un correspondant chargé de gérer les relations courantes[63] et une articulation entre les serveurs WEB respectifs est également prévue. Une action de formation de deux jours sera organisée dans chaque pays pour présenter le dispositif statistique du partenaire et le contenu des produits à vendre.

• Avec la **diffusion de fichiers détail** se pose le problème de la confidentialité[64] tant du point de vue juridique (règles du secret statistique) que du point de vue méthode (procédés de brouillage). Le contexte actuel d'accroissement des demandes en tableaux détaillés et d'accès aux fichiers pousse à étudier les méthodes de contrôle de la divulgation statistique. Des différences fondamentales de pratique s'observent entre les deux pays. Depuis quelques années, l'ONS a fortement incité à une large exploitation des données et les études des chercheurs britanniques (que l'ONS ne fait pas en interne) sont assez valorisées au Royaume-Uni, alors qu'en France, les études sont réalisées en interne et leur diffusion peut alors rester interne. La France semble diffuser assez largement ses fichiers et le Royaume-Uni assez peu, mais celui-ci dispose d'un service d'archivage et de gestion des données, " *The Data Archive* " localisé à l'université d'Essex[65], chargé notamment d'organiser les consultations (tarifées en fonction de plusieurs critères[66]) : c'est le dépositaire le plus important (avec accès informatisé) de données relatives à la sphère économique et sociale, historique et contemporaine et en provenance (contrat de dépôt) de sources gouvernementales, universitaires et commerciales.

→ Thème d'étude : Une meilleure connaissance réciproque des solutions apportées à ce problème et des modalités de mise à disposition (usages, contraintes, facturation) est souhaitable.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *Report of the Task Force on Disclosure*, december 1995, GSS Methods Committee
- *Pricing and dissemination Policy* (brochure 3 pages, ONS)
- *Charging Guidelines, for statistical products and services* (memento, GSS)
- *The marketing decision*, Eurostat report 1996, Philip Powell (ONS, Marketing and Customer Service)
- *Archivage et diffusion des fichiers informatiques de l'INSEE*, Courrier des statistiques n°66, juin 93 (INSEE)
- *La politique de cession et de tarification de l'INSEE*, Courrier des statistiques n°67-68, décembre 93 (INSEE)

B] Quelques thèmes repérés en vue de comparaisons plus approfondies.

1) Technologies d'enquêtes

D'une manière générale, les britanniques utilisent relativement peu les sources administratives[67] et ont une préférence pour les enquêtes. Comparativement à la France, ils font plus d'enquêtes en continu. C'est pourquoi leurs recherches dans ce domaine sont intéressantes. Mais, contrairement à l'INSEE, l'ONS ne fait pas, ou peu, l'analyse des résultats. La procédure est habituellement celle de l'appel d'offres entre l'institut statistique, les universités et les sociétés privées. Heureusement la division de l'ONS concernée, mise en concurrence, peut obtenir ce contrat. La division des enquêtes sociales a souvent obtenu ces marchés et peut maintenir 9 enquêtes en continu sur l'année bien qu'elle ait perdu par exemple l'enquête " *Health* " pour l'Angleterre et, récemment, l'enquête " *Time Use* ". Cette division domine le marché avec la SCPR qui en occupe le tiers. Elle n'a pas de ressources propres mais génère un chiffre d'affaires de £25m (l'enquête mensuelle dite " *Omnibus* " dans laquelle les questions varient d'une fois sur l'autre, peut lui rapporter en fonction des annonceurs qui lui achète un espace).

67 - Notamment parce qu'ils ont peu de registres et que les concepts enregistrés ne correspondent pas aux besoins de suivi statistique mais à un besoin administratif particulier ; par exemple, la définition du chômeur a changé 32 fois (*Claimant Count*).

Les deux principaux axes développés récemment sont l'automatisation des procédures et la réduction des charges (coût des enquêtes et charge de réponse). Le mode de réponse par téléphone à touches a également été testé ; il est actuellement utilisé dans l'enquête sur les prix à la production des services, et devait être proposé à partir d'août 96 aux industriels du secteur manufacturier[68].

68 - Voir la description de la procédure dans le compte rendu de mission (juin 96) d'André de Los Santos.

69 - Comme en France, le logiciel de questionnement choisi est Blaise, logiciel développé aux Pays-Bas par le CBS.

70 - Contrairement à ce qui se fait en France : le travail est en outre organisé en équipes de manière à contacter les personnes absentes de leur domicile en journée.

71 - Toutes les informations sur la formation des enquêteurs sont disponibles auprès de Liz Mc Crossan (social survey division).

• La **collecte assistée par informatique, CAPI, avec utilisation du progiciel Blaise**[69] est très développée. Toutes les enquêtes sont sur micro-portable y compris depuis peu l'enquête "*Omnibus*". A la différence de la France, les concepteurs, informaticiens et responsables de la collecte sont rapprochés dans un même lieu, et les méthodes utilisées peuvent être très variables d'une enquête à l'autre. Les délais de production des enquêtes sont ainsi considérablement raccourcis : grâce à CAPI (moins d'erreurs de routage, de saisie...), à l'utilisation du téléphone pour 4/5 des interviews[70] et finalement grâce au report sur l'enquêteur des tâches de codification. En France on facilite le travail de l'enquêteur[71] en améliorant le fonctionnement de Blaise par programmation par exemple du carnet de tournée avec les adresses (option zéro-papier) ou redéfinition de la présentation écran.

Enquêtes passées en Capi

LFS (*Labour Force Survey*, Emploi)	Housing Survey (Logement)
GHS (*General Household Survey*, Ménages)	FRS (*Family Resources Survey*, Revenus)
Travel Survey (Transport)	FES (*Family Expenditure Survey*, Budget de famille)

La Social Survey Division compte 280 personnes et un réseau de 1000 enquêteurs dont environ 480 enquêteurs font des interviews en face-à-face, 250 sont spécialisés dans les enquêtes par téléphone, et 170 se consacrent à l'enquête emploi en continu (LFS). Les enquêteurs par téléphone sont réunis dans un centre unique (pool téléphonique) situé à Tichfield et font l'objet d'un recrutement local, les autres sont recrutés au niveau national par voie de presse. En France, les mêmes enquêteurs font tout et travaillent de chez eux.

Les caractéristiques du réseau d'enquêteur ressemblent davantage qu'auparavant à celles du réseau Insee. En ce qui concerne le **recrutement des enquêteurs**, la préférence au Royaume-Uni va dorénavant, en raison du développement de ces technologies d'enquêtes, vers une fidélisation du personnel : moins nombreux mais réalisant plus d'enquêtes (l'expérience acquise de ces nouvelles méthodes accroît l'efficacité). Aucune qualification n'est réclamée au départ et la sélection s'opère d'abord sur la base de deux documents : un questionnaire confidentiel détaillant notamment le niveau de disponibilité, la possession d'une voiture, le niveau d'éducation, les emplois antérieurs et l'expérience dans ce métier (*Interviewer Application Form*) et un descriptif de la fonction (*Background Notes for Prospective Interviewers*). Un rendez-vous avec le candidat présélectionné teste la compréhension des questions et des instructions. Les enquêteurs sont en majorité des hommes (30 % de femmes) et des personnes en pré-retraite. En général, on observe 30 % de perte la première année puis 15 % ensuite (retraites incluses).

72 - Le correspondant de Chantal Cases (division prix et condition de vie des ménages)

Dans le cadre du panel européen sur la condition de vie des ménages[72], les méthodes britanniques se caractérisent non seulement par la collecte avec CAPI, mais aussi par l'introduction d'un contrôle pour régler l'incohérence longitudinale (entre vagues) et le test d'un nouveau module d'interrogation des indépendants. L'utilisation de techniques modernes permet ainsi de réduire le coût des enquêtes (moins d'heures manuelles de saisie en particulier) et de gagner du temps pour la livraison des résultats. L'exploitation de l'enquête et la publication d'études y afférant relèvent du client (à qui est souvent livré un fichier).

• L'utilisation de nouvelles technologies telles que **le système OCR/DIP** (*Optical Character Recognition/Data Image Processing*) se généralise aussi pour le traitement des formulaires remplis. Ils sont scannés à réception par la *Data Collection Unit* (DCU) puis introduits dans le système avec deux processus lors d'un unique passage :

∠ capture d'image de chaque formulaire pour une recherche ultérieure et visualisation par les opérateurs EED en cas d'échec des contrôles de validation des informations.

∠ récupération des données des diverses rubriques pour traitement par le logiciel.

Ce système est par exemple systématiquement utilisé dans les enquêtes AES (*Annual Employment Survey*) et NES (*New Earnings Survey*).

• **Deux spécifités britanniques** sont à remarquer dans les enquêtes :

Le code postal est conçu de manière à constituer quasiment un découpage par quartiers, il pallie l'absence d'échelons géographiques à un niveau fin. De nouvelles adresses sont facilement et rapidement introduites mais il est parfois plus difficile de repérer les adresses qui ne sont plus valables. Le fichier est à deux niveaux (utilisation large ou utilisation restreinte), est réactualisé tous les six mois et enrichi par les données du recensement ; par exemple, le pourcentage de chômeurs dans une aire relevant d'une autorité locale dont l'adresse est restée, le pourcentage par grandes catégories des principales classifications socio-économiques, dans le but de préparer une stratification dans les sondages complémentaire à celle purement géographique. Il s'avère d'autant plus utile que la plupart des enquêtes (de la *Social Survey Division*) sont basées sur le ménage.

Le dépôt des données des enquêtes régulières, une fois anonymisées et après publication des résultats par l'ONS ou tout autre organisme (ministère ou client), se fait au " *Data Archive* " (mentionné page 40). Par exemple, dans le cas de l'enquête européenne sur la force de travail (LFS), ce sont les mêmes données qui sont transmises à Eurostat et déposées en archives à l'université d'Essex pour être à la disposition des chercheurs bien intentionnés qui payent alors un droit d'accès. L'ONS ne touche rien mais a un droit de regard car accorde l'autorisation de consultation. L'ONS est intéressé par l'exploitation qui est faite de ces données mais n'assume aucune responsabilité quant à l'usage qui en est fait. Les données peuvent aussi être communiquées à des clients contractuellement via des bureaux commerciaux qui assurent ce service. Ce centre détient environ 5000 fichiers dont les principaux sont :

UK Census Data	Labour Force Surveys
Workplace Industrial Relations Surveys	1851 British Population Census Returns
General Household Survey	JUVOS Unemployment Statistics
British Election Studies	NHS Patients Re-registrations
Family Expenditure Survey	National Child Development Study
British Social Attitudes	Eurobarometers
CSO Data	British Crime Surveys
National Food Surveys	New Earnings Surveys

A l'exception du recensement, l'anonymisation se fait pour toutes les enquêtes de manière pragmatique par simple éradication des informations susceptibles d'identifier un individu : pour les aires géographiques, on ne descend pas en dessous d'un certain niveau (ici, en général le comté), pour les enquêtes sur des sous-groupes particuliers, des renseignements tels que l'âge ou les détails de la profession sont supprimés...

• La **réduction du coût des enquêtes auprès des entreprises** a déjà été évoquée dans le cadre plus général du " *Compliance Plan* " (page 13 et annexe). La réduction du nombre d'enquêtes et de la taille des échantillons (grâce aux améliorations des techniques et aux interconnections de fichiers), permet de répondre à l'objectif similaire à celui de l'INSEE, prioritaire dans les relations avec les entreprises, de **réduction de la charge de réponse**. En évaluant les modalités de réalisation de chaque enquête, le CSO a estimé le coût de réponse par rapport au besoin d'information en partant du principe que ce coût est pour partie constitué par le temps mobilisé du chef d'entreprise ou de ses employés et pour partie afférant aux outils nécessaires à la formulation de la réponse (voir encadré).

Méthode de calcul du coût de réponse pour les entreprises

Coût total = (RxTxC) + (NxtxC) + A

avec : R = nb de répondants, T = temps requis pour fournir l'information, C = coût horaire du répondant, N = nb de non-répondants, t = temps pris par ceux-ci pour réfléchir et décider de ne pas répondre, A = traitement informatique., C peut être calculé à partir de l'information disponible dans New Earnings Survey.

Exemple pour un questionnaire postal envoyé à 1000 directeurs

Les taux horaires précis ne sont pas connus, ils sont alors estimés à £45 par heure.

Un taux de réponse de 80 % est escompté et un test montre qu'il faut environ 30 minutes pour remplir le questionnaire en incluant la recherche de l'information.

On suppose les non-répondants auront mis 3 minutes à prendre cette décision.

10 % des retours (soit 80 questionnaires) nécessiteront une relance (réponses complémentaires mobilisant en moyenne 10 minutes soit un coût additionnel de 80 * 10/60 * £45 = £600.

L'équation ci-dessus permet d'évaluer le coût de l'enquête pour les entreprises à :

(800 * 30/60 * £45) + (200 * 3/60 * £45) + £600 = £19050

L'évaluation[73] des enquêtes est réalisée par la DDU (*Departmental Deregulation Unit*) de l'agence qui tient un inventaire de toutes les enquêtes statistiques périodiques, arrête des objectifs spécifiques en vue de minimiser et si possible de réduire le charge de réponse, et évalue les progrès réalisés. Il s'agit d'éviter la duplication entre enquêtes, de simplifier les questionnaires, de développer un répertoire interministériel sur les activités économiques.

73 - Il existe un document support de contrôle-qualité GSS *Statistical Quality Checklist UK GSS 1997* (voir exemple en annexe I)

→ Thèmes d'étude : l'utilisation du code postal PAF (Postcode Address File) dans les enquêtes, l'archivage des données (comparé avec le Lasmas en France) ou le choix d'enquêter simultanément sur emploi et production dans le cadre de la réduction du coût des enquêtes pour les entreprises.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *The Data Archive*, dossier complet de présentation, University of Essex (archive@essex.ac.uk)
- *A report of surveys to business and local authorities produced by the Survey Control Unit of the Central Statistical Office*, rapport du Government Statistical Service.
- *Annual report on major regular social surveys 1996/97* GSS, Committee on Social Statistics, Socio-Economic Statistics Analysis Group ONS.

2) Les répertoires

• En ce qui concerne **les répertoires d'entreprises**, la France se dit actuellement plutôt leader et se tourne donc davantage vers la coopération dans ce domaine. La réflexion dans les deux pays sur la charge statistique des entreprises avait déjà conduit de part et d'autre à proposer des solutions :

EN FRANCE, les Centres de Formalité des Entreprises (CFE) ont été conçus en 1981 pour être le lieu unique de toutes les déclarations relatives à la vie (création, modification ou cessation d'activité) des entreprises et de leurs établissements. Des passerelles s'établissent progressivement entre les diverses bases de données de manière à favoriser les échanges informatisés (tout en protégeant les données). Le répertoire **SIRENE**[74], par son identifiant unique et obligatoire, facilite l'appariement de toutes les sources d'information et ses mises à jour utilisent diverses sources :

74 - Le Répertoire national d'identification des entreprises et de leurs établissements a pour mission d'enregistrer l'état civil des entreprises : nom, prénom, date et lieu de naissance (personne physique), ou raison sociale (personne morale), ainsi que sigle, forme juridique, siège social, dates de création ou de cessation d'activité, et pour un établissement, adresse, date et origine de la création, et indicateurs de taille et d'activité exercée.

∠ l'effectif salarié (au 31 décembre de l'année n-1) des établissements est fourni annuellement par les sources BRIDGE et DADS (plus de 1,5 millions de mise à jour par an).

∠ l'activité principale exercée (APE) est contrôlée et mise à jour en permanence grâce à OCEAN, outil de coordination des enquêtes économiques (les EAE permettent de contrôler l'APE de 300 000 unités par an et de façon exhaustive pour les plus grandes).

∠ le chiffre d'affaires est révisé annuellement à partir de la base SUSE (décalage temporel de deux ans).

∠ la variable état est mise à jour, soit à partir des déclarations CFE, soit à partir des retours d'enquêtes statistiques ou administratives générées à partir des confrontations des fichiers fiscaux ou sociaux.

∠ les variables de marquage sont mises à jour en permanence notamment grâce aux sources infra-annuelles comme les déclarations mensuelles à l'URSSAFF ou les déclarations mensuelles de TVA.

Des travaux sont en cours :

∠ le projet ODISSEE (outil de diffusion d'informations SIRENE et de statistiques sur les entreprises et les établissements) est prévu pour être opérationnel début 97.

∠ la refonte du vidéotex professionnel SIRENE au stade de l'étude préalable.

∠ une meilleure appréciation des " fausses actives " est envisageable par une estimation de leur taux de présence sur stratification avant toute enquête sur le terrain.

∠ une réflexion est en cours pour réorganiser le système des répertoires (un ensemble plus vaste que SIRENE) et développer des éléments relatifs à différentes unités statistiques (entreprises, unités d'activité économique, groupes...).

AU ROYAUME-UNI, l'" **Inter-Departmental Business Register** " (IDBR ou répertoire d'entreprises interministériel[75]), créé en avril 1995 à l'initiative du CSO et du ministère de l'emploi (appellations d'époque) par nécessité pour le Royaume-Uni[76], et opportunément en raison du besoin manifesté au niveau européen, est essentiellement une liste (1,9 million d'entreprises) de noms et adresses d'unités opérant au Royaume-Uni. L'IDBR couvre plus de 98 % de l'activité économique du Royaume-Uni, à l'exclusion des ménages et des organismes extra-territoriaux. Un comité de gestion interministériel en suit les développements et veille à son utilisation systématique pour les contrôles de cohérence. Ce registre est utilisé pour sélectionner des échantillons en vue d'enquêtes statistiques et ses principales sources d'information sont le fichier VAT (TVA) (identifiant pour les entreprises) et le fichier PAYE (*pay as you earn*)[77] des régimes de cotisation d'employeurs.

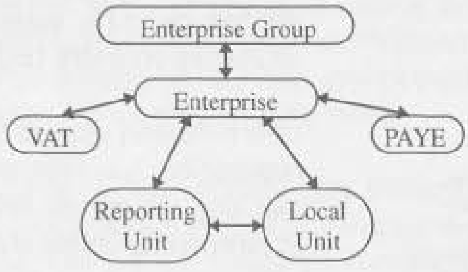
Du point de vue pratique, le fichier VAT, fourni à un rythme hebdomadaire par le ministère de douanes et droits indirects, couvre 1,6 million d'entreprises de commerce, et le fichier PAYE, fourni à un rythme trimestriel par le fisc, couvre 0,9 million d'employeurs (les deux étant communiqués sur support informatique). Les unités qui y sont décrites sont dénommées " *administrative units* ". Les renseignements communiqués (les formulaires sont envoyés à la " *reporting unit* ") sont traités par un procédé de codage automatique (*Precision Data Coder*) qui consiste à lire les descriptions (inscrites dans un espace structuré en cases) et à affecter en conséquence un code de la classification SIC92 : c'est l'interlocuteur qui décide de décomposer ou non ses activités économiques en principale et secondaires. Les unités dites statistiques sont telles que le groupe d'unités légales relevant du même propriétaire est appelé " *Enterprise Group* ". Enfin, une " *enterprise* " est la plus petite combinaison d'unités légales ayant un certain degré d'autonomie à l'intérieur du groupe.

75 - Toutes informations complémentaires peuvent être obtenues auprès de John Perry (Business Registers Unit).

76 - Un recensement de l'ensemble des entreprises (1,2 millions d'établissements) avait été réalisé en 1993 et couvrait les entreprises qui avaient des salariés et non pas les entrepreneurs individuels ou les sociétés en nom collectif.

77 - PAYE est un système de collecte de l'impôt auprès des salariés par l'intermédiaire des employeurs.

Schéma descriptif des unités prises en compte dans l'IDBR :



Les données de l'IDBR sont " *restricted commercial* " ; la publication de listes d'entreprises (autre que la base officielle ACOP) nécessiterait une demande d'autorisation préalable (contrairement à la France qui se conforme simplement aux usages) et génèrerait un coût qu'il faudrait donc justifier.

→ Thème d'étude : observer la méthode anglaise de codage automatique et les conditions de publication des répertoires d'entreprises (raison sociale, adresse, activité, produits, taille).

Pour en savoir plus :

- *The Inter-Departmental Business Register*, in Economic Trends n°462, April 92
- *IDBR, Inter Departmental Business Register, a Brief Guide*, ONS
- *Le répertoire d'entreprises interministériel du Royaume-Uni*, Courrier des Statistiques n°75-76, décembre 95, John Perry (ONS).
- *Dossier SIRENE*, Courrier des Statistiques n°75-76, décembre 95, Hugues Picard (Unité Répertoire et Démographie des entreprises et établissements, Insee)
- SIRENE : *The French Business Register- Enterprise Statistics- Le courrier des statistiques*, English series, n°3, 1997

• Les **répertoires de personnes physiques** et leurs modes d'utilisation sont moins connus.

EN FRANCE, le **répertoire national d'identification des personnes physiques** (RNIPP) a pour base l'état civil (transfert des bulletins des mairies à l'INSEE)[78] . L'application BRPP qui couvre à la fois la gestion du RNIPP et celle du fichier électoral a été rénovée en 1993. Le coût en heures manuelles de la gestion courante du répertoire est de l'ordre de 70 000 heures soit

78 - Identité et existence mais pas l'adresse physique.

2 personnes-années par DR auquel il faut ajouter 35 mois de production et 18 mois de maintenance au CNI de Nantes. L'accès à l'information est réglementé et facturé, et la contrepartie en termes de recettes est significative (entre 4 et 5MF par an).

Le répertoire en tant que tel ne donne pas lieu à études statistiques à l'exception du thème des noms et prénoms, mais il est utilisé pour quelques opérations statistiques importantes : le NIR (numéro d'inscription au registre) est l'identifiant utilisé pour la gestion de l 'EDP (panel démographique), et le RNIPP permet l'identification des lignes DADS (Déclarations Annuelles de Données Sociales) pour leur regroupement une même année et pour les rapprochements entre années successives. Il a permis de rassembler des informations administratives éparpillées dans de multiples organismes moyennant l'emploi de procédures en double-aveugle (pour respecter les dispositions de la loi " Informatique et Libertés " de 1978). Les utilisations du RNIPP sont accessibles en annexe II.

Le répertoire national inter-régimes d'assurance maladie (RNIAM) sera géré par la CNAV.

AU ROYAUME-UNI, les numéros nationaux d'identification sont essentiellement le **numéro du service national de sécurité sociale** NI (*National Insurance number*) qui couvre la population active[79] et dont l'utilisation principale est la taxe sur les salaires (avec le système de déduction à la source, la contribution à la caisse de sécurité sociale, et le droit à certaines aides sociales). Ce numéro administratif peut être utilisé à des fins statistiques : les informations d'origines administratives diverses peuvent être mises en relation ou interconnectées en vue de l'établissement de statistiques. Mais il n'y a pas de connection avec l'état-civil et il n'y a pas d'identifiants nationaux des personnes[80]. Nul n'est obligé de se déclarer auprès d'une quelconque autorité ou d'un organisme[81] et le nombre de personnes présentes sur le sol britannique reste indéterminé.

Les **numéros du service national de santé** (*NHS numbers*) n'ont aucun lien avec les numéros cités de sécurité sociale (NI)[82], ne sont pas utilisés à des fins statistiques et couvrent 99 % de la population. Avant 1996 existaient 22 variétés de numéros car ils avaient été créés à l'origine, (en 1939), pour des besoins d'identification des civils puis adaptés en 1948 pour former un identifiant de santé et de nouveaux formats furent créés après épuisement des anciens. Les numéros actuels à dix cases sont produits de façon aléatoire et n'ont pas de signification. Ils sont émis localement lors de l'enregistrement des naissances ou par l'ONS, qui maintient à Southport un index central, pour tous les nouveaux numéros ou pour les personnes

79 - Dans la pratique, ce numéro est attribué à la naissance de l'enfant pour l'octroi des allocations familiales, et devient opérationnel au moment de l'entrée dans le monde du travail.

80 - Protection des données notamment par le Census Confidentiality Act de 1991.

81 - Les migrations internationales sont connues par des enquêtes auprès des passagers, les migrations intérieures par le changement de docteur.

82 - Les HA ciphers ne font pas partie du NHS number : ils sont une abréviation en deux ou trois lettres, par exemple "DO" pour Dorset. Ils indiquent les comtés, les districts métropolitains ou arrondissements londoniens.

en provenance de l'étranger qui ont besoin d'un nouveau numéro parce que l'ancien ne peut pas ou n'a pu être retrouvé. Dans ce cas, ils sont redistribués au niveau local d'enregistrement des naissances.

L'ex-OPCS (intégré depuis à l'ONS) a un système de panel démographique avec des données sur la santé qui ressemble au projet envisagé en France pour l'avenir pour les enquêtes-santé.

➜ Thème d'étude : à l'occasion de la constitution en France d'un identifiant permanent de patient (IPP), et au stade de l'étude préalable, une meilleure connaissance de ces identifiants et de leur fonctionnement serait utile.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *A guide to the National Health Service Central Register* (NHSCR), ONS
- *Possible use of administrative records to supplement data collected in a census of population*, and *Use of health service registers in the estimation of population and migration*, working papers submitted by the General register Office of Scotland and OPCS for England and Wales, Conference of European Statisticians, Jan. 1995

3) Emploi et salaires

Les sources britanniques sur ce thème sont :

∠ " *New Earning Survey* " (NES), enquête structure légère portant sur 1 % des salariés et donnant chaque année le salaire du mois d'avril de l'année n, avec sa décomposition en 4 postes[83], et le total des gains bruts de l'année fiscale écoulée (i.e. avril n-1, avril n).

83 - Salaire de base, primes pour heures supplémentaires, prime de poste, primes de performance individuelle

∠ " *Quarterly Labour Force Survey* " (QLFS), enquête emploi[84] (force de travail) en continu avec résultats trimestriels.

84 - 16 personnes la gèrent, encadrant le travail de 500 enquêteurs (moitié en face-à-face, moitié par téléphone en équipes centralisées)

∠ " *Employees/Workforce in Employment* " (WinE) combine le nombre d'employés (source employeurs) avec le nombre d'indépendants (source LFS) et le nombre d'employés des forces britanniques (source Défense).

∠ " *Average Earnings Index* " (AEI), un indicateur (série initiée en 1989) mensuel de salaire moyen en 19 secteurs

85 - "*Options for Producing Monthly Estimates of Unemployment According to the ILO Definition*", report of the work undertaken by the Task Force (CSO, janvier 96)

86 - Une personne est au chômage si elle est sans travail et, en même temps, disponible pour un travail et à la recherche d'un travail

87 -Pour plus d'information, s'adresser à Bob Armitage

(pour les évolutions trimestrielles) mais sans décomposition par profession.

∠ Le " ***Claimant Count*** " (CC), mesure mensuelle du chômage par enregistrement des demandes d'indemnités-chômage

Remarque : le rapport[85] de David Steel sur le travail de la task force à partir de la définition[86] du BIT (ILO), Bureau International du Travail (International Labour Office), montre que les britanniques utilisent l'enquête trimestrielle sur la force de travail et la mesure mensuelle du chômage (source administrative CC) mais, les deux sources ne suivant pas la même définition du chômage, suggère qu'un autre suivi mensuel soit élaboré à partir de la Labour Force Survey.

• Le système statistique sur le marché de l'**emploi**[87] repose sur des principes similaires en France et au Royaume-Uni. Comme en France, la synthèse des sources sur l'emploi s'appuie sur différentes catégories d'informations : enquêtes auprès des entreprises sur l'emploi salarié, données centralisées sur l'emploi public et quelques secteurs, informations sur les non-salariés issues de l'enquête sur les forces de travail, effectifs des forces armées, nombre de personnes concernées par les programmes de formation avec contrat de travail. Les différences les plus importantes entre les deux pays sont liées d'une part au fait que l'enquête emploi de l'ONS est trimestrielle depuis 1992, et d'autre part aux sources administratives qui enregistrent tous les demandeurs d'emploi (ANPE) et tous les salariés (DADS) en France, et seulement les demandeurs d'emploi indemnisés (UBO) et les salariés (PAYE) à l'exception des plus bas salaires au Royaume-Uni.

L'emploi salarié des entreprises est calé en niveau sur un recensement effectué tous les 2 ans. Il s'agit en fait d'une enquête portant sur le quart des employeurs et couvrant environ 80 % des effectifs concernés avec répartition par sexe et distinction temps plein/temps partiel (au plus 30 heures par semaine). Les questionnaires font l'objet d'une saisie optique et les résultats devraient être diffusés 9 mois après la fin de l'année (réduction de moitié du délai).

88 - Auparavant, deux enquêtes étaient superposées, l'une annuelle auprès de 45 000 ménages et l'autre trimestrielle auprès de 15 000 ménages

89 - Ils décident donc des priorités, et notamment des investissements méthodologiques, en fonction de leurs propres impératifs

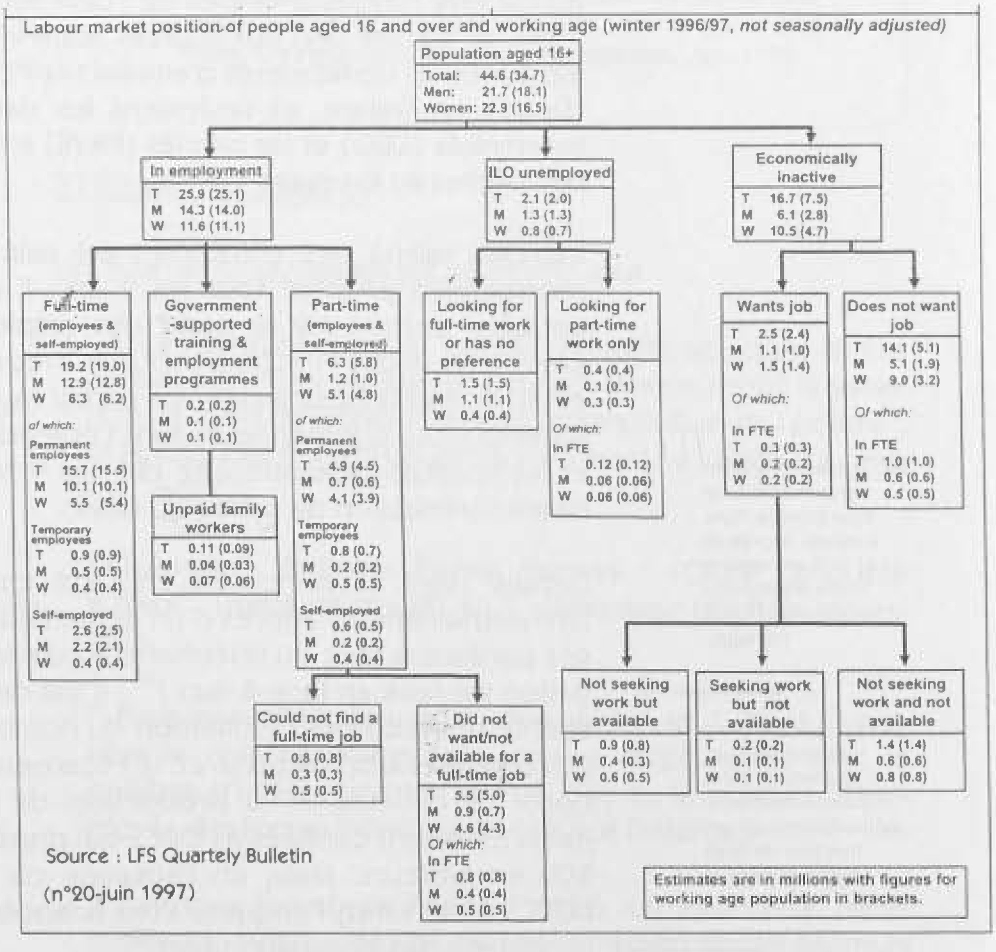
Depuis 1992, la principale enquête emploi (LFS) se fait (trimestriellement) auprès d'un échantillon de 60000 ménages par face-à-face ou téléphone (seule la première interrogation est faite en face-à-face)[88] . C'est depuis 1992 la seule source utilisée pour l'estimation du nombre de non-salariés (divergences trop fortes avec le recensement de la population). La collecte et la production de l'enquête étaient jusqu'à présent confiées à l'OPCS qui dispose d'un réseau de 500 enquêteurs. Mais, en l'absence de budget propre à l'OPCS à cet effet, l'enquête était financée directement par les organismes commanditaires[89].

Les publications anglaises sur ce thème sont :

∠ le document " ***Labour Market Statistics Press Notice*** ", correspondant à la production de la section synthèse et conjoncture de l'INSEE, publié selon un calendrier défini à l'avance au milieu de chaque mois, contient des informations, provenant de sources administratives ou d'enquêtes auprès des entreprises, sur : les demandeurs d'emploi, l'emploi, les postes vacants, les heures travaillées, les salaires, la productivité, les conflits du travail et l'emploi-formation.

∠ le document " ***Labour Force Survey Quarterly Bulletin*** " donne chaque trimestre les principaux résultats de l'enquête trimestrielle sur les forces de travail (emploi, chômage, population active, chômeurs découragés), et analyse le croisement entre chômeurs au sens du BIT et demandeurs d'emploi (mais, contrairement à la France, sans calage de l'exploitation des sources administratives sur l'enquête LFS pour estimer un taux de chômage au sens BIT).

L'édition de juin 1997 du bulletin trimestriel LFS décrit par exemple ainsi la structure du marché du travail :



Source : LFS Quartely Bulletin (n°20-juin 1997)

➔Thème d'étude : la division emploi accueille Phillip Lee pour 18 mois (au moment de la refonte de l'enquête emploi) pour un échange de savoir-faire méthodologique sur l'enquête emploi. Un échange de fichiers des enquêtes française et britannique entre les deux services est proposé.

Pour en savoir plus :

- *Measures of unemployment : the clairmant count and the LFS compared* in Employment Gazette, October 93
- *Les sociétés britannique et française depuis 25 ans* dans France, portrait social, et Social Trends, Nov. 1997, Phillip Lee, Patrick Midy (INSEE), Allan Smith, Carol Summerfield (ONS).
- Article de comparaison des structures du marché du travail en France et au Royaume-Uni (à paraître à la fois dans Insee-Première et Labour market trends), Phillip Lee, Insee-ONS

• En ce qui concerne le **suivi des salaires**[90], les dernières constatations sont les suivantes :

∠ similitude de position sur l'IECE[91] en général par rapport aux propositions d'Eurostat[92].

∠ Royaume-Uni choisi comme pôle de réflexion pour l'enquête structure des salaires au niveau européen[93].

∠ méthode britannique de construction d'un indice de coût horaire du travail[94] intéressante.

La **New Earnings Survey** a lieu en avril[95] chaque année depuis 1970 et a pour but d'obtenir des informations sur les niveaux et distributions de salaires des employés (salaire bruts de l'année) dans toutes les industries et professions et pour les principales conventions collectives.

- L'échantillon correspond à 1% des membres du fichier PAYE (Pay as you earn) dont dispose le Fisc (Inland Revenue) qui communique les noms et adresses des employeurs avec ceux des employés individuels. Pour 88%, il est extrait directement par sélection des employés dont le NI (National Insurance number) finit par deux chiffres donnés. Le reste de l'échantillon est destiné à couvrir les employés qui ne sont pas inscrits dans le fichier PAYE (parce qu'ils gagnent moins qu'un certain seuil) est obtenu directement dans les grandes entreprises publiques et secteur privées.

90 - Suite aux réunions du groupe de travail européen sur les salaires avec Derek Bird comme homologue pour Louis de Gimel (division salaires)

91 - Indice Européen du Coût de l'emploi en cours d'élaboration à Eurostat

92 - De manière générale, par la construction d'un indice à partir des sources existantes ; et de manière particulière, par le fait de ne pas séparer CDD/CDI, de ne pas donner de résultats par grands groupes d'âge, ainsi que sur l'importance des révisions (Eurostat envisage un indice non révisable)

93 - Voir (en annexe II) la note détaillée N° 181/F240/LDG/CB du 18 nov. 1996

94 - Voir (en annexeII) la note détaillée n° 126/F240/LDG/CB du 4 sept.1996

95 - L'année budgétaire au Royaume-Uni se déroule du 1^er^ avril de l'année nau 31 mars de l'année n+1

- 200 000 questionnaires sont envoyés à environ 74 000 employeurs dans la première quinzaine d'avril. La scannérisation et le processus OCR/DIP (depuis 1994) sont appliqués à la réception des retours (voir technologies d'enquêtes page 34). Puis les données sont transmises électroniquement chaque nuit pour identification et vérification dans l'IDBR (voir répertoires page 36). Les données qui ont passé avec succès ces tests de validation au cours des différentes procédures sont intégrées dans les fichiers NES et IDBR pour actualisation. Parmi les vérifications, il faut tenir compte du fait qu'un individu qui est membre de plus d'un fichier PAYE peut apparaître plusieurs fois. Les employés à plein temps sont mieux couverts que les employés à temps partiel notamment parce que ceux qui gagnent moins de £68 par semaine ou £294 par mois ne sont pas couverts (en dessous du seuil d'imposition).

- Les employeurs spécifient si, en avril, la durée de référence est la semaine ou quatre semaines ou le mois, et cela est converti en équivalent hebdomadaire dans les résultats de l'enquête. Les informations, pour chaque individu de l'échantillon, sont les suivantes: le salaire brut total sur la période de référence (avec précision, le cas échéant, de congé-maladie, chômage technique, ou absence qui affectent le salaire), le salaire de base et les paiements additionnels de différentes natures (heures supplémentaires, primes diverses, indemnités diverses...), le salaire brut annuel total sur l'année écoulée, le nombre d'heures standard et le nombre d'heures supplémentaires, le sexe, l'âge, le type ce tarif (adulte ou non), le temps-plein ou temps-partiel, la profession, la distinction manuel/non-manuel, la branche industrielle, le lieu de travail, la convention collective (s'il y a lieu).

Remarques : par le mode de tirage, les salariés présents dans la NES (New Earning Survey) constituent un panel sur l'ensemble du champ des activités (y compris administrations). Avec cette enquête, les anglais possèdent une source annuelle plus riche et plus rapide que les sources françaises issues de la conjugaison des enquêtes gains et des DADS, puisqu'elle permet d'analyser les effets de structure sur l'évolution des principaux éléments du salaire, à partir d'un véritable échantillon de salariés dans un délai de disponibilité inférieur à celui des DADS. En revanche, la source d'information mensuelle apparaît moins riche que l'enquête trimestrielle ACEMO (qui ne porte que sur le salaire de base).

→ Thème d'étude : (en cours) : Participation au programme de recherche basé sur l'enquête européenne sur la structure des salaires piloté par la London School of Economics

Pour en savoir plus :

- *The Average Earnings Index* in Employment Gazette, Special Feature, November 89

- *Une expérience française de combinaison d'une enquête et d'un fichier administratif : l'enquête complémentaire aux déclarations annuelles de salaires (DADS)*, Jean-Louis Faure, groupe de travail OCDE, octobre 1996.

IV - Conclusion

D'une manière générale, l'INSEE et l'ONS entretiennent déjà des relations mutuelles attentives ; des échanges d'information et des missions ont régulièrement lieu de part et d'autre. En 1997, ce fut notamment le cas en ce qui concerne le recensement (mission de l'ONS à Paris en août) et l'emploi (mission de l'INSEE au Royaume-Uni en octobre). Des compte-rendus détaillés des missions antérieures avaient déjà permis d'observer des différences de méthodes et de repérer des démarches intéressantes.

Ces rencontres ne permettaient cependant pas d'aller au delà de ces constatations et, par exemple, d'effectuer des recherches ou de produire des travaux en bilatéral à un moment pourtant où les exigences d'harmonisation et de comparabilité au niveau européen peuvent conduire à modifier ou créer les méthodes et outils existants ou nécessaires.

C'est pourquoi, en complément des réflexions menées dans les groupes de travail d'Eurostat, par souci de qualité et d'optimisation dans un contexte budgétaire strict, il est envisagé de mener en commun une analyse plus approfondie des méthodes et des expériences de l'autre institut statistique, notamment dans ses domaines de compétence constatés, et dans les domaines où des méthodes trop différentes pourraient être un obstacle à la publication de résultats comparables.

Dès à présent, deux expériences sont en cours par échange de personnel sur le modèle franco-canadien :

∠ Phillip Lee est en place dans le département de l'emploi et des revenus d'activité à l'INSEE depuis mars 1997 pour 18 mois. Il participe à la refonte de l'enquête emploi et à la rédaction d'articles en commun pour les publications des deux instituts.

∠ Philippe Ravalet est en place pour deux ans à partir de l'automne 97 dans la division des comptes nationaux à l'ONS pour étudier le système britannique de comptes intégrés.

De son côté, l'ONS pourrait être intéressé à l'INSEE par des thèmes moins développés dans l'institut statistique britannique, par exemple la conjoncture et les études sociales, ainsi que l'étude de certaines méthodes françaises telles que micro-simulations (modèles statique et dynamique) et exploitation mixte de sources administratives et d'enquêtes ou également une participation aux journées méthodologiques organisées par l'unité méthodes statistiques (où le Canada est l'interlocuteur privilégié).

Enfin, l'observation des façons de faire des deux instituts britannique et français permet de constater à l'ONS une pratique plus usuelle des procédures de sous-traitance et d'appel d'offres, y compris vis-à-vis d'Eurostat, et, en revanche, à l'INSEE, une plus grande internalisation des études méthodologiques (en amont) et des analyses (en aval). La démarche-qualité affichée de l'ONS est explicitement orientée vers le marché, alors qu'à l'INSEE, les efforts d'amélioration de la qualité sont entrepris et jugés du point de vue de chaînes de production et d'usage plus intégrées.

À suivre ...

ANNEXES

I - Annexe ci-joint

II - Annexe disponible dans la division Méthodes comparées

Tous les documents cités dans ce rapport y compris dans la bibliographie ci-après peuvent être demandés à l'auteur du présent rapport.

III - Annexe future

Les documents nouveaux ou complémentaires concernant tant l'organisation statistique du Royaume-Uni que le développement de travaux bilatéraux sont à communiquer à la division Méthodes comparées pour enrichissement et actualisation de l'information de base présentée dans ce texte.

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Liste des interlocuteurs ONS privilégiés

ARMITAGE Sue,	Head of PPS Data Collecting unit
BAIRD David,	Data Collection Initiatives unit
BIRD Derek,	Earnings and Employment division
BLACK Ole,	Acting Head of Production Sector division
BRUETON Anna,	Head of National Accounts branch
CLARK Alex,	Deputy director of Census
DENHAM Chris,	Head of Census Customer service
DIXIE John,	Head of Census Contents, questions and classification unit
FRANCOMBE Keith,	Head of Distribution & Service sector
HAWORTH Martha,	Head of Labour Market division (nouveau poste)
HOLT Tim	Director of the Office for National Statistics and Head of GSS
JONES Tim,	Head of Methods and Quality division
KIDGELL John,	Head of Macro-Economic Statistics & Analysis group
KINDER John,	Head of Product Prices and Sales branch
KNIGHT David,	Classifications unit
LEE Phillip,	Division Emploi à l'INSEE
MANNERS Tony,	Social Survey division, researcher
MARTIN Jean,	Social Survey division, head of group 1
MAYHEW Les,	Head of Administration Services & Registration group
McCROSSAN Liz,	Social Survey division, field branch
PAPE Robin,	Head of Information Systems division
PARTINGTON James,	Head of PPI Development section (ancien poste)
PEPPER Mike,	Head of Business Statistics group
PERRY Keith	Head of Earnings and Employment division
PERRY John,	Head of Business Registers unit
POWELL Philip,	Head of Marketing and Customer Service division
PRICE Jonathan,	Head of Service Sector Prices section
PRITCHARD Alwyn,	Head of International unit
PULLINGER John,	Head of Social and Regional division (nouveau poste)
READ Adrian,	Head of NHSCR
RICHARDSON Ian,	Head of PPI Calculation section
SMITH Paul,	Business Survey Methods unit
SOUTH Richard,	Head of Marketing Communication section
WERNER Barry,	Head of Socio-Economic Statistics division
WHITE Ian,	Head of Census Legislation branch
WILLIAMSON Kevin,	Head of Trade Methodology branch (ancien poste)
WROE David,	Head of National Accounts branch (ancien poste)

Liste des interlocuteurs INSEE rencontrés

ALLAIN Joël,	Chef du département de la coordination statistique (jusqu'en juillet 97)
AMIEL Marie-Hélène,	Chef de la division des relations multilatérales et des affaires européennes
ANTHEAUME Yves,	Chef de la division documentation
BEHMOIRAS Jean-Pierre,	Directeur de la coordination statistique et des relations internationales (jusqu'en décembre 1996)
BODIN Jean-Louis,	Chef du département des relations internationales (jusqu'en janvier 97)
CASES Chantal,	Chef de la division des services (nouveau poste)
DE GIMEL Louis,	Chef de la division salaires et revenus d'activité
DE LOS SANTOS André,	Chef du département de l'industrie et de l'agriculture
DESROSIÈRES Alain,	Chercheur au CREST, chef de la division méthodes comparées (à partir de juillet 97)
DEVILLE Jean-Claude,	Chef de l'unité méthodes statistiques
DOMERGUE Philippe,	Chef du département des normes statistiques et comptables
DUSSERT Françoise,	Chef de la cellule coordination des activités d'enquête
FAURE Jean-Louis,	Chef du département de l'emploi et des revenus d'activité
GISSOT Claude,	Division Emploi
GOUËT Marie-Josèphe,	Chef de la division impression et commercialisation
GRANDJEAN Jean-Pierre,	Chef du département système statistique d'entreprises
GREGOIR Stéphane,	Chef de la division comptes trimestriels
JACOD Michel,	Chef du département de la démographie
LACROIX Jacqueline,	Division recensement de la population
LANG Gérard,	Chef de la division environnement juridique de la statistique
LE GLÉAU Jean-Pierre,	Chef de la division méthodes comparées (jusqu'en juin 97)
LERNER Daniel,	Chef du département des moyens et méthodes de diffusion
LOLLIVIER Stéphane,	Chef du département des prix à la consommation, des ressources et des conditions de vie des ménages
MADINIER Chantal,	Chef de la division recensement de la population
MAGNIEZ Jacques,	Chef de la division concepts et nomenclatures
PICARD Hugues,	Chef de l'unité répertoire et démographie des entreprises et des établissements
PUIG Jean-Pierre,	Directeur de la coordination statistique et des relations internationales (depuis décembre 1996)
RIVIÈRE Pascal,	Chef de la division harmonisation d'enquêtes auprès des entreprises
ROUSSEL Patrice,	Chef du département des activités tertiaires
TRANAP Alain,	Chef du département des relations internationales (depuis février 97)
TYRMAN Henry,	Chef de la division échanges extérieurs

Missions attribuées à l'ONS

∠ recueillir, compiler et analyser les statistiques économiques et sociales, puis diffuser les statistiques et les analyses ;

∠ assembler, cataloguer, documenter et rendre disponible une base de données des statistiques clés pour dépeindre la société, ainsi que rendre compte du travail et des réalisations du gouvernement ;

∠ contrôler le développement des normes, définitions et classifications utilisées à travers le GSS, en incluant celles qu'utilisent les ministères dans leur production statistique contribuant aux séries statistiques clés ;

∠ coordonner les opérations des ministères et agences relatives au travail statistique en veillant particulièrement à éviter les redondances, à obtenir la compatibilité des statistiques élaborées, à maximiser l'exploitation des statistiques collectées et à optimiser le processus de collecte ;

∠ contrôler l'application des lois sur le mariage et gérer l'enregistrement des principaux événements de la vie ;

∠ maintenir et administrer le registre central du ministère de la santé et tout autre registre requis ;

∠ faire la liaison entre le Royaume-Uni, les autres pays et les organisations internationales dans les domaines statistique et d'enregistrement, et, le cas échéant, représenter et défendre les intérêts du Royaume-Uni dans le cadre du développement des normes, procédures et pratiques ;

∠ assumer les fonctions centrales requises par un service statistique décentralisé.

Les objectifs affichés de l'ONS

- sélection des méthodes statistiques
- comparabilité entre différents ensembles de données
- mesures pour réduire les non-réponses
- surveillance de la qualité des données tirées de sources administratives
- rapidité de traitement
- mise en forme des statistiques avant communication aux utilisateurs
- éducation des utilisateurs et des médias
- choix d'entreprises externes si le coût est moindre.

Extrait du rapport (remis en juin 96) du comité directeur pour les enquêtes statistiques, sur la réduction de la charge des enquêtes sur les entreprises.

Le comité, constitué de Edward Osmotherly, Teresa Graham et Mike Pepper, a vu ses propositions (ci-dessous) approuvées en septembre 1996 par le gouvernement dans " Government Response to the Osmotherly Steering Group Report on Statistical Surveys ". L'objectif est d'atteindre une réduction des coûts de 26 % d'ici à l'an 2000 (la plus grande partie devrait être obtenue dans les deux ans) et de garantir aux petites entreprises un espacement des enquêtes.

Les propositions de ce rapport sont rédigées comme suit :

(1) Des plans de conformité doivent être établis et publiés pour toutes les enquêtes d'envergure (à partir de £250 000).

(2) Une personne extérieure indépendante doit participer à l'examen de ces enquêtes par les ministères.

(3) La priorité doit être donnée au développement de logiciels pour ces enquêtes dans la limite des ressources gouvernementales.

(4) Un comité de pilotage pour un logiciel comptable doit être créé au plus haut niveau afin d'accélerer ce développement.

(5) La mise en oeuvre des propositions du rapport du consultant pour l'allègement des enquêtes dans le secteur de la construction est recommandée.

(6) Le ministre de l'agriculture, de la pêche et de l'alimentation, devrait examiner la possibilité de réduire la charge du recensement agricole par accélération du programme d'introduction de l'échantillonnage.

(7) Seules des circonstances exceptionnelles doivent empêcher les ministères d'utiliser l'IDBR (Inter-Departmental Business Register). Cette utilisation sera une condition d'approbation des nouvelles enquêtes (réponse du gouvernement).

(8) L'ONS doit fournir la garantie à toutes les entreprises de moins de 10 employés, qu'après avoir participé à une enquête, elles disposeraient d'une période de tranquillité d'au moins 3 ans.

(9) Les ministères sont invités à adopter également cette attitude.

(10) L'engagement devra ensuite être valable pour toute enquête émanant du gouvernement, c'est-à-dire globalement et pas seulement par organisme. Le but doit être atteint en juin 1999.

(11) Les ministères doivent envisager que les garanties exposées aux points 8 et 9 seront étendues aux entreprises de 10 à 24 employés d'ici 1999.

(12) Le gouvernement devrait persuader ses partenaires européens de réduire les charges liées à Intrastat par réduction du nombre de champs, simplification du détail des produits, élévation du seuil de la valeur commerciale à £160 000 annuel, et introduction de garanties sur l'échantillonnage pour les petites entreprises.

GSS Statistical Quality Checklist

A. Objectives

A1. Objectives

Why was the survey carried out?

What information was being sought?

What were the topics covered and the main data items?

What national or international standards were used to define data items?

B. Coverage

B1. Target Population

What is the target population of the survey?

Does this population have a standard set of criteria that allows its units to be identified and classified?

If a target population classification exists, is there a readily accessible reference to it?

B2. Study Population

What is the study population for the survey?

How close is the study population to the target population?

B3. Sampling Frame

If the survey involved the selection of a sample, what sampling frame was used for sample selection?

Has this frame changed over time? If so how?

Has the frame been updated to take account of births, deaths and other relevant changes to the study population?

What summary tabulations of key frame variables are provided in the report?

C. Design

C1. Sample-based inquiries

What type of sample design was used?

What were the target and achieved sample sizes?

If the sample design involved stratification, how were these strata defined?

What method was used to select the sample?

For a continuing survey, have there been any changes over time in the sample design methodology?

C2. Data definitions

Are underlying concepts described and definitions of key items provided?

Is a copy of the questionnaire provided?

For a continuing survey, is there information as to whether or not data item definitions have changed over time?

C3. Data collection methods

If the data were collected by interview, what was the training or relevant expertise of the interviewers?

What checks on the quality of the information were made as it was captured?

What procedures were used to minimise respondent errors in the survey?

Was any pilot testing of the data collection methods carried out?

Are there any items collected in the survey for which the data are suspect?

What procedures were used to minimise non-response?

C4. Data processing

What procedures were used to minimise processing errors?

Were there systematic controls in place for the detection and verification of outliers and for the correction of introduced errors?

What procedures were followed to prevent disclosure of confidential information?

D. Analysis

D1. Estimation

If the survey was based on a sample, what method of sample weighting was used to calculate the estimates contained in the report?

Were the sample estimates grossed up to known population values?

In the case of time series, were seasonal adjustment techniques used?

D2. Reliability

Are estimates of sampling errors provided?

Does the report provide an assessment of the impact of non-sampling errors on the quality of the estimates derived in the survey?

Is a table showing the extent of non-response provided?

Are there any known difference between respondents and non-respondents?

Was there item non-response?

Were imputation methods used to create complete unit records from those with item non-response?

E. Extensions

E1. Internal comparisons

How should valid comparisons between estimates provided in the report be carried out?

E2. External comparisons

In cases where the estimates in a report are time stamped, are the reasons for expected revisions presented?

Does the report draw the user's attention to other data sources containing information related to or relevant to the statistical analyses contained in the report?

E3. More information

Does the report contain a contact address for extra information about the statistical data collection methods used in the survey?

Projet britannique :
ACCORDS BILATERAUX DE COMMERCIALISATION
entre l'INSEE et l'ONS

Chaque accord nécessitera une adaptation spécifique des conditions individuelles telles que droit d'auteur, politique de diffusion, tarification, etc. Néanmoins, il serait bénéfique d'essayer d'établir quelques principes fondamentaux qui puissent être adoptés dans tous les cas. Une première liste est proposée ci-dessous :

PRINCIPES FONDAMENTAUX

1. Chaque partie tiendra toujours compte du point de vue de l'autre, de ses souhaits et de toute restriction imposée par des circonstances exceptionnelles. En toute occasion, l'esprit de l'accord prendra le pas sur la chose écrite.

2. Tous les accords seront établis sur la base du partenariat et formalisés par écrit. Les modalités en ont été définies au Royaume-Uni, mais d'autres sources peuvent avoir déjà effectué ce travail (ex : Eurostat ?). Tous les accords seront officiellement examinés et renouvelés annuellement pour maintenir l'impulsion, la convergence et la pertinence.

Répartition des benéfices :

3. Il est suggéré que tous les revenus soit répartis également entre le vendeur et l'auteur (soit 50 %-50 %).

4. En cas de nécessité, ce sont les revenus nets qui sont répartis (par exemple quand des services à la demande impliquent des investissements de la part du vendeur), et la base de déduction des coûts fera alors l'objet d'un accord préalable.

5. Les revenus seront déclarés mensuellement ou trimestriellement, et restitués au pays auteur trimestriellement ou annuellement à sa convenance. De nouveau, ceci aura été défini préalablement au lancement de l'opération commerciale.

Produits :

6. Tout produit quel qu'il soit, de l'une ou l'autre partie, doit être inclus dans les limites de l'accord : livres, CD-ROM, données interactives, etc.

7. Les livres et autres produits tout préparés tels que les CD-ROM exigent des systèmes compliqués de gestion de stock, et par conséquent des frais administratifs élevés si des stocks raisonnables sont maintenus localement, mais chaque partie peut décider de ce qui lui convient le mieux.

8. Il a été suggéré qu'il pourrait être pratique pour le vendeur de chaque partie d'avoir une bonne connaissance de l'éventail complet de la production de l'auteur, mais de garder et stocker seulement les exemplaires de référence des principaux titres-clés. Les commandes peuvent alors être transmises par fax ou E-mail à la partie auteur qui la traitera pendant que le vendeur effectuera la faturation etc. (Ceci présente des avantages considérables en termes de langue, de conformité aux directives et taxes locales, etc).

Les coûts d'emballage et d'envoi pourront être récupérés dans les délais convenus si besoin est pour équilibrer les comptes et pour mémoire (NB : point 4 ci-dessus) à la fin de la période agréée comme référence. L'impact du service pour le client est probablement insignifiant et des échéances de livraison réalistes peuvent être établies pour le client si les méthodes de transmission ont fait l'objet d'un accord préalable.

9. En ce qui concerne les données interactives, le stockage n'est pas une solution du fait que les données sont enregistrées puis téléchargées à la demande à partir des fichiers sur n'importe quel support requis : disquette, CD-ROM, ou directement vers le support du client via les services en ligne (Internet inclus). Les données interactives peuvent être des tableaux prédéfinis (les séries de l'indice des prix à la consommation par exemple) ; ceci pare à la nécessité de systèmes d'administration de stocks compliqués et de magasinage, et les vendeurs pourront ainsi détenir les données localement et réaliser le remplissage directement comme pour le point 8 ci-dessus. Cependant, les données interactives sont aussi diffusées dans des analyses à la demande. A moins que le vendeur soit consentant et en mesure de consacrer des ressources importantes pour fournir un service à la demande sur des données d'origine étrangère (pour lesquelles il est improbable de recouvrir les coûts en tout cas sur le court terme), le vendeur doit à nouveau se reposer sur l'auteur pour la réalisation, ce qui de toute façon présente des avantages en termes d' interprétation des données et de familiarité avec l'extraction. Comme pour le point 8 ci-dessus, les commandes peuvent être transmises à l'auteur par E-mail, le vendeur effectuant la facturation etc. et les deux parties équilibrant les comptes à la fin de la période agréée comme référence. Les accords préalables sur le niveau de service permettront au client d' être avertis des échéances de livraison.

Réseaux d'approvisionnement et soutien :

10. Les deux parties s'efforceront de fournir l'aide initiale pour toute donnée à vendre (sans considération de qui fournira l'information). Cependant, un soutien statistique détaillé ne sera pas possible, aussi un recours aux parties auteur interviendra si nécessaire. Si les demandes d'aide apparaissent excessives par rapport aux volumes de ventes et revenus générés, un paiement pourrait alors être demandé aux clients.

11. Les deux parties doivent cependant prendre un engagement sérieux pour le financement de l'entreprise commerciale commune. Ceci nécessite une formation pour les unités de vente, et peut-être/probablement une formation réciproque avec échange serait aussi nécessaire.

12. Les deux parties utiliseront tous les dispositifs en leur pouvoir conformément aux termes de l'accord pour promouvoir et diffuser les produits de provenance étrangère, mais toute commission à payer (par exemple si l'ONS avait besoin d'utiliser les librairies du Service des fournitures et des publications de l'Administration) devra être comprise dans la quote-part de 50 % à moins d'accord préalable avec le partenaire.

Promotion des ventes et information mutuelle à la clientèle

13. Chaque partie s'engage à promouvoir les données acquises par l'accord bilatéral de commercialisation suivant les méthodes adéquates. Chaque fois que cela est possible et utile, cette promotion sera incorporée dans les schémas de promotion nationaux, soit :

spots publicitaires, campagnes de publicité, etc. Ceci inclut les relations avec les sites Internet.

14. Chaque partie s'engage à partager le détail de tous les clients approvisionnés avec des données relevant de l'accord bilatéral de commercialisation.

Intermédiaires et filières :

15. A l'origine, les accords bilatéraux de commercialisation ne couvraient que l'utilisateur final sous licence, mais il faut espérer que de tels accords puissent être étendus pour inclure la redistribution. Cependant, de tels arrangements risquent d' être compliqués. Par exemple, en ce qui concerne la sécurité des positions de redistributeurs locaux. En outre, le droit d'auteur est également concerné. Par exemple, les termes de la délégation de droit d'auteur de l'ONS implique qu'un redistributeur ONS (c'est-à-dire le vendeur) ne peut vendre qu'à des utilisateurs finaux et n'est pas autorisé à accorder une licence à un autre redistributeur.

De tels moyens sont déjà mis en oeuvre au Royaume-Uni pour cela (principalement, le nouveau distributeur signe un contrat ONS qui est géré localement avec un administrateur qui prend une "commission" sur les ventes du redistributeur), mais ceci n'est bien évidemment pas applicable ou approprié dans tous les cas.

Groupes particuliers de clients

16. En tout état de cause, le prix prévu par l'accord bilatéral de commercialisation sera appliqué par chaque partie sans considération de clientèle. Dans le cas où le vendeur souhaiterait offrir un rabais (pour un groupe identifié spécifiquement tel que des scolaires), cela sera financé localement. De même, les systèmes de rabais mis en place par l'un des partenaires n'engageront pas l'autre.

Exemple communiqué à l'appui : Les PRINCIPES de l'ACCORD avec l'UNIVERSITÉ d'ESSEX sur le DÉPÔT des DONNÉES du CSO

Cet accord est conclu le (date) entre l' Office Statistique Central (indiqué par CSO dans l'accord) des ministères, domicilié Great George Street, London SW1P 3AQ, et l'université d'Essex (indiquée par l'université et aussi par The Data Archive dans l'accord), domiciliée Wivenhoe Park, Colchester, Essex CO4 3 SQ.

Ceci est la structure de l'accord qui vise à formaliser un arrangement de longue date par lequel le CSO fournissait des données au Data Archive à l'université d'Essex et à résumer les principes fondamentaux du partenariat. Il ne prend pas en compte les détails ou les mécanismes pour mettre en pratique ces principes, et compte sur la bonne volonté des deux parties pour l'interprétation au jour le jour. Dans le cadre de cet accord général, le CSO et l'université d'Essex ont la possibilité d'établir de façon plus précise des accords écrits séparés pour des bases de données spécifiques.

Cet accord prend effet à partir de la date mentionnée ci-dessus et est valable jusqu'à ce qu'il soit remplacé par un accord modificatif, amélioré ou plus détaillé, ou jusqu'à ce qu'il soit dénoncé par l'une ou l'autre des parties, ce qui peut être fait par notification écrite avec un préavis de trois mois.

Les points de l'accord sont les suivants :

1. Le dépôt du CSO au Data Archive sous forme électronique :

(a) les bases de données dont le CSO dispose sur son propre ordinateur central (CSDB) pour publication via la banque de données du CSO.

(b) les bases de données de l'enquête FES (Family Expenditure Survey).

(c) toute autre base de données qui relèverait de la responsabilité du CSO, et qui serait disponible par l'intermédiaire de la base de données centrale du CSO.

(d) d'autres bases de données à la demande et avec l'accord du CSO.

2. Le CSO donne au Data Archive le droit non-exclusif de faire ce qui suit :

(a) détenir les données sous forme électronique pour son propre usage, pour l'usage de l'université d'Essex, et comme archive en référence académique.

(b) autorise un accès aux données libre de toute rétribution au CSO pourvu que ce soit pour une utilisation ou recherche universitaire de bonne foi, soit directement à partir de Data Archive ou par l'intermédiaire d'une tierce partie qui procure ce service à Data Archive, pourvu que cet accès continue d'être géré par Data Archive.

(c) autorise l'accès aux données pour des recherches menées par, ou sponsorisées par, des organisations charitables ou philanthropiques sous condition de paiement (à des tarifs préférentiels) de royalties qui seront versées dans la caisse pour la recherche académique.

(d) autorise l'accès aux données pour des recherches sponsorisées par des organismes commerciaux sous condition de notification au CSO et de paiement des royalties correspondantes pour le CSO.

(e) autorise dans certaines circonstances l'accès aux données pour un usage commercial sous condition d'autorisation du CSO et de paiement (plein-tarif) des royalties correspondantes au CSO.

Le Data Archive peut aussi autoriser l'accès aux données pour d'autres départements ministériels du gouvernement que le CSO aurait normalement approvisionné gratuitement dans le cadre d'un accord réciproque, et pour des organismes intergouvernementaux avec qui le CSO a des conventions, libre de toute commission pour le CSO selon le point 2a ci-dessus.

Les autres départements ministériels, les autorités locales, et les organismes qui ne dépendent pas du gouvernement seront facturés selon le point 2e ci-dessus.

Le CSO laisse le Data Archive libre de jugement en ce qui concerne la nature et le financement des recherches proposées mais donne son avis sur demande.

Sauf mentionné ci-dessus, le Data Archive ne communiquera pas les données.

3. Le CSO fera tous les efforts nécessaires pour délivrer les données en temps utile et s'efforcera de vérifier leur cohérence avec celles que le CSO publie par ailleurs. Cependant, le CSO n'acceptera pas de responsabilité pour cause de retard, ou si une quelconque incohérence conduit à une déperdition, même si il s'agit d'une négligence. Le CSO sera toujours en mesure d'ajouter, retirer ou modifier des éléments dans la base de données sans avertissement, mais s'efforcera de prévenir convenablement chaque fois que des changements sont prévus.

4. En fournissant les services sus-mentionnés, le Data Archive révèlera la source des données et attirera l'attention de l'utilisateur sur les limites de responsabilité mentionnées au paragraphe 3. Le Data Archive sera responsable de l'encadrement pour l'accès aux données en utilisant sa propre documentation.

5. La Couronne est propriétaire du droit d'auteur pour toutes les données fournies par le CSO et rien de ce qui est écrit dans l'accord ne peut limiter en quelque manière que ce soit l'utilisation de ces données par le gouvernment de sa Majesté ou par n'importe quel département ou agence ministériels, ou dans le cadre d'obligations à remplir du fait d'un traité international.

Le Data Archive attirera aussi l'attention des utilisateurs sur la question des droits d'auteur qui interdit aux utilisateurs la rediffusion ou le transfert du fichier, ou la photocopie sauf en cas de nécessité dans un but précis d'utilisateur, et ce sans l'autorisation du CSO et le paiement des droits d'auteur le cas échéant.

6. Le Data Archive prend en charge le contrôle de toute infraction potentielle au droit d'auteur de le Couronne, rend compte au CSO, et intervient au titre du CSO pour s'occuper des demandes des utilisateurs sur les autorisations de reproduction. Le Data Archive récoltera les sommes dues au CSO qui, dans le cas de données communiquées ou recherchées à des fins commerciales, sont basées sur la valeur commerciales des données. Le Data Archive fera les comptes de ce qui est dû au CSO sur une base annuelle.

7. Le CSO peut aussi réclamer que le Data Archive obtienne des garanties de la part de ses utilisateurs quand certains fichiers sont fournis ou mis à disposition.

8. Si une plainte intervient à l'encontre du Data Archive du fait de fichiers CSO incomplets ou incorrects, le CSO indemnisera le Data Archive pour :

(a) tous les dommages et coûts générés par un tribunal sous loi anglaise où la défense a été conduite conformément aux souhaits du CSO.
(b) tous les montants à payer avec l'approbation du CSO pour débouter la plainte.

Cette indemnisation interviendra uniquement dans les cas où le CSO est informé à temps de la plainte.

9. Si l'un et l'autre, CSO ou Data Archive, est retardé dans l'exercice de ses obligations dans le cadre de cet accord en raison d'évènements en dehors de son contrôle, l'accord sera alors suspendu pendant toute la durée de ces évènements. Ceux-ci incluent les grèves, les exclusions, les émeutes, le sabotage, les actes de guerre ou de piraterie, les cas où des équipements essentiels sont endommagés par le feu, une explosion, une tempête, une inondation ou un tremblement de terre, et les retards causés par des pannes de courant ou de transport.

10. Le CSO vérifiera ses fichiers pour tous les virus informatiques connus et n'acceptera pas de responsabilité dans les pertes ou dommages de ce fait.

11. Si l'un et l'autre, CSO ou université d'Essex ou Data Archive, cessent d'exister sous leur présente forme, l'accord prend fin immédiatement à moins d'être remplacé par un nouvel accord avec le (s) successeur (s), sauf que cet accord restera valable quand le CSO intégrera le nouvel office statistique "Office for National Statistics" comme cela est actuellement envisagé.

L'accord prendra fin immédiatement s'il est violé par l'une des parties, ou si il est remplacé par un accord différent entre le CSO et l'université. L'accord peut aussi être interrompu par le biais d'une notification écrite avec préavis de trois mois.

Au terme de l'accord, le Data Archive peut conserver les fichiers obtenus dans le cadre de l'accord et continuer à détenir les données sous forme électronique pour son usage personnel, pour celui de l'université d'Essex et comme archive à titre de référence académique. Il peut aussi continuer à autoriser l'accès aux données pour les besoins des universitaires et chercheurs de bonne foi. Mais il doit stopper l'accès aux données pour les organismes de charité, philanthropiques ou commerciaux, ou leurs intermédiaires, ceux-ci devant s'adresser directement au CSO ou à son successeur.

12. Ce document est l'accord complet qui ne peut pas être modifié à moins qu'ensemble le CSO et l'université ne signent un accord plus détaillé, ou se mettent d'accord pour écrire des modifications qui seront interprétés selon la loi anglaise. Ni cet accord ni aucun de ses avantages ne peuvent être transférés à une quelconque autre partie. Tout désaccord en ce qui concerne cet accord sera réglé par deux personnes, l'une choisie par le CSO et l'autre choisie par l'université, conformément à l'Acte d'Arbitrage de 1950 ou tout autre Acte qui l'amende ou le remplace.

RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE
MINISTÈRE DE L'ÉCONOMIE

INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA STATISTIQUE ET DES ÉTUDES ÉCONOMIQUES

Protocole d'accord entre l'INSEE et l'Office for National Statistics (Great britain)

Entre l'INSEE (Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques), représenté par la direction de la diffusion et de l'action régionale, M. Pierre DELORME d'une part,

et l'ONS, (Office for National Statistics) représenté par Mr. POWELL, Director of mrketing and customer Service d'autre part,

Il a été convenu ce qui suit :

1 - Les deux instituts se sont mis d'accord sur le principe de contribuer chacun à la diffusion des produits du catalogue de son partenaire.

2 - Dans un premier temps, la vente directe se limitera aux publications et aux CD ROM considérés comme les plus "importants". On pourra envisager ultérieurement d'y inclure certains périodiques de type "bulletin mensuel de statistique", ou "indicateurs conjoncturels" par fax.

3 - Chaque institut fournira , en dépôt vente, un nombre limité d'exemplaires des produits sélectionnés. La sélection des titres se fera sur la base du catalogue annuel. La liste en annexe 1 précise les titres faisant l'objet du protocole avec le nombre d'exemplaires correspondants. Elle pourra être modifiée par accord entre les deux parties sous forme d'échange de correspondance.

4 - La vente des produits de l'ONS sera assurée dans un premier temps par Insee Info Service dénommée (IIS), qui dispose d'une librairie à PARIS et d'un service de VPC. Une ou deux des directions régionales du Nord-Est de la France pourront ultérieurement se joindre au réseau.

La vente des produits de l'INSEE sera assurée par l'ONS à son libre choix (librairies de l'ONS, recours à des librairies privées de type Blackwell).

Chaque partenaire désignera un correspondant chargé de gérer leurs relations courantes.

5 - Le réassortiment aura lieu dès que le stock n'est plus que de un ou deux exemplaires.

6 - L'INSEE et l'ONS pourront, chacun pour ce qui le concerne, vendre, sur commande, les autres produits du catalogue de son partenaire qui se chargera de l'envoi à l'acheteur.
A ce titre, chaque institut disposera de 50 exemplaires du catalogue des produits.

7 - Les commandes ou les demandes de réapprovisionnement pourront se faire par fax. Chaque organisme s'engage à adresser les documents demandés dans les 48 heures et par les voies les plus rapides.

8 - Les produits concernés par l'accord seront inclus dans les plans de promotion et dans les catalogues de son partenaire et notamment :
- pour la France, au travers d'Insee actualités, d'Insee Actualités Flash, et du catalogue annuel.

- pour l'ONS dans le cadre de ses mailings habituels et par l'intégration dans le catalogue bi-annuel. Une promotion plus spécifique sera assurée à la fin de l'année 1996.

Chaque partenaire enverra à l'autre des exemplaires des supports de promotion concernés.

Une promotion réciproque des services offerts sera assurée sur le serveur WEB de chaque institut avec routage éventuel sur le serveur du partenaire.

9 - Le principe du partage des recettes est retenu. Au démarrage, chaque organisme gardera les recettes qu'il a pu encaisser. La rémunération sera calculée sur la base de :
- 33 % pour les ouvrages,
- 15 % pour les abonnements aux revues.
Un bilan sera fait au bout d'un an. Au vu de ce bilan, il conviendra de prévoir un protocole précisant comment payer la rémunération du partenaire dans le cas où les recettes ne sont pas équitablement réparties.

Si les recettes sont équivalentes de part et d'autre, il n'y aura pas lieu de procéder au versement des sommes "dues".

10 - Une action de formation de deux jours sera organisée dans chaque pays pour présenter :
- le dispositif statistique du partenaire
- le contenu des produits à vendre.

11 - Les deux partenaires s'accordent pour rechercher dans un deuxième temps une coopération plus large, notamment dans le domaine de la diffusion électronique, et au travers des sites WEB que chacun développe.

Fait à Paris,
le

INSEE Le Directeur de La Diffusion et de l'action régionale	ONS Le Directeur
P. DELORME	AB. POWELL

Publications de l'ONS disponibles à l'INSEE

	TITRES		DEBUT
1	Labour market trends	(Serie)	1996
2	Navidata <sur disquette>	(Serie)	n.d.
3	UK economic accounts : a quarterly supplement to econo		1993
4	Input-output tables for the United Kingdom 19..	(Serie)	1961
5	United Kingdom national accounts 19.. : the CSO blue b	(Serie)	1984
6	Regional trends 19..	(Serie)	1981
7	Social trends	(Serie)	1970
8	Statistical news : developments n British official st	(Serie)	1968
9	Monthly digest of statistics	(Serie)	1946
10	Annual abstract of statistics 19.. - United Kingdom	(Serie)	1948
11	Economic trends : annual supplement	(Serie)	1975
12	Economic trends	(Serie)	1953
13	National income and expenditure...	(Serie)	1941
14	United Kingdom balance of payments 19.. : the CSO pink	(Serie)	1948
15	Financial statistics	(Serie)	1962
16	Subnational population proje	(Serie)	1991
17	Topic monitor. 1991 census	(Serie)	1993
18	Series DS, Decennial supplem	(Serie)	1978
19	Mortality statistics. DH4 Series	(Serie)	1992
20	Key population and vital sta	(Serie)	1993
21	Mortality statistics. DH6 Series	(Serie)	1990
22	Mortality statistics. Series	(Serie)	1982
23	Mortality statistics. DH3 Series	(Serie)	1982
24	Hospital in-patient enquiry	(Serie)	1989
25	Population projections micro	(Serie)	1971
26	Population and vital statist	(Serie)	1986
27	General household survey 19.	(Serie)	1973
28	Hospital in-patient enquiry.. MB4	(Serie)	1980
29	Population estimates... Serie	(Serie)	1976
30	Electoral statistics. Serie EL	(Serie)	1975
31	International migration. Series MN	(Serie)	1977
32	Marriage and divorce statist. Series FM2	(Serie)	1977
33	Mortality statistics. Series DH5	(Serie)	1976
34	OPCS Monitor - VS - Live bir	(Serie)	1975
35	OPCS Monitor - AB - Legal ab	(Serie)	n.d.
36	OPCS Monitor - WR - Registra	(Serie)	1975
37	Mortality statistics. Series	(Serie)	1976
38	Congenital malformation stat	(Serie)	1983
39	Births statistics. Series FM1	(Serie)	1977
40	Population trends	(Serie)	1975
41	Abortion statistics. Series AB	(Serie)	1977
42	Mortality statistics. Series DH2	(Serie)	1977
43	Mortality statistics. Series DH1	(Serie)	1977
44	Mortality statistics. Series DH3	(Serie)	1977
45	Local authority vital statis	(Serie)	1976
46	Hospital in-patient enquiry. MB4	(Serie)	1978
47	Hospital in-patient enquiry. MB4	(Serie)	1977
48	Communicable disease statist	(Serie)	1975
49	Studies on medical and popul	(Serie)	1949
50	Series LS, Longitudinal stud	(Serie)	1982

WHERE TO OBTAIN ONS PUBLICATIONS

A free catalogue is available from the library enquiry points.

ONS publishes a large number of books, CD ROM, and other formats of its data, methodological and statistical works etc. These and other services can be accessed directly.

Population census statistics, particularly those at local level, are available in electronic formats.
Tel: 01329 813800 for details.

ONS Publications are available through The Stationery Office, and can also be ordered from:-

Sales Office
Room B1/6
Office for National Statistics
1 Drummond Gate
Drummond Gate
Pimlico
London SW1V 2QQ
Tel: 0171-533 5678

Blackwells
244 High Holborn
London WC1V 7DZ
Tel: 0171-831 9501

Major ONS Publications

*Guide to Official Statistics *Economic Trends *Financial Statistics *Monthly Digest of Statistics *Annual Abstract of Statistics *UK National Accounts ('ONS Blue Book') *UK Balance of Payments ('ONS Pink Book') *Regional Trends *Social Trends *Key Data *Statistical News *Family Spending *Business Monitors *Retail Prices *Labour Market Trends *New Earnings Survey *General household survey *Population Trends *The Health of Adult Britain *1991 Census Reports, Key Statistics, and summary Monitors.

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MAIN ONS ADDRESSES

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Library, 1 Drummond Gate,
Drummond Gate, Pimlico,
London SW1V 2QQ
Tel: 0171-533 6262
Fax: 0171-533 6261
Email info@ons.gov.uk

Office for National Statistics,
Newport Library,
Government Buildings,
Cardiff Road, Newport NP9 1XG
Tel: 01633 812973
Fax: 01633 812599

Office for National Statistics,
Public Search Room,
St Catherine's House,
10 Kingsway,
London WC2B 6JP
Tel: 0171-396 2218

Please note that from April 1st 1997 the Public Search Room will move to Myddelton Place, Myddelton Street, London EC1
Tel: 0171-233 9233.

Office for National Statistics,
General Register Office,
Smedley Hydro,
Trafalgar Road,
Southport PR8 2HH
Tel: 01704 569824

Office for National Statistics,
Labour Market Statistics,
1 Drummond Gate,
Drummond Gate,
London SW1V 2QQ
Tel: 0171-533 6109

Office for National Statistics,
Census Marketing and Customer Services,
Segensworth Road, Titchfield,
Fareham, Hants PO15 5RR
Tel: 01329 813800
Fax: 01329 813532

The ONS web site address on the Internet is
http://www.emap.co.uk/ons/

HOUSE OF COMMONS SESSION 1988–89

TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

OFFICIAL ECONOMIC STATISTICS

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

Wednesday 1 February 1989

CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Mr J Hibbert, Mr D Flaxen and Mr J Kidgell

Ordered by The House of Commons *to be printed*
1 February 1989

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE TREASURY AND CIVIL SERVICE COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 1989

Members present:

Mr Terence L Higgins, in the Chair

Mr A J Beith	Mr Giles Radice
Mr Nicholas Budgen	Mr John Townend
Ms Joyce Quin	Mr John Watts

MR J HIBBERT, Director and Head of the Government Statistical Service (Grade 1A), MR D FLAXEN, Assistant Director (National Income, Expenditure and Output Statistics) (Grade 3), and MR J KIDGELL, Assistant Director (Public Sector Financial Statistics) (Grade 3), were examined.

Chairman

1. Mr Hibbert, we are most grateful to you and your colleagues for coming this afternoon to give us evidence. As you know the Committee recommended in its report on last year's Budget that the Government should carry out an inquiry into Government statistics because we expressed considerable concern about the nature of some of them and the Government subsequently agreed to set up such an inquiry. We understand that has been completed and Government are now considering how to respond in the light of information they do have available. We further understand once that is completed the report will be published together with the Government's comments. We thought in advance of that it might be helpful to have evidence from you so that we have a better background against which to appraise the conclusions and evidence the Government subsequently publishes. We are very grateful to you indeed for coming along. As we have not asked you for a memorandum are there any opening remarks you would care to make?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I thought it might be helpful if I did begin by making a very brief opening statement about the current problems that we have with national accounts and balance of payment statistics about which, as you have already said, you have expressed concern. I think the first point I would like to make is although the system for compiling statistics has not always worked adequately in the past, and looking back at some of the events in the past, over the last week or so, I came across 1972 which was a particularly bad year. But on the whole I think the system has worked reasonably well, perhaps with one or two exceptions of that kind. However, during the 1980s I think the measurement system has come under increasing strain. I would point to two developments that seem to me to be relevant there: the first, and perhaps the most important one, is the economy itself has become more complex and subject to more rapid structural change, so the statistical initiatives that need to be taken simply in order to keep up with these changes have actually increased. The second point is that one consequence of deregulation has been Government receives less information in the normal course of its business, (for example data derived from the administration of exchange control) but at the same time the objective of minimising the burden of form filling on businesses means, quite rightly, there needs to be a strong case to justify the collection of new data. While all these developments have been occurring we have been doing what we can to provide an adequate statistical service to users of statistics. The Committee might be interested later to hear about some of those specific improvements that have been made, but despite those improvements it did become clear the present system was not performing adequately and, as you have already mentioned, it was decided a formal scrutiny of the arrangements for producing Government economic statistics should be carried out. Again, as you have said, when the recommendations have been considered by the Government and the Action Plan agreed, then an announcement and publication of the report will be made in the usual way as with the formal scrutiny procedures. I think that is all I want to say by way of opening remarks. Thank you, Chairman.

2. Thank you very much, Mr Hibbert. I think there are broad issues we would like to pursue with you first of all and then we would like to deal with some particular areas of difficulty with regard to that national accounts, the external accounts, the savings ratio and so on. Might I begin by asking one very broad question: could you confirm that the statistics which are produced by the CSO are official statistics, that is to say they are statistics produced by officials and are not influenced by ministers in any way?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Yes, I can certainly confirm that.

Mr Radice

3. You have suggested that there are problems with the statistical services, statistics that have been produced, could you perhaps suggest the areas where in general terms you think there are problems? Is there any indicator which might demonstrate the reliability of economic statistics in general?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I cannot think of a general indicator of the kind that you are suggesting but it is not difficult to point to the problems which are the most serious. I think this Committee is probably well aware of them but, certainly, the problems that we regard as the most serious are

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[Mr Radice *Cont*]

those concerning the different measures of growth of GDP and in particular our ability to describe the growth in the economy not only in terms of the industries producing the outputs in question and the incomes being generated, but in particular the components of final expenditure which are reflected in that economic growth. Again, I am sure the Committee are aware, it is in that area of components of final expenditure where problems have been particularly acute in the recent past. I think it is an interesting point to note that the problems have literally been in respect of the most recent period. What I mean by that is if you go back 12 months or so the picture we then had for 1987 was really very confused, whereas now the figures tell a much more coherent story about the growth in GDP. It remains to be seen whether we are able to produce a more coherent picture in respect of 1988 as we run through 1989 and more information becomes available. I would certainly expect that the discrepancies are reduced rather than increased. But, having said that, there are other areas of the accounts, and in particular the balancing items in the sector accounts, where the problems are as serious, if not more serious, and there is little evidence so far that we have really managed to resolve those problems in any convincing way. I am sure you might want to explore that a little further with us. I will certainly be happy to say more about it.

4. My colleagues will ask detailed questions about the various difficulties.

(*Mr Hibbert*) Given what we are trying to do: which is to describe what is happening in the economy in a number of ways within a theoretical framework which does ensure that if we are producing an inconsistent picture this is made apparent by the accounting identities in the system, it does seem to me to look for some single measure of reliability is not a sensible way to proceed.

Chairman: Mr Hibbert, as we mentioned, we hope to deal with the individual items later in the evidence on national income accounts, external accountancy but we really want to start with the broader issues.

Mr Radice

5. May I make a quick comment on your last answer, you suggested that we are now much more certain what the economy was actually doing in 1987 but after all that is quite a long time past now and it was not a lot of help to the policy makers in 1988. If we are uncertain what was happening then it is not much help to policy makers now if we cannot be certain what is happening now or if we do not have a good idea; that is a comment.

(*Mr Hibbert*) Yes; clearly it is more difficult to produce reliable statistics for the recent past, you would expect that to be so. But, I think the Chancellor has made very clear has he not that this Government is not in the business of fine tuning and that policies are very much more medium term so that I would have thought the need for more accurate figures about the recent past is not so pressing as it would be if you were in the business of fine tuning.

6. I do not think even the Chancellor has said that the statistics are not important for him to know what is happening.

(*Mr Hibbert*) I was going on to say I think the discrepancies we were talking about in respect of 1988 in particular are so large that clearly that is unsatisfactory as a picture of what is happening. One can still make a judgment about what is happening in 1988, of course, and so far as we are able to, we do that. I merely make the point that it would be unreasonable to expect to be able to construct very accurate statistics for the very recent past simply because one will not have as much information available at that point of time.

7. Can we just look for a moment at the possible reasons why there have been problems with the reliability of statistics. You have mentioned a couple have you not, you have mentioned the structural change in the economy and rapid growth and you have mentioned rapid growth as a possibility and you have mentioned de-regulation. I wonder about the other factors like, for example, the abolition of exchange controls in 1979 and the growth of smaller firms and the larger service sector, that kind of thing, whether that is important as well? What about reduction in the resources going to Government statistics? I do not know how you evaluate these factors which you think are most important.

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think all you have mentioned are examples of what I had in mind when I talked about structural changes taking place in the economy and the economy itself becoming very complex. It seems to us that one of the consequences, perhaps, of abolishing exchange controls could be the financial sector itself could become more complex, that there are opportunities which perhaps would not have been there with exchange control; that is merely a thought associated with that. You mentioned the question of resources, I do not think that the problems that we are facing are problems that would be readily resolved by having more resources in order to do our work. Obviously at the margin they may well make a contribution and it is certainly the case that the resources that are put into different tasks are reviewed regularly to see whether there is a case for shifting resources around or competing for additional resources. Further, one has to bear in mind that the kind of skilled resources that one might be looking for would be relatively scarce to obtain. It is an interesting fact that the number of members of the statistician group, the number of professional statisticians in the Government statistical service have actually increased since 1979. We have, within the Civil Service, more professional statisticians than ten years ago.

8. It is not true that there is de-centralisation rather than centralisation? You can say you have got more but you have not got more necessarily at your command, have you?

(*Mr Hibbert*) At the Central Statistical Office?

[Mr Radice *Cont*]

9. Yes?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Or more widely?

10. Yes.

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think the numbers at the CSO, if I remember rightly, have gone down from 65 to around 50 for that period.

11. I am right.

(*Mr Hibbert*) The crucial question is how you deploy those 50 and whether in fact you are now unable to do things that you could do with those additional 15 people. You mentioned the fact that we are a decentralised statistical service and quite clearly there are other parts of the system that we depend on for the work and one would need to look at the resources deployed there if one really wanted to see what the overall position was. I think my main point is simply that although there may be some advantages in putting additional resources in at the margin, I do not see that as a sufficient condition for solving the problems we have. They are, in fact, much more intractable even though the addition of a few more resources would help. I might just quickly mention one thing that I have taken a personal initiative over, which is that I think the nature of some of the problems we have is such that what we should be seeking is knowledge that we do not actually have within Government about the way the economy works and the way we can measure it. I have personally pushed the idea of our drawing in expertise of a kind that I think will help us to solve some of those problems from outside.

12. Could you just explain what you mean by that?

(*Mr Hibbert*) What I mean is we are statisticians who are knowledgeable in the measurement of economic and social phenomena but if we do not really understand the way in which, say, the financial markets are developing then we may not be able to do that task particularly well. By getting the right kind of inputs from people outside, which is something that I do not think we have particularly sought in the past, I think that could well help us to solve some of these problems.

Chairman

13. I wonder if I might take up three points which arise from Mr Radice's questions. As I understand it you are carrying out an analysis for the reasons of the discrepancies up to the period of 1987, is that right?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I imagine you are referring to what has come to be called the experiment relating to balanced accounts for the years 1985–87 which we referred to in our press notice on the Blue Book last September. I would not describe that in quite the terms you have put it. We are concerned about analysing the reasons for discrepancies all the time of course. What that exercise is intended to do is to give us an additional tool in the process of ferreting out the reasons for those discrepancies. If the Committee would like to hear more about that I think Mr Kidgell could tell you.

14. I think the best way of dealing with it might be to have a note. More particularly, when are we likely to get it extended to 1988?[1]

(*Mr Hibbert*) What we shall be doing is publishing an article in the February issue of Economic Trends which is published, I think the scheduled date is 10th March, which will describe the work that we have done to date. We do regard it as experimental, and the question of whether the approach we have used in that work can usefully be extended to 1988 is one that we have not actually come to a decision about. I think it does depend very much how you view this work. We see it, as I have said, as a tool in helping us to try to find discrepancies, or the sources of discrepancies, the reasons for them. I think to regard it as our version of the truth, so to speak, would be a great mistake because as I think you will find when we publish the report on our work it is very much a function of the assumptions that one feeds in. There are all sorts of interesting lessons that will come out of the work, I am sure, but it could not be regarded as some alternative set of accounts.

15. When will be the earliest you can produce the corresponding response for 1988 assuming you were to go ahead with it?

(*Mr Kidgell*) If we were to go ahead with it we would not have all the information for 1988 until at least the end of April when the last set of data on financial accounts becomes available.

16. How long will it take you to analyse it?

(*Mr Kidgell*) It depends when we start it. We could do it in two or three months.

17. The second point arising from what Mr Radice asked: we were rather surprised about the need for the statistics to be accurate in relation to the Chancellor. It is also true the figures have a considerable impact on financial markets, is that not something that gives you cause for concern?

(*Mr Hibbert*) It all comes back, surely, in the end to how accurate statistics need to be in order to be adequate and what the cost of producing them to that degree of reliability is. The reactions of the markets to the figures really one would have hoped would take into account the reliability of the figures. Obviously what I would like to be able to do is to produce figures which are adequate and which people can rely on but that cannot be done irrespective of what the costs would be or, indeed, whether some of these things are actually technically possible.

18. Finally, before I turn to Ms Quin, again in answer to Mr Radice you were saying you would like to have more information from outside on the economic analysis relative to your own statistical inquiries, have you actually made any progress on that?

(*Mr Hibbert*) This is something relatively recent. There is only one example which is going forward at the moment. I am hopeful that in the course of this year there will be several more, but that is an attempt to look at alternative data sources for the financial transactions of the personal sector. That

[1]See appendix 1(i)

[**Chairman** *Cont*]

is clearly one of the areas that has given us a great deal of difficulty.

19. Why has it not been done before?

(*Mr Hibbert*) To be honest I think the reason is that we, within the GSS, do not see this as being very likely to yield the answers to the problems but, nevertheless, it does seem that it is worth exploring. There are, unfortunately, a great many areas that one can potentially explore. I have my own top 20 here, there are many more. The innovation here is simply to look to knowledge outside the existing system as a possible source of information to help us. Talking to your two advisors over there about problems of this kind has not actually helped in this respect, but it seems to me that it was something that was worth exploring.

Chairman: Perhaps you might, nonetheless, let us have a note of your top 20.[1]

Ms Quin

20. We were wondering how British statistics compare with those of other countries. Are we talking about a peculiarly British problem here or do other countries have similar, although perhaps less obvious, problems?

(*Mr Hibbert*) We do have quite a lot of close contacts with other countries, particularly with other Member States of the EEC and the United States and Canada. My impression is that when we discuss our problems with the statisticians in those other countries that their problems are usually very similar to ours, in other words discrepant movements, different movements, in GDP, problems of measuring the level of saving, in fact any differences between two large aggregates are going to give problems. If one comes to look at the specific statistics we are talking about and try to make comparisons with other countries' performance I do not think there is any doubt the position we are in now is rather worse than we would expect to find in most advanced countries of that kind. What I mean by that is that the residuals that one finds in the accounts for the recent past are rather greater than one finds in other countries. This is something which I think has probably only emerged in recent years, and given that our statistics are by and large, I would say, more timely than the generality of other countries — I am not thinking about the United States now but some of the other countries — it may well be the case that one finds these other countries also have developing problems over this period. I am not sure I can add very much to that. I do not know whether either of my colleagues have any further thoughts on that particular question.

(*Mr Flaxen*) I think perhaps the one factor which affects a number of countries is we are quite transparent in the ways we present our figures so any discrepancies are there to be seen. This is historical and we think it is the way to do it rather than tidy everything up. A number of other European countries will make sure everything is consistent before figures are published and to that extent it is not possible to see to what extent their figures are less reliable than they appear to be. I think that is one thing which is helpful. It is a big subject, one can talk about a lot of things.

21. Are there pressures within the EEC and also within OECD for a standardised approach to the statistics and the methods of compiling them?

(*Mr Hibbert*) There already exist standard frameworks within which measurement takes place but so far as the method of making estimates to put into that framework are concerned, it is generally thought that it is best to leave it to the national statisticians to use whatever methods are most appropriate rather than specifying particular methods but there is no shortage of international manuals on these subjects that one can refer to for suggestions and guidance and so on.

22. Have our recent difficulties with statistics led to problems in submitting information to the EEC or OECD?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Not in the sense that we have been unable to provide numbers to them but obviously the fact that the discrepancies are there in the figures means that there may be difficulties in using those figures.

23. Has it got any implications for our financial contributions and financial relationship with the EEC and the EEC budget?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Clearly it has in one sense but I do not really think there is a problem because for the information on which those contributions are to be based, the annual estimates of gross national product, there will be arrangements for adjusting any contributions for up to five years after the event. The problem of revision of estimates is a common one with all statistical offices so unless we were in a situation where our estimates of gross national product were very uncertain for a run of years, going back to say the last five years, ignoring for the moment the most recent year, then I do not see there will be a problem. There will obviously be some interesting discussions among Member States as to the reliability of each Member State's estimates.

24. Finally, would you say that the UK devotes as much in the way of resources and staff and so on to the collection of statistics as other countries? Are there any differences there as far as you know, particularly with the EEC?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Yes, as you can imagine within the 12 Member States there are very big differences because some countries, such as Portugal and Greece, do not have very well developed systems anyway, other countries have more developed systems. If one tries to make direct comparisons of numbers of staff or cost and so on you very quickly run into problems largely because of the different ways in which the work is organised in different countries. I did visit both the Netherlands and Swedish statistical offices last year and my impression is that, taking what one knows about the other countries, the money devoted to statistics in most countries is proportionate to the income of that country. So the wealthy countries tend to

[1] See appendix 1(ii)

[Ms Quin *Cont*]

devote more and the less wealthy rather less but that is no more than impressionistic and there will certainly be other differences that one could point to. What I do observe, interestingly, is that in all these countries the statistical services are under very great pressure, both to reduce their costs and to reduce the burden of form filling on businesses.

Chairman

25. The actual amount we pay in hard cash to the EEC depends on the estimate of GDP, does it not?

(*Mr Hibbert*) It does now with the recent agreement on the so-called fourth resource.

26. And the variation of the estimate in growth in GDP varies from 2½ per cent to 6 per cent depending on the method used to compute it?

(*Mr Hibbert*) If we are talking about the growth between 1987 and 1988 that may well be so, those numbers do not strike a chord.

27. Which method of computation does one use for the purpose of handing cash over to the EEC?

(*Mr Hibbert*) We have, in our published statistics, adopted an average method of gross domestic product and gross national product which is the statistic on which the contributions are to be based, both at current prices and at constant prices. The contribution will be based on the current price estimate. We have in existence what we regard as our best estimate of gross national product, the average estimate, and that is what will be used.

Mr Beith

28. Looking at the impact on policy making statistics, I am bound to come back to this area which was discussed a moment ago. Your biggest customer is Treasury, the Government at the moment is looking at the debt one assumes for signs of slow down in domestic demand and judging whether the interest rate is high or low they fall on the basis of whether they consider there has been a slow down in domestic demand. What you told them in terms of the statistics, could cost a lot of people a lot of money either way, could it not?

(*Mr Hibbert*) When the Treasury are looking at the indicators for changes in domestic demand, as you say, they will be looking at a number of indicators, for example the monthly index of retail sales. Now, I would regard that as actually quite a good indicator.

29. Interesting example to choose because if one had looked at it this time last year one would not have predicted the credit boom.

(*Mr Hibbert*) Is that because it was inaccurate or because one's reading of the statistics was wrong? I do not think I can do more than try to deliver reasonably accurate statistics to the Government of the day and the public at large. I think, as I have made clear, I am not actually complacent about what we are doing, far from it. I think we need to improve on what we have been doing for the recent past. I think the whole question of the costs of having inaccurate statistics is a very complex one. By all means let us pursue it if you wish but I do not think it is a judgement that you can expect me to make. That is all I am saying.

30. It must be for the Committee to draw its own conclusions. Let me throw a couple more examples at you: the Government at the moment is making an assessment of what it considers to be excess capacity, or spare capacity, that could be released by its interest rate policy in industry and which, if released, could improve our export performance and, thereby, shift our balance of payments. That is another example where, to some extent, your statistics and those produced by industry themselves separately, a very major policy decision is being made. Are you telling us that too much is being rested on these statistics?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I am afraid I cannot say in respect of the particular example you quoted. I think insofar as Government makes judgments based on our statistics it is aware of the reliability, or in some cases the lack of reliability, of the statistics in question. I do not think misjudgments are made by Government because of a misunderstanding about the reliability of the statistics but that is a rather different point from the question of whether we actually would benefit from having more reliable statistics.

31. Should the statistics carry your health warning rather than the Government's health warning? I say that because clearly Government may want to qualify one set of statistics rather than another because it has its own case to put. I would feel happier if I was making my judgment to somebody outside Government, if I was basing it on what you tell me rather than what the Government tell me is a reliable or unreliable statistic.

(*Mr Hibbert*) It may be we could usefully do more in drawing people's attention to the relative reliability of the statistics that we produce, but I must say that we have done a lot and the reliability gradings that we have attached to the different series in the national accounts are published, they have been published for a great many years. It may be we could do more to try and ensure people are aware of those reliability gradings and make use of them but that is not an easy task.

32. Could I ask to what extent you are encouraged, or feel that it is your job to develop the scope of statistics into areas of increasing current interests? Let us take, for example, the public sector balance area which this Committee has been involved in discussions about, or the indices of the rate of national resources, or measures of environmental impact. Is statistical innovation in these areas something that is demanded by the Government, or is it something you and your office feel it is your job to do anyway?

(*Mr Hibbert*) It is our job to be aware of the opportunities and needs of Government and to make suggestions for development of the kind you are referring to, but it is not ultimately for me to

[Mr Beith *Cont*]

make decisions about whether that work should be done.

33. I wonder if I might take up one or two points about the organisational side of things. As I understand it the CSO in 1979 had 255 staff and 65 statisticians, the figure is now 160 staff and 53 statisticians but I gather from what you were saying earlier you do not think there is a need for an increase in the number of staff, is that correct?

(*Mr Hibbert*) What I was suggesting was while it might be the case that our work would benefit from additional resources at the margin I do not believe it would benefit from large-scale increases, if you like, back to the level of 1979. Of course, the staff that were working in the CSO in 1979, many of them were working in areas other than economic statistics. Clearly there are potential benefits from putting more resources into the work but it really is a judgment as to what the pay-off would be. Having the resources is not going to be any use unless you have some idea as to how you would use them. The reason I am basically cautious about seeing a solution to these problems as being in terms of extra resources is the experience we had that I mentioned earlier in respect of 1972 where at that time there were resources available to mount a special project which, in fact, was reported, I think if I remember rightly, in the April 1973 issue of Economic Trends, looking into the discrepancies which arose at that time and the results of that work were very disappointing. They demonstrated that many of the problems were intractable and I would suspect that to some degree, to a considerable degree perhaps, the problems are still of that kind. I do not want to sound too downbeat because clearly there are things we can do.

34. The 53 statisticians are all graduates, are they?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Most of them would be graduates, yes, but we do have some members of the Statisticians Group who have joined the group as a result of their work in the Government Statistical Service and we judge them to be adequately qualified for that work. Certainly by far and away most of the people concerned are people with qualifications in statistics.

35. How many with post-graduate degrees?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I could not say, but it is a small proportion because we tend to recruit people after the first degree. They may have a career and we take them on later. Perhaps just under 5 per cent anyway.

36. It has been suggested the Business Statistics Office and other parts of the DTI should be amalgamated with the CSO, do you think that is a good idea?

(*Mr Hibbert*) My ideas on that have been given to the scrutiny team and we have to await their report.

37. Do you think CSO should be turned into an Executive Agency?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think that is an interesting idea. In many ways the nature of what we do could be conceived of as operating as an executive agency but it is something which I think needs careful thought before taking it any further if, indeed, that comes forward as a firm proposal.

38. Do you think your relationship with the Treasury is close enough?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think it is close enough, we are actually in the same building. We have a great deal of contact with them. I do not think there is at all a problem about our failing to understand the Treasury's needs or priorities. I think our problems are of a quite different kind. Certainly we need to have a very close relationship with the Treasury as a major user of the statistics and I believe that, in fact, we do have that relationship.

Chairman: Could we then turn to areas of particular difficulty, first of all on the external account.

Mr Townend

39. The Chancellor and Sir Terence Burns when they came before the Committee told us they thought the present deficit on the current account was overstated, yet I understand the head of your balance of payments branch was rather more pessimistic when he gave a paper to the Statistics' Users Conference. Do you think the present deficit is overstated or understated?

(*Mr Hibbert*) All we can do is put forward what we believe to be our best estimate of the currrent account balance using the information that we have available to us and our best judgements about it and that is what we have done. Having said that, there is certainly an established history of, on average, revisions of net credits as the statistics are revised over time. The difficulty when making any judgment about whether that history is likely to be repeated in respect of the recent past is that there have obviously been all sorts of changes since those earlier years' estimates were made. We have actually made quite a lot of admittedly small but useful improvements in the way in which the balance of payments' accounts and particularly the current account estimates are compiled. Having said that, there is no doubt that there is a large margin of error to be attached to the estimate of the current account balance. You have only got to consider the size of the debits and credits in the account that give rise to that balance. I think they are now running at the order of 175 billlions on each side so even a 1 per cent error in each of those figures would imply a margin of error of let us say around three billions. It is, as I said earlier, in the nature of these statistics which are the difference between two large aggregates that the margin of error to be associated with them is going to be very large. So I would not say that the eventual estimates for 1988 are necessarily going to be what they are now, roughly 14½ billion but we do not have any reasons, other than the past history on revisions, to suggest that the deficit is currently being over-estimated. I hope I have made my position clear.

[**Mr Townend** *Cont*]

40. We have got this high balancing item, have we not, and this has either got to be an under-recording of capital imports and investment in this country or an under-recording of exports, probably invisibles. If you were to give a broad estimate what proportion would you think would be current accounts and what proportion would apply to the capital account?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think it would be most unwise to make such a guess. It is quite conceivable that a balancing item of five billion, which is what we had in 1987 ---

41. 13 billion this year?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Sorry, I am talking about 1987 and 1985, a balancing item of 5 billions to conceivably reflect missing capital transactions of more than five billions and errors in the current account in the opposite direction. Now, in 1986 and so far in 1988 we have figures which are considerably larger than five billions, so that itself presents something of a conundrum because one would not expect the major part of those exceptionally large balancing items to reflect current account errors. It is just basically implausible to think of movements between year to year current account transactions which would be reflected in swings of that kind. So, the evidence that we have is a run of years with a positive balancing item. Now that might itself be taken to mean that there is a probability that at least some part is in the current account as you are implying. I honestly do not feel in a position to make a sensible case as to what part of that it might be. By implication from what I have said earlier, I think it is the case that I would expect it to certainly be a relatively small part of that rather than a substantial part of that.

42. You are saying you think the high proportion will be on the capital account?

(*Mr Hibbert*) That is my judgment, yes.

43. Having said that it could be still three or four, even five billion, out of the 13 billion on the current account, which is quite feasible.

(*Mr Hibbert*) It is possible but I think it would be quite unlikely. If we go back to the historical record on revisions, the figures vary from year to year but they would imply something like 1½ to 2 billions.

44. If it was unrecorded receipts of invisibles, is it not possible they would never be found when it came to bringing figures up to date?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Certainly that is always possible, yes. We do not pretend that when the figures finally settle down that we have somehow arrived at the perfect answer, that is perfectly true, but if we are talking about very large sums I would have thought that is not very likely.

45. When you talk of the current account deficits of all the various countries of the world and then add them up and set them against the current account surpluses, there is a balancing figure which is called the black hole. I understand that has been revised downwards but it is still a substantial figure. Could part of that be caused by the United Kingdom under-recording visible exports?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I think we might ask Mr Kidgell to say something about that.

(*Mr Kidgell*) The IMF did identify a number of general weaknesses in the balance of payments' statistics in the way they were compiled. These showed there was a general under statement of world credits. They identified two areas of particular weakness: shipping and investment income. As you have drawn the conclusion — a number of people have drawn the conclusion — that these two pieces of circumstantial evidence together (the IMF study and the positive United Kingdom balancing item) could lead to the conclusion that the UK has contributed to this world imbalance. We have looked at this very closely and we drew the conclusion that what the IMF observed does not apply strictly to the United Kingdom position. That is not to say that therefore UK net credits are not understated, I am not saying that at all. I am saying that the particular items the IMF identified do not apply to the United Kingdom.

46. What you are saying is you feel the credits for invisibles are understated but you have no idea what the extent is?

(*Mr Kidgell*) No, I am saying that the reasons identified by the IMF for the world underestimates of credits, do not necessarily apply to the United Kingdom. Let me give a couple of examples. (Incidentally, the IMF peak in-balance occurred around about 1983 and has declined since then. In the United Kingdom in 1983 there was no balancing item, or only a small balancing item, and it has grown since then. There is no simple link between the two). If I can just quote three examples: The IMF identified international banking flows as an area of particular weakness and said that countries should use the Bank of International Settlement data to produce estimates of these flows. In that way the world understatement would be lessened. The UK in 1983, and now, is using the BIS data. A second example is shipping, but in that case the IMF pointed the finger strictly at particular countries and it did not identify the United Kingdom. The third reason I put forward, relates to income from investment and securities. The IMF suggested that exchange control was widely used and this under-estimated net credits, and I think that is not surprising. If you run an exchange control system you want to control outflows and consequently monitor outflows. Therefore you get better information on outflows than inflows. In the UK we do not use exchange control information. We use survey methods and we cover most major financial institutions. We believe there is no reason why we should be underestimating net credits for the reasons given by IMF. I am not saying because we do not underestimate for the reasons given by the IMF we do not underestimate at all.

47. I understand your Department has a programme of work to improve our balance of payment statistics which started in 1987, what changes are you making and will they make much differ-

[**Mr Townend** *Cont*]

ence to the final product in the quality of the product?

(*Mr Kidgell*) I have a list here of about 12 different things that we have done and are doing. Maybe now is not the time to list them all but perhaps I could just identify two or three particular items.

48. It might be helpful if you sent us a note on them.

(*Mr Kidgell*) We will do that. Perhaps I can mention the sort of things we have been doing in broad categories. These mainly reflect the current account because the decision was taken earlier on that it was more important to try to improve the current account rather than the capital account in the initial stages of the review. First, I have got a list of three surveys which we have made more frequent, for example, collecting annually instead of triennially. Second, I have a list of three where we have widened the coverage. So we have increased, for instance, the international passenger survey sample to collect more information on fares paid to overseas airlines. Thirdly, we have done a number of miscellaneous things. Perhaps it is worth mentioning the annual direct investment inquiry where in 1987 we made the inquiry statutory instead of leaving it voluntary. We have in hand, with the Bank of England, a major improvement in the collection of information for securities dealers which will be started in the next few months. Finally, we are currently considering whether we should have another share register survey to see what holdings there are of shares by the different sectors of the economy.

Chairman: I think if you could let us have a list that would be helpful.[1]

Mr Watts

49. If I can just pick up one further point on the external account before moving to the national account. How would the survey methods that you use detect a netting off between, for example, flows of dividend income and funds being transferred overseas for acquisitions? For example, if a substantial company here with large investments overseas is making further acquisitions and already has a flow of dividends from its existing investments, surely it would not actually remit dividends and then remit gross funds it needed for further acquisitions, it would remit on the net account? How would your survey methods pick up that netting off? Is there not a danger you would see the outflow in capital account and not see anything coming through the current account?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Certainly the surveys are intended to measure profits whether remitted or not and, of course, those unremitted profits appear in the balance of payments accounts twice, once as current account income and capital account outflow. Given there is no remittance taking place those two flows have to cancel out. As far as that flow is concerned by definition it cannot give rise to any problems of a balancing item. What really matters so far as the balancing item is concerned is whether we are measuring the remittance correctly. I hope that makes sense. Again, if it would help we could provide a little note explaining.[2]

50. I would certainly find that useful. If we go on to the measures of GDP. It does seem that over the period of years comparing the first Blue Book estimates with the latest available ones that you have been able to reduce the residual error between the expenditure and the income measure of GDP, but the record of improving differences in the sectoral balances has not been so good, why is this so?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Clearly we do not know otherwise we would actually do something about it, but I think there are a number of factors, certainly in respect of 1986 and 1987. We think there are events that took place either associated with the Big Bang or related to the Big Bang which meant we were not able to pick up all the financial transactions that were taking place at that time. We think that has made problems with the sector's balancing items worse. The other thing I would say is we are, of course, aware of gaps in the accounts. Just as one example, we do not know how the assets of migrants affect the accounts, people both leaving the country and entering the country. What we have done in situations of that kind in the past is to decide whether this is something that must be pursued given all the other problems we are dealing with or whether we should leave it and assume that broadly speaking these two things cancel out. I think we are becoming increasingly aware that some of those items that we have assumed to be negligible, or certainly very small, have assumed greater importance and many of those items are on my list of 20. Another example which is in there is the situation when a closed company is sold for cash to the owner. Insofar as that is happening and we are not picking that up, that will generate a residual in the company sector and the personal sector. There are other examples of that kind but I have already offered to send my list of 20 and you may be able to spot a few more. I do not know whether there are any other points that either of my colleagues feel should be made about sector balancing items?

51. There are also considerable discrepancies between the output and expenditure measures. What are the main difficulties of measurements you face in looking at GDP always on a different basis which might lead to these differences?

(*Mr Hibbert*) If we take the figures now up to 1987, and certainly the change between 1986 and 1987, the three measures are very close indeed, they are all within 4 or 4½% but, of course, when one comes to 1988 we are in trouble. The main problems arise from the fact, in my judgment, that whereas we can in general expect to be able to measure changes in output reasonably accurately with the information we have for the recent past, when it comes to fixed investment and stockbuilding in particular there are reasons why there are inherent difficulties in making reliable estimates for the recent past. They arise partly from the fact that there are liable to be timing differences

[1] See appendix 1(iii)

[2] See appendix 1(iv)

[Mr Watts *Cont*]

between the measurements of output on the one hand and the acquisition of these goods by firms on the other and partly from the fact (and this is perhaps a personal view) that so far as most companies are concerned accounting for the acquisition of capital assets is essentially an annual event, it is not something which as a matter of course a business is monitoring quarter by quarter and therefore it has to be expected that we would get much better annual figures after the event of capital expenditure than we do quarter by quarter. Having said that, of course, it is still very disappointing that we cannot go from the imprecise information that we collect quarterly and somehow move to estimates for the companies as a whole but experience does seem to suggest that that is a real area of difficulty. I think we have to consider very seriously actually whether we should adopt a different approach for the measurement of fixed investment and stockbuilding and this is certainly one of the things we will be looking at during the course of this year, by that I mean for the recent past. One would still want to rely on this data collected from the people acquiring these assets in the longer term.

52. What has been the impact of the very significant shift in the balance of the economy from manufacturing to services? I imagine you have had many decades of experience of measuring the manufacturing industry but not so much in measuring the output of the services sector?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Well, certainly the change has taken place and the methods we have been following recognise that fact. In fact one of the improvements that we have made in recent years is to collect data from some of the service sectors which have not been covered in the past — data on their turnover and capital expenditure. It is like so many of these other things, whether what we are doing is sufficient is difficult to say but certainly we are very well aware of the fact that we need to try to obtain information which bears on the whole of the economy and not simply rely on information relevant to the traditional centres of activity.

53. What about the very substantial growth in self-employment and the proliferation of small businesses? If a large element of the total growth is coming from self-employment and small businesses how will your existing methods pick that up?

(*Mr Hibbert*) In the short term they pick it up very imprecisely but certainly what we are doing will be consistent. The measures that we are using will be, as I say, consistent with each other. I suppose what we do not know very much about is investment in fixed assets by unincorporated businesses but I think we would make the judgment that we would not actually expect that to be very large. Obviously small businesses will be investing in motor cars and computers and other things of that kind. I am thinking now of those outside the manufacturing sector. So, there is a potential problem, but I do not think we see that as very likely, and not something which could explain the problems we had in 1988. They might very well explain some part of any trend, growth in discrepancies that one might discern.

Mr Budgen

54. I want to take up the point Mr Watts was raising to come to a specific problem, have you looked at the accuracy of your figures during the last war because were they more accurate?

(*Mr Hibbert*) The national accounts figures that we have begin at the earliest in 1946. I know that, of course, during the war and subsequently there were estimates published but to be quite honest that is not something that we have explored.

55. Why I asked you that question was it seems to me from the point of view of accurate decisions on what is happening, accurate description of the economy, a regulated economy mainly involved in manufacturing with a high degree of licensing, with a very high proportion of the workforce engaged in work in the public sector or in large manufacturing units, with a very stiff system of exchange control of that sort of tight regulated economy, is actually the economy which you can most accurately describe, is it not?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I would have thought so, although one is still dependent on people reporting information accurately.

56. That is true.

(*Mr Hibbert*) It is not sufficient simply to decree that something shall happen.

57. If you can take a stereotype, a Government bureaucrat in a Ministry of Defence munitions factory, is more likely to accurately record the number of shells that the factory has manufactured than is a chap selling services in the black economy likely to record how many windows he has cleaned or whatever particular service he is performing in the black economy.

(*Mr Hibbert*) I do not think I could disagree with that.

58. The position surely is this, if we divided the economy up into three for this purpose, the manufacturing sector, the service sector and the black sector (the black economy), the more the economy becomes service orientated with an ever larger black economy, the more difficult it is for you to get accurate statistics, is it not?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Well, I have another list of 20 which are the various terms which have been used to describe what we usually call the hidden economy. I am not sure what you mean by the "black economy"?

59. I will explain.

(*Mr Hibbert*) Yes, thank you.

60. The unrecorded element of the economy, unrecorded most of all because it does not go through the misery of paying any tax.

(*Mr Hibbert*) We do make what allowance we can for activities of that kind. If it were to be expanding very fast in the way that you are describing then certainly one would expect the measures to diverge. What I would expect to happen in that circumstance would be the measure based on ex-

[**Mr Budgen** *Cont*]

penditure data would grow faster than the measure based on income data. As a general proposition what ---

61. What I say is clearly right?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Yes, and problems will be greater but I am not sure that problems would be of the kind we are facing, they would be rather different problems.

62. The problem about the black economy is this, is it not, I think the last time we spoke to somebody from the Inland Revenue he said, I think I am right in saying, that he thought the black economy was 7 or 8% of the economy. Our Chairman is better at remembering these figures than I am but I think it was 7 or 8%. No-one can really tell, and I suspect probably the gentlemen from the Inland Revenue who recognised the black economy as a criticism of this any way did not have minds given to exaggeration like politicians do and probably underestimated it and perhaps we overestimate it, but the anecdotal evidence of those of us who watch the great British public would be the effect of the black economy is much bigger than 7 or 8%. If that is so it would be a major cost of your underestimating a number of important figures certainly in relation to credit and in relation to the size of saving at the present time?

(*Mr Hibbert*) There are a number of implications there. I do not actually think that it will necessarily raise problems over the measurement of saving.

63. Would it not? Let us take the absolutely archetypal chap in the black economy, the chap who draws both Social Security and has got a good little business, shall we say as a plumber, unregistered, not paying any VAT and operating as a plumber or operating on a building site. Surely if out of that activity, out of that black activity, he, for the sake of argument, collects 6,000 in a year he may well say to himself: "It is a bit dangerous to stick this into the bank or the building society, you can never trust these chaps, they might shop me one day", and he might say: "I want to buy myself a new car later but I will save up and stick it under the mattress". That is, in fact, a system of saving which would go unrecorded by you gentlemen, is it not?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Not necessarily, no.

64. Why? You do not have reports from mattresses, do you?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Would you like to hear the answer?

Chairman

65. Yes.

(*Mr Hibbert*) It depends on whether you believe that the outputs of this person are being reflected in the final expenditure or not.

Mr Budgen

66. Ah, I see.

(*Mr Hibbert*) If you believe that the sales of his plumbing services to households are being recorded in our expenditure measure through our family expenditure survey or whatever, — and such evidence as we have from the kind of investigations of how people report in such surveys would suggest for the most part they actually include those things — then what would happen in the situation you are postulating is we would have the final expenditure in our estimates but we would not pick up the income.

67. So when he puts the money under the mattress you do not get it there but when he buys the car you do?

(*Mr Hibbert*) No, I have not finished yet. If that is the situation, when we confront our expenditure and income estimates we will find there is an imbalance and if you go back over a long period of time there is such an inbalance but over recent years things seem to have switched. On the basis of that long-term imbalance we include in our estimate of GDP allowances for evasion of various kinds which would cover the example you have given. The income is in there if those conditions are met. The chap has not spent the money, he is not spending his income in your example, therefore there would be reflected in the personal sector accounts the fact that some income had been attributed to him and there would be no expenditure in respect of his consumption and there would be some implied saving.

68. But to the extent that the black economy grows, whether it does or does not, if I am right in saying it may well have grown a good deal, then that would be an area where you would find it more difficult to record that accurately than you would the sort of regulated war time economy I was referring to earlier?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Again, I could not disagree with that, although I would be very surprised if there were not some similar sorts of activities taking place during the war. This is a fascinating subject and there have been a number of studies done and a very wide range of assessments have emerged from those studies, some of them very close to the amount of allowance that we include and some of them greater. Some of the more outrageous claims for the size of the hidden economy have been shown to be quite flawed in terms of the methodology underlying them.

69. How big do you think it is?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I would think it is certainly less than 5 per cent of GDP.

Chairman

70. I wonder if I might pick up one or two loose ends. As I understand it, at the moment, manufacturing is about 23-24 per cent of GDP and services 58 per cent of GDP. We take the point you have been making about the difficulty of measuring services and changes in services and so on. Do you think you are giving too much attention to manufacturing given the decline in its size and the great deal of detail you go into in terms of the standard industrial classification?

(*Mr Hibbert*) Sorry, for our amusement, we have just had a meeting in the European Community where some of us were arguing we do not need a

[Chairman *Cont*]

very detailed industrial classification, or more detailed than we have at the moment, whereas some of our European colleagues were arguing the reverse. To come back to your question, what the balance should be depends on the uses to which the various statistics are to be put and whether the balance is right at the moment I think is a moot point. Certainly the statistics which have been collected in the past, and which to a considerable degree are still collected in respect of manufacturing industry, are not in fact needed in order to construct the national accounts. They are used for other purposes. Whether one is getting the balance right or not I think is not an easy question to answer but it is certainly one which is constantly reviewed and in fact a recent study at DTI, again another scrutiny, has been looking, as far as that Department is concerned, at the balance of reporting and as I understand it will follow the same procedure as the central scrutiny and one will see what their conclusions and recommendations are.

71. Again arising from Mr Budgen's questions, you were saying a lot of your studies are done on a sample basis, are you satisfied the checks on the validity are adequate in terms of carrying out a major survey and so on?

(*Mr Hibbert*) In so far as we have a good register for a particular part of the economy and we choose a sample which is then used as a basis for a statutory inquiry, I would have every confidence in the results that we get. There are at least two kinds of problem. One is that we may not have a particularly good register and obviously the problem of new businesses is something you have to take account of. The other thing is where our sample surveys are on a voluntary basis then what you have, in fact, is a self-selected sample rather than a probability sample and there are obvious difficulties of a technical kind in inferring from that sample what is happening for the population as a whole.

72. You said in answer to my earlier question that something like 5% of your statisticians had post-graduate degrees?

(*Mr Hibbert*) I am sorry if that was the case, I think I said no more than 5%.

73. In round terms there are 50 statisticians and we are saying two and a half of them are, let us round it to three. Are we to understand you only have three people, or employees, with post-graduate degrees?

(*Mr Hibbert*) In that 50?

74. Yes.

(*Mr Flaxen*) People with full doctorates, there are not many of them but there are a number with statistical training after the first degree. It is a small proportion, Mr Hibbert is quite right.

75. The questions we are looking at as far as balancing and so on is concerned are fairly technical, are they not, are you satisfied at that level you have the number of people you need to deal with the statistical techniques involved in balancing and all that?

(*Mr Hibbert*) So far as we can use statistical techniques to solve these problems I think we have the skilled manpower we need to do that. I do not think that is a problem. In fact, in that particular case I think we are very fortunate in having someone who is recognised in the statistical profession as being highly proficient in the areas that are needed. I think it would be a mistake to expect the problems that we are facing to be ones that are necessarily capable of being resolved by the application of high-powered statistical techniques but obviously we think they have a contribution to make and we shall make use of them.

76. But the balancing techniques and so on of Mr Richard Stone from what I call the other side of the river, Cambridge?

(*Mr Hibbert*) We are in touch with the team. The first paper which Stone and others wrote was round about 1941 and the big breakthrough was being able to compute these things more quickly which is something that has happened in the last 10/15 years. I am not aware of any other country that has found these techniques have a major input into the work of compiling national accounts but maybe we shall be in the forefront of that development if it proves to be helpful.

77. Mr Hibbert, thank you very much indeed, we are extremely grateful. You said you would send a number of varying lists from 20 to 12 and other figures.[1] We are grateful to you indeed, it would be helpful indeed in anticipation of the Government's report we are enthusiastically awaiting.

(*Mr Hibbert*) We have enjoyed having the opportunity to talk about our work.

[1]See appendix 1

APPENDIX 1

NOTE BY CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

1. When the committee took evidence from officials of the Central Statistical Office on 1 February 1989, it requested notes on the following topics:

(i) CSO's current work on balanced accounts (Question 14);

(ii) areas of the national accounts regarded by the Director of the CSO as likely sources of discrepancies (Question 19);

(iii) CSO's programme of work to improve balance of payments statistics (Question 48); and

(iv) recording of direct investment transactions in the balance of payments (Question 49).

(i) **Balanced Accounts**

2. When the 1988 edition of the National Income and Expenditure Blue Book was published, the CSO announced that it was embarking on an experiment into how the UK's national and financial accounts, in 1985-1987, might be balanced. The work has been continuing since then and the intention is to publish an article describing the work in the next edition of Economic Trends which will appear at the beginning of March.

3. The main aims of the exercise are to assist in the interpretation of the existing accounts using subjective assessments, and through these, to identify more clearly likely areas of weakness in the accounts. It is not intended, at least not in the execution of the current experiment, to publish a different set of figures that is considered to be a better version of the "truth".

4. The work has been undertaken in two stages. First, statisticians in the CSO, in other departments and in the Bank of England have been asked to provide estimates of the error ranges (in £ million) that they consider appropriate to the series they regularly feed into the national and financial accounts. The ranges are intended to be set so that there is a 90% chance that the true value of the series lies somewhere between the two extremes of the range. Compilers have also been asked to provide estimates of any biases they think might be present in their estimates. Of course, in the routine production of the accounts, everything possible is done to eliminate bias. In this exercise, statisticians have been asked to be more speculative and less formal in their views of bias, and to take account of poorly based factors (even hunches) that could not be contemplated in the official statistics.

5. The second stage involves the balancing of the accounts (ie eliminating the residual error and the sectoral balancing items) using a recognised statistical technique. Adjustments are first made to the accounts to reflect the biases. The balancing then takes place by spreading the errors to the various figures in the account according to their relative uncertainty ie according to the sizes of their error ranges.

6. The article, to be published in March, will describe this process in greater detail, and will examine how sensitive the results are to different assumptions. It is anticipated that it will identify some areas of notable weakness that are subject to significant adjustment for a range of different assumptions. It is likely that these conclusions will reinforce views already held by statisticians about poorly estimated series. This further evidence will be taken into account by the CSO in deciding how resources should be allocated to areas of research aimed at improving the quality of the accounts.

7. In the light of the results from this experiment and its perceived success (or otherwise), it will be decided how the work should be progressed. In particular, a decision will be made on whether to extend the work to 1988.

(ii) **Areas of Weakness in the National Accounts**

8. When giving evidence, the Director of the CSO (Mr Hibbert) said that he had his own list of 20 topics that he considered the most important to investigate in order to improve the quality of the national and financial accounts. The list includes areas where there are known gaps in the data, inconsistencies between two or more series, and other serious data weaknesses.

9. The Director's list is as follows:

1. Earnings and financial transactions of securities' dealers.
2. Transactions in bearer bonds.
3. Trade credit.
4. Transactions of property companies.
5. Company profits.
6. Conversion to sterling of transactions (or implied transactions derived from changes in levels) denominated in foreign currencies.
7. Sector classification of counterpart data.
8. Capital gains or losses indistinguishable from income as defined for the national accounts.
9. Items derived as residuals (eg personal sector transactions in land and existing buildings, or UK company securities).
10. Personal transfers to, or from, the overseas sector.
11. UK investment in property overseas and overseas sector investment in UK property.
12. Treatment of debts written-off and business fraud.
13. Treatment of mergers and acquisitions.
14. Dependence on assumed rates of return to estimate portfolio income.
15. Estimation of export volume changes and related domestic output.

16. Estimation of import volume changes and related output or final expenditure.
17. Offshore activities.
18. Estimation of external trade and stockbuilding or acquisition of capital goods.
19. Inter-sector insurance claims.
20. Treatment of migrants' assets.

(iii) **Programme of Work on Balance of Payments Statistics**

10. The CSO, together with other departments, has been carrying out an internal review of balance of payments statistics. This began in the middle of 1987, and is continuing. A progress report is being published in "Statistical News" in February 1989. This includes a list of recent changes to the collection of statistics on invisibles and capital transactions. A copy of the article is reproduced as an annex to this note.

(iv) **The Recording of Direct Investment Transactions in the Balance of Payments**

11. Information on transactions between UK companies and their overseas affiliates (branches, subsidiary companies and associated companies) is obtained by quarterly and annual surveys. The information obtained from UK companies is not restricted to a single figure of the net transfer of funds between the UK company and its overseas affiliates, but is broken down into the full range of transactions, viz:

(a) The profit attributable to the UK investing company
(b) The dividends remitted to the UK investing company
(c) Any interest payments made to or from the UK investing company
(d) Any acquisitions or sales of loan and share capital of overseas companies by the UK investing company
(e) The levels of inter-company (and branch-head office) current account indebtedness between the overseas affiliate and the UK investing company.

12. The profit attributable to the UK investing company will cover all of the profit of a wholly-owned subsidiary abroad or a proportionate share of the profit of an affiliate which is not wholly-owned. This profit is covered in the current account of the balance of payments, whether or not it is remitted to the UK as it reflects the current benefit to the UK of the investment. However, to ensure that the correct flow of funds is reflected in the balance of payments account as a whole, that part of the profit which is not remitted to the UK is regarded as equivalent to a capital outflow and appears as a debit in the direct investment component of the capital account as unremitted profits.

13. Thus, if a UK company wished to finance further acquisitions abroad from the profits of its overseas affiliates, it could choose not to remit any of those profits to the UK as dividend, but retain them abroad for such acquisitions. In the balance of payments accounts the profits would continue to be recorded in full in the current account but would be offset by an equivalent figure for unremitted profits in the capital account.

14. A substantial proportion of direct investment abroad by UK companies is in the form of unremitted profits (just over two-fifths of the total in recent years) which will be used either to expand existing businesses or acquire other businesses, as the following figures illustrate:

£ billion

	Direct investment abroad by UK residents Unremitted profits	Other Investment	Total
1986	4.4	7.1	11.5
1987	7.1	8.3	15.4
1988 January to September	4.7	5.6	10.3

An extract from "Statistical News", *February 1989*

Recent Developments in Balance of Payments Statistics

This is an abbreviated version of a paper, *The statistical basis of the UK balance of payments accounts; an overview and assessment* by B J Buckingham, Chief Statistician, (Central Statistical Office) prepared for the Statistics Users' Conference on 7 December 1988 (see report on page 84.12).

The main characteristics of the UK balance of payments accounts at present are:

a. an absence of any data from foreign exchange records (although some estimates still rely in part on exchange control data which were discontinued in 1979);
b. the use of a variety of sources, including
   - Administrative data (particularly for government transactions)
   - Trade association data (eg on UK consultancy firms)
   - Data from offical returns serving both supervisory and statistical purposes (eg on banking)
   - Data from official surveys, some concerned solely with overseas transactions and some in which information on overseas transactions is part of wider approach;
c. an acceptance that some transactions cannot be monitored as frequently or as accurately as others, and that some transactions cannot (at least at present) be monitored at all;
d. the acceptance of a decentralised statistical system in which surveys are in general carried out by the department with the closest policy interest in the subject;
e. the extensive use of proxy measures of the value of transactions which cannot be measured directly.

The quality of balance of payments statistics has been subject to criticism in the last two or three years, leading some commentators to conclude that the official current account estimates are significantly biased. A comprehensive programme of work has been under way since the middle of 1987 to improve the UK balance of payments statistics, although building on earlier developments to improve specific areas such as insurance. One part of this programme has concentrated on seeking to reduce the scale and frequency of revisions to recent data on invisibles by improving projection methods (where reported data are not immediately available) and obtaining more up-to-date information. Several changes have been introduced, as indicated in the following table which indicates the main action taken and planned in each major part of the account. These changes are relatively modest in scale, compared at least with the size of the balancing item. However, in terms of improving the short-term assessment of the trend in the current account balance, they should constitute a useful contribution.

The second part of the review is examining the basis of those parts of the account thought to be weakest in terms of methodology or quality of reported data (particularly in respect of portfolio investment). Some of the more straightforward improvements in methodology have already been introduced, as indicated in the table. However, much work remains to be done, and it likely to be another year or so before there is clear evidence whether changes to the present information system can resolve the major discrepancies within the account.

In reviewing balance of payments statistics, priority has been given so far to improving the current account estimates. This reflects the greater policy interest in the current account and a recognition that the obstacles to preparing a fully integrated capital account in current circumstances are formidable. Among the obstacles are:

a. the absence of information on some subjects (eg suppliers' trade credit) and no immediate prospect of obtaining it;
b. the reliance on information from intermediaries (eg securities' dealers) for details of transactions which could only be obtained from principals at substantial (and probably prohibitive) cost, and which are likely to be incomplete as more transactions take place without intermediaries, or with intermediates other than those currently covered in offical surveys (including ones outside the territorial jurisidiction of the UK statistical authorities);
c. the need to infer the value of transactions from changes in asset or liability levels, with the accompanying need to adjust for valuation (especially exchange rate) changes;
d. the need to ensure accurate and consistent reporting in respect of overseas residents and overseas securities in an environment where such distinctions may be seen as increasingly irrelevant for normal accounting purposes.

Further information relevant to the capital account is being sought during 1989 in respect of securities' dealers' transactions (from April 1989) and on overseas residents' ownership of UK company securities as part of a wider share register survey (subject to feasibility and financial considerations). Even with additional information, the most that it is probably realistic to expect in present circumstances is that the capital account should be sufficiently complete and reliable to remove serious doubts about bias in the current account,and sufficiently detailed to identify major changes in patterns of financing.

Recent Changes to Invisibles and Capital Transactions within Balance of Payments Statistics

Component	*Steps implemented*	*Steps planned*
Sea Transport		
Foreign disbursements in UK:		
a. Bunkers		Obtaining data from UK operators' purchases and subtracting this from total UK port sales
b. Port expenditure	Assessment of ports' accounting data	Use of ports' accounting data. Possible new survey of ports or of port agents
Civil Aviation		
Overseas operators		
a. Fares	Expanded (five-fold) sample in International Passenger Survey (1987). Coverage extended to second-leg journeys, etc (June 1987)	Estimates for latest quarter based on monthly survey figures
b. Disbursements		Improve quarterly interpolation and extrapolation methods
Freight on imports	Improved estimates integrated with visible trade adjustments (August 1988)	
Travel		Review of expenditure coverage and improvement of computing facilities
Financial Services		
Banking services	Annual reporting (1987)	Consider quarterly reporting
Insurance: Lloyd's	Include adjustments for payments to, and UK expenses of, overseas members (August 1988)	
Securities dealers	As interim step, better use made of existing data, etc. (August 1988)	Obtain estimates from comprehensive survey for 1989
Commodity traders) Bullion dealers)	Survey in respect of 1988 in progress	
Export houses		Consider how best to obtain recent data
Other services		
Consultancy firms and miscellaneous services		Review existing estimates
North Sea oil and gas services		Seek earlier quarterly estimates
Royalties and other services	Earlier annual estimates produced for 1986 Royalties benchmark survey for 1987	
Embassies		Improvement in extrapolation method

Recent Changes to Invisibles and Capital Transactions within Balance of Payments Statistics (contd)

Component	*Steps implemented*	*Steps planned*
Direct Investment Earnings		
Insurance companies	Quarterly reports on outward investment from October 1987	
Banks		Consider more frequent (less than annual reporting)
Non-monetary sector companies	Earlier annual estimates for 1987 (March 1988). Question on attributable share capital and reserves added to 1988 survey to enable annual reconciliation of changes in investment positions with capital flows. This will provide annual flow estimates which are less likely to be revised subsequently.	
Portfolio Investment Income		
Insurance companies	Quarterly reporting from sample from October 1987	
Lloyd's	Adjustments for payments to overseas members (August 1988)	
Quarterly non-bank credits and annual credits for non-reporters (securities dealers and clients)	New estimation method using market data, etc. (June 1987)	
Securities dealers and clients	Census of quarterly survey carried out in second half of 1988	Consider implication of census for earlier estimates and future procedures. Also, consider new securities dealers' reports from April 1989
Inward investment a. Shares		Make revisions in light of tentatively planned share register survey for 1989
b. Bonds		Complete review of existing sources and possible alternative sources.
Other Investment Income		
Non-bank transactions with banks abroad	Move to expanded IMF coverage and use of currency analysis (March 1988)	
Short-term securities	Use of Bank of England data for euro-notes and euro-commercial paper (March 1988)	
Other		Explore ways of estimating trade credit by modelling techniques
Private transfers	Revised estimates using more data from other countries (August 1987, August 1988)	

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IMPROVING ECONOMIC STATISTICS — THE CHANCELLOR'S INITIATIVE

In May 1990 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a series of measures to improve economic statistics. They were aimed at improving the measurement of three key areas - services, companies and the balance of payments. This article describes the individual initiatives in the package and reports progress to date.

1. Background

Since the mid 1980's, the national accounts have been subject to considerable criticism in government, in Parliament and elsewhere. The quality of the National Accounts is characterised by the discrepancies between the three alternative ways of measuring the Gross Domestic Product (GDP); by balancing items in the accounts of the institutional sectors; and by revisions up to two or three years after the reference period.

In 1988, an efficiency scrutiny on economic statistics (the Pickford review) was set up to examine the deficiencies in the National Accounts as measured by these quality characteristics. The review team, reporting in May 1989, indicated that the problems were deep seated and pervasive, had multiple causes, and had existed for a long time. Pickford indicated a number of areas where improvements were needed or where further work was necessary.

In line with Pickford recommendations, the new CSO was set up in July 1989, with greater responsibility for the data input into the national accounts, and with clearer objectives for producing more coherent accounts. There is now greater consistency in the three measures of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and in their quarterly growth paths, and there have been some significant reductions in sector balancing items for the past periods (particularly in the overseas and personal sectors). However, the degree of consistency in the GDP measures has, in part, been achieved by the introduction of statistical adjustments. Moreover, there is a long way to go before it can be said that the balancing items are down to acceptable levels. In particular, there is concern about the figures for the latest year (1989), in which the balancing items for the overseas and Industrial and Commercial companies sectors are currently unacceptably high.

In the early part of 1990 the quality of economic statistics continued to be of concern to the Treasury, and to the CSO. The Chancellor of the Exchequer indicated to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee on 3 April 1990 his continuing concern about the statistical base. This was quickly followed by the announcement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 17 May of the series of further measures to improve the quality of economic statistics.

2. Services

Turnover Inquiries

A new set of statutory Quarterly Turnover Inquiries (QTI) covering selected parts of the service trades is being introduced from the first quarter of this year. The inquiries are aimed mainly at improving the quarterly estimates of the output measure of gross domestic product - GDP(O). They will generally collect figures of turnover which will be used to replace those indicators currently used for GDP(O) which are thought to be weakest. In a few cases further information may be requested from respondents.

The service trades to be covered will fall mainly within road transport, private education and health, business and professional services. Initially the QTI will cover around ten per cent of the economy but this might subsequently be extended after further consideration is given to the inclusion of areas where quarterly data derived directly from the administration of VAT are currently used as indicators of output or where other improvements prove necessary.

The inquiries will be conducted on a sample basis and will be designed to give reliable and timely quarterly estimates. There will be periodic replacement of smaller firms in the sample. The sample size will be over 20,000 and could possibly rise if an extension is deemed necessary. The forms for the first phase will generally be despatched in late March to collect information relating to the first quarter of the year.

In order to make the most efficient use of the results of the inquiries it will be necessary to improve and extend the measures available of prices of the services covered. This will lead to the need for the collection of price information for some service trades broadly analogous to the information collected from manufacturers for the prices of manufactured goods.

There has been an extensive consultation programme with trade bodies, informing them of the proposal and seeking their assistance in its detailed implementation.

3. Company sector

(a) Company Profits

Company profits are a major and volatile component of the income measure of gross domestic product (GDP). Current estimates of these profits for the most recent quarters are very weak. For industrial and commercial companies these estimates are provided by the Inland Revenue's Quarterly profits enquiry to a voluntary panel. Recommendations in the Scrutiny Report on Government Economic Statistics (the Pickford Report) called for an investigation of the adequacy of the existing Quarterly Profits Enquiry and of the need for, and feasibility of, introducing a statutory quarterly inquiry into UK company profits. These investigations have been undertaken and concluded that only a statutory inquiry can produce estimates of acceptable quality. Good estimates of profits are essential to the production of good estimates of GDP, and to improve the measurement of the company sector.

A new statutory quarterly profits inquiry to industrial and commercial companies is to be introduced and run by the CSO. This will replace the existing Inland Revenue voluntary inquiry. The new inquiry will cover a representative selection of about 1,500 large industrial and commercial company groups, and the information will be sought in a form which should generally be available from companies' own management records. The first of the new inquiry forms will be despatched at the end of June asking for profits information relating to the first two calender quarters of this year. In order to implement this inquiry the schedule of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947 has been amended to permit statutory collection of profits figures.

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With the Bank of England, the CSO is also considering ways in which the coverage and quality of the figures for financial companies' profits can be improved. In particular, last autumn, new reporting forms giving a more detailed breakdown of banks' income and expenditure were agreed with the banks, to be introduced in the first quarter of 1992. In the meantime, the frequency of the banks' existing reports has been stepped up.

(b) Stockbuilding Inquiry

For many years estimates of stockbuilding have been derived from a quarterly voluntary inquiry covering a panel of businesses in the production industries and in wholesaling. Annual figures are also obtained from the statutory annual inquiries into production and services. The results of the quarterly inquiry have been "benchmarked" retrospectively to tie in with the annual results. The quarterly estimates are required for the Index of Production, the Output measures of gross domestic product (GDP(O)), for the expenditure measure GDP(E), and for estimates of stock appreciation in the income measure GDP(I).

The existing quarterly inquiries have not provided estimates of sufficient precision for these purposes, partly because the numbers of businesses sampled were too small, and also because the voluntary nature of the inquiry restricted efficient selection. The information of main interest is the change in stock levels between the start and finish of the quarterly periods rather than the levels themselves. Changes are relatively small differences between large aggregates and are difficult to measure; at times there have been substantial revisions between the provisional and final figures. This tendency to revision should be reduced with more businesses within a better sample structure.

The "Armstrong/Rees" Review of DTI Statistics in 1988 questioned the usefulness of voluntary inquiries, and favoured a statutory basis on the grounds that a given level of accuracy could be achieved with fewer forms through more efficient sampling. With effect from Q3 1990 for stocks in production industries and from Q1 1991 for wholesalers stocks, the existing quarterly inquiries became statutory. Advice received from the accountancy profession, and from the Production Statistics Advisory Committee (PSAC) suggested that smaller businesses may have difficulty with the completion of a quarterly stockbuilding return. For that reason the CSO conducted a small scale survey of businesses, to establish their ability to complete each quarter statutory stocks and capital expenditure forms. The results of this exercise confirmed that stocks would not be a problem for larger businesses with more than around 75-100 employees, but could be difficult for some of the smaller firms. Consequently, no production stocks forms are mailed to businesses with employment below 75.

The sample arrangements for the new inquiries will cover all production businesses with employment greater than a selected "threshold" for each industry, and wholesaling businesses above turnover "thresholds". Because of the link between stockbuilding and the Index of Production, for those activity headings covered by the monthly sales inquiries, the new production forms are sent, subject to the 75 employment limit, to the same businesses covered by those inquiries.

(c) Capital Expenditure Inquiry

In the past, estimates of capital expenditure covering most of the private sector have been made from quarterly voluntary inquiries. Annual figures are also obtained from the statutory annual inquiries into production and services. The estimates from the quarterly inquiries have been "benchmarked" retrospectively to match these.

The information is required for the national accounts expenditure measure GDP(E), but as with stocks, the existing samples do not provide estimates of sufficient precision. For that to be achieved the number of forms is being increased and the inquiry is being made statutory. As for stockbuilding, this is in line with an Armstrong Rees recommendation. The small scale survey of business ability (described above) did not identify any problems of completion by contributors for quarterly capital expenditure.

Forms for the new statutory inquiry will be despatched in respect of Q1 1991. Studies into the optimal sampling arrangements have recommended a design proportional to size. However, for operational reasons, in the short term, the sample will be selected using thresholds in a similar way to stocks.

(d) Company Liquidity Survey

The national accounts estimates for the industrial and commercial company sector include for the latest years a large balancing item of unidentified flows. Much of this problem stems from lack of information on the financial transactions of these companies. The CSO is therefore introducing a statutory annual survey into the financial assets and liabilities of about 700 large industrial and commercial company groups. The first forms, in respect of end 1990, have recently been dispatched. The existing voluntary quarterly company liquidity survey will be expanded to cover a wider range of assets and liabilities than at present and used alongside the statutory annual survey. These developments will improve the national accounts estimates for the industrial and commercial company sector and will also have indirect benefits for other sectors, particularly the overseas and personal sectors, that are counterparts to these transactions.

4. Balance of Payments

(a) Review

During the second half of the 1980's, the overseas sector had large balancing items and current account, especially invisibles, and capital account estimates have been subject to substantial revisions. As a result, the accounts, including the current account had been subject to widespread criticism.

A Chief Statistician, from outside the CSO was appointed last summer to review the entire system for measuring the balance of payments accounts and to investigate these problems. The review will last 12 months and is expected to identify further improvements that will reduce the frequency and scale of revisions and the size of the balancing items.

(b) Overseas Trade in Services

At present overseas trade in royalties and services is measured by a series of surveys (some quarterly, some annual) on particular services activities (eg financial services and telecommunications), and a general purpose annual survey to cover all overseas transactions in royalties and in those services not covered in particular service activity surveys.

There is widespread concern about the data quality and the paucity of quarterly information. The scale of cross-border service transactions has expanded considerably in recent years, especially with the growth of multinationals, and new service activities have developed which are not fully reflected in the present estimates.

Priority has been given to obtaining more quarterly information to measure the latest trends in a more accurate and timely way. The general purpose annual survey of royalties and services has been transformed (from Q3 1990) into a quarterly survey covering major transactors, supplemented by an annual survey covering the remainder. Initially, retrospective reports for the earlier quarters of 1990 were sought, and the first results now enable a much earlier assessment of 1990 figures to be made.

To ensure that overseas trade in services is measured comprehensively, a series of investigations are being made to check (i) that no significant service activity is being missed, (ii) that the registers for existing surveys cover all firms with significant trade in services and (iii) that activities not surveyed recently are covered. The first category is covering, inter alia, the activities of fund managers and arts organisations. The second is examining, inter alia, consultancy and education services. The third is examining, inter alia, trade commissions and export houses. From these studies, additions are being made to the coverage of the 1990 annual inquiry into royalties and services (for example, to cover trade commissions and arts organisations) and supplementary inquiries are planned in other areas (for example, on fund managers).

To tie together the various surveys into trade in services, an integrated central register of firms engaged in trade in services is being prepared.This will be progressively enhanced as various investigations are completed, and ensure the progressive improvement in the data over the next two to three years.

Much overseas trade in services is conducted by financial companies. The banks have agreed to increase the frequency of their reporting of service transactions to the Bank of England from annual to quarterly. This will take effect in a temporary form from the first quarter to 1991 and will, with effect from 1992, form a part of the new quarterly integrated reporting of banks' income and outgoings mentioned earlier.

The Bank has also opened discussions with the Baltic Exchange, with the view to their increasing the frequency of their data collection from annual to quarterly. Similarly, the CSO is exploring the possibility of collecting quarterly data from the insurance industry.

(c) Direct Investment Inquiries

Direct investment income is an important component of the current account of the balance of payments, and direct investment capital flows, especially those associated with cross-border acquisitions and mergers, are substantial. In the past, quarterly estimates, based on a voluntary sample, have been subject to substantial revision in the light of subsequent more comprehensive annual data. From Q3 1990 the quarterly inquiry into direct investment has been made statutory and its coverage significantly widened. This led to a significantly improved coverage in the estimates incorporated in the balance of payments account published in December 1990: the coverage of outward investors increased by 25 per cent and that of inward investors by 10 per cent. Further improvements in coverage are anticipated as the new statutory survey beds down.

In addition, the annual direct investment inquiry for 1990 will be extended in scope to cover a range of questions on assets and liabilities (which was to have been deferred until 1992 as originally envisaged in the Armstrong Rees Report). These additional questions will help to check the reporting of transactions in recent years. Also, an extensive register proving exercise will be undertaken to validate the coverage of the estimates and help improve grossing procedures. The expanded 1990 inquiry will be processed in 1991 with results available early in 1992.

The Bank of England has negotiated with the banks an increase from annual to quarterly in the frequency of reporting of the direct investment income (credits and debits) of banks. This forms a part of the new quarterly reporting of banks' income and outgoings, which will come into operation in 1992.

(d) Trade Valuation Survey

A major statutory survey of importers and exporters has been undertaken by Customs and Excise. The questionnaires, sent out in November 1990, were linked to a sample of Single Administrative Documents received by Customs in respect of trade recorded in August.

One aim of the survey is to confirm current estimates of the differences between the value of goods declared for Customs purposes and the amounts actually paid. Another is to confirm the accuracy with which traders report the value of trade and any differences from the required cif and fob valuation bases.

Although the coverage of the volume of visible trade is considered to be very good, there are doubts about the valuation procedure, which, especially for exports where there are no revenue implications, are largely handled by traders themselves. The last survey (for imports only) took place in 1980 with the last comprehensive information for exports coming from 1979 exchange control information. There has been a more recent series of export value verification exercises but they did not cover all aspects of the problem. If the survey reveals serious differences between current estimation procedures and what is happening on the ground, adjustments will be applied to the figures, and consideration will be given to the need for smaller continuing surveys. The results from this complex inquiry are expected to be available in the Summer.

5. Other measures

(a) Share Register Survey

A substantial part of the sector balancing items in recent years has been due to the poor quality of the estimates of holdings and transactions in UK company securities by the overseas, personal and industrial and commercial companies sectors. In 1990, a sample survey of around 100,000 holdings of listed ordinary shares of some 220 companies on the London International Stock Exchange was carried out. These 220 companies accounted for about two thirds of the total market capitalization of all companies on the Exchange. The survey was designed to establish the beneficial ownership of the shares classified to the broad sectors used in the national accounts.

The share registers were purchased on computer tape, in the format maintained by the registrar. The identities of the beneficial owners of nominee holdings were derived from an existing index of beneficial owners in nominee accounts, from firms' own registers of replies to enquiries made under Section 212 of the 1985 Companies Act, and from nominee companies.

Results of this survey (reported in more detail in an article in January 1991 Economic Trends) showed larger holdings of shares by the overseas sector and fewer by the personal sector than previously estimated. This has led to reductions of around £13 billion in the cumulative balancing items for the overseas sector over the latest five years, with consequent reductions in counterpart sectors (mainly the personal sector). A further survey is now being undertaken in respect of end 1990, using information gleaned from the 1989 survey to refine the survey design. The CSO expect to run an annual survey of share registers as a major new source of data for the national accounts.

(b) Employment Statistics

Employment estimates are used, together with the Average Earnings Index, to calculate "income from employment", the major component of GDP(I) and personal sector income. Employment estimates also used as a proxy indicator for a small part of GDP(O). They are also used in measuring productivity and unit wage costs.

In September 1989 the then Secretary of State for Employment approved a package of measures to improve employment statistics compiled by his Department. The improvements package contains a number of elements which will be introduced in stages over several years.

Short-term employment estimates are based on benchmarks derived from the now biennial Censuses of Employment and on results from a panel of employers, supplemented by information from the current annual Labour Force Survey of households (LFS), both of which are used to project forward from Census benchmark. Results of the 1989 Census will be published in March some six months faster than the 1987 Census. At the same time, results from the 1990 LFS will be available. Both will be reflected in the monthly and quarterly employment estimates.

The monthly and quarterly employee estimates are based on information received from a panel of employers. The existing panel is not representative of current employment patterns - either industrially or geographically. A new panel is being selected from respondents to the 1989 Census. This will be the first major step towards improved reliability. The panel has now been recruited and the first batch of forms issued. Results are expected in the Autumn of 1991 when the June 1991 quarter figures are published.

On 9 March 1990, the Secretary of State for Employment announced the development of the LFS in Great Britain to deliver results on a quarterly rather than annual basis as at present. The Labour Force Survey offers a comprehensive and consistent picture of the labour market, employment, unemployment, occupation, hours of work, methods of job search, qualifications, training and other characteristics of people who are engaged in labour market activities. The introduction of a quarterly survey is expected to reduce the scale of revisions to the self-employed figures and be an additional contribution towards reducing revisions to the estimates of employees in employment.

The survey will be based on a sample of 60,000 households each quarter. The development will be carried out by the Department of Employment in partnership with the Social Survey Division of the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys. The enhanced survey will use Computer Assisted Interviewing techniques to give highly reliable results and to allow results to be produced quickly. When the enhanced Survey is fully operational, it is expected that first results will be available 12 weeks after the end of the quarter to which they relate. Detailed planning for the enhanced LFS is well under way. The current aim is to have the first full-size quarterly survey in operation in the Spring of 1992.

(c) Sectorisation of Banking Flows

The banks provide information which analyses, for non-marketable instruments, business with other sectors of the economy. These flows are very large and any mis-allocation will affect the balancing items in the accounts of the individual sectors. Given the potential for mis-allocation a project has been initiated, to confirm that existing procedures provide reliable information. Terms of reference for the study provide for a report on the first phase of the inquiry, including the results of visits to a number of banks, by 31 March 1991. The report will note any areas where there might be substantial errors and, in the light of the work done, recommend whether a further phase of the project is necessary to quantify the errors found.

(d) Construction Industry

The construction industry accounts for six per cent of the country's gross domestic product. The diverse structure of the industry means there are considerable difficulties in obtaining accurate estimates of this contribution. Early estimates of construction are important as they provide a forward indicator of the state of the economy. Currently early estimates are frequently revised and their precision is thought not to be sufficient for national accounting purposes. Although, the Department of the Environment has undertaken continual research to improve these estimates, they are now doing further research to identify whether existing procedures can be changed to provide improved timely estimates. The research will also indicate whether the existing sampling scheme is optimal for the quality of the estimates required. A Report on this later research is expected in March. It will highlight the action required to make further improvements to the estimate of output of the construction industry.

(e) Offshore Centres

At present the balance of payments and financial transactions accounts define the UK to include the Channel Islands and the Isle of Man (off-shore UK), whereas the measures of gross domestic product relate only to mainland UK. Trade in goods and services by these islands with the rest of the world which are included in both are sufficiently small to make little practical difference. However, financial institutions in off-shore UK have substantial transactions and their treatment is known to be incomplete. This could lead to a biased picture and could explain part of the balance of payments' balancing item. Banking transactions are well covered but little information at present exists elsewhere.

A study is being undertaken during the first quarter of 1991 to look again at the availability of information within the off-shore UK centres which might be of use in compiling the balance of payments. This may point the way to the need for further research.

IMPROVING ECONOMIC STATISTICS

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Introduction

In November 1991 Mr Norman Lamont, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, announced a series of measures to improve the reliability of economic statistics. This followed an earlier set of measures which had been announced by the previous Chancellor in May 1990. The two packages have become known as Phase One and Phase Two. This article gives a brief account of the background and some of the achievements of Phase One and details the projects in Phase Two.

Phase One

Phase One was described in an article in the February 1991 issue of Economic Trends. A report on progress was published in the summer 1991 issue of the Treasury Bulletin. Methodological bulletins on a number of the projects have been published. Further bulletins will be published in the coming months.

The initiative had three key objectives.

(1) To reduce revisions to early estimates of gross domestic product and the overseas current account.

(2) To improve the coherence and accuracy of gross domestic product estimates.

(3) To reduce the size of the sectoral balancing items in the national accounts.

The primary means of achieving these objectives was increased use of quarterly inquiries, strengthening and making statutory existing voluntary inquiries and launching new inquiries. The CSO consulted with firms and trade associations and other representative bodies on the design and implementation of the new and extended inquiries. This keeps down the form filling burden to the essential minimum and focuses questions in an appropriate way. Other projects included investigating known problems in the national accounts and proposing methodological or organisational improvements.

All the new or enhanced inquiries in Phase One have now been launched. The latest is that of the Employment Department's quarterly Labour Force Survey. The expansion of the Labour Force Survey was announced by the Secretary of State for Employment in March 1990.

Results from the great majority of inquiries are already feeding into published economic statistics. It is too early to make a full evaluation but there is already evidence of a significant impact on quality.

For example, the annual share register surveys have produced substantial reductions in the balancing items of the overseas sector and personal sector accounts in the last five years. Sectoral balancing items in 1989 and 1990 have also been substantially reduced by the results of the annual financial assets and liabilities survey.

The coherence of the national accounts has been improved by the introduction of data from the new quarterly overseas trade in services inquiry. This helped remove the need for a statistical adjustment to overseas trade in goods and services in the June 1991 balance of payments press notice. The results of the new statutory quarterly profits inquiry are being used in estimates of GDP. Early estimates of overseas direct investment are now based on a sample some four times larger than previously, resulting in a corresponding improvement in quality.

Phase Two

The Phase Two projects were designed to carry forward the work of Phase One. The objective remains to improve the reliability of early estimates and to reduce both discrepancies between the different methods of measuring gross domestic product and the balancing items in the sector accounts. Again the CSO consulted widely to ensure that the form filling burden was kept to a minimum and questions were appropriately focused.

As with Phase One, much of the emphasis is on enlarging short period inquiries, which contribute to early estimates, and making them statutory. In addition, new surveys are being established where quarterly information either does not exist or is of poor quality. Making surveys statutory increases response rates which, in turn, improves the quality of estimates.

One of the measures in Phase One was a review of balance of payments statistics. The review was carried out by Richard Eason, a chief statistician from the Inland Revenue. His report included a number of recommendations that have been taken forward as part of Phase Two in the areas of balance of payments, financial institutions and sector financial accounts. (Copies of the Eason report are available from the CSO.)

Retail sales and consumers' expenditure

The monthly retail sales inquiry was made statutory from January 1992 and has been expanded from 3,500 to 5,000 contributors. This change was needed as the previous voluntary inquiry had some weaknesses. It will enable the inquiry to obtain data from the few larger firms who did not respond to the voluntary inquiry and to approach a more representative sample of smaller firms. In addition, in June 1992, a new quarterly inquiry will be launched to collect sales by commodity from large firms. The existing annual retail inquiry will collect full product detail on an annual basis rather than biennially as at present. These projects should improve early estimates of consumers' expenditure.

Estimates of a number of other categories of consumers' expenditure are known to be unsatisfactory. Work will be carried out to improve the data sources for these estimates. In particular, there will be an investigation into ways of improving the quality and coverage of responses by households to questions in the Family Expenditure Survey relating to contractors' charges, motor repairs and domestic services. Work will also be undertaken to adjust survey results for non-response and under-recording. New benchmarks are being sought for estimates of final expenditure by charities and people living in communal establishments. Improvements to the estimates of expenditure on financial services are also envisaged.

Output of goods and services

Monthly sales inquiries were extended in January 1992 to cover a number of manufacturing industries where the current sources of data need to be strengthened. This will improve the reliability of the monthly index of production (IOP), and therefore early estimates of GDP, by giving more control of data quality and timeliness.

From January 1992, monthly data are being collected on the level of production stocks for the aerospace, computer and shipbuilding industries. For these industries, the changes in the level of work in progress and producers' stocks can be large and variable and were not measured by existing surveys. This voluntary inquiry will improve the IOP and early GDP estimates by increasing accuracy and reducing the need for revisions.

Quarterly turnover inquiries (QTIs) were introduced as part of Phase One to improve estimates of output for selected service trades. From the first quarter of 1992, the QTIs, which are statutory surveys, are being extended to cover more industries where the existing indicators of output are unsatisfactory. This measure, which will include wholesaling, catering and the motor trades, should lead to improvements in early estimates of GDP.

Recent work carried out by the CSO has compared the measures of price changes in overseas trade and domestic output. This has revealed inconsistencies between them. A review will be carried out to recommend ways of reducing these inconsistencies so that discrepancies between the different methods of measuring GDP are reduced.

Stockbuilding

Quarterly stock changes are a very volatile but important component of GDP. Improvements to estimates of stockbuilding are needed where current approaches are producing estimates of insufficient quality.

The existing voluntary, quarterly retail stocks inquiry will be replaced with an enhanced statutory survey covering around 1,300 retail firms. The new sample will be more representative of the sector and lead to more precise estimates of stockbuilding.

For motor trades and construction industries only limited annual data are currently available. New quarterly statutory inquires into stockbuilding in these industries are being launched.

These new inquiries, which will generally collect data from the first quarter of 1992, should improve early estimates of GDP and reduce imbalances in the quarterly national accounts.

Producer prices

The monthly producer prices indices are an important measure of prices changes and are used in calculating the volume of output. The previous voluntary survey was known to have inadequate coverage of certain industries such as aerospace, shipbuilding and defence equipment.

In January 1992, the inquiry was made statutory and it will be expanded by 500 contributors, giving 10,000 further price quotations per year. The new survey should lead to improvements in the quality of the IOP and output components of GDP.

Balance of payments

Estimates in some parts of the balance of payments accounts are known to be of poor quality. This leads to a large overseas sector balancing item which, in turn, has implications for other sectors. They have also contributed to imbalances in the national accounts as, for example, trade in services is a component of GDP. A number of measures to improve the estimates are under way.

Some existing estimates of overseas service earnings, based on a variety of sources, are known to be of low quality. The coverage of the survey of royalties and other services is being improved and quarterly reporting has been introduced. Consultants and advertising agencies are being covered systematically for the first time in 1992 with the intention of introducing quarterly reporting.

Private transfers by households have not been directly measured since exchange control ceased in 1979. Existing estimates are based on partial data from other countries, passenger survey data and, in part, projections. Ways of improving these estimates, including the possibility of measuring transfers through a household survey, will be investigated.

Currently, no single register gives adequate coverage of those enterprises which are engaged in trade in services. A new register is being established specifically to cover such enterprises. This will then be used in the construction of inquiries. In time, this register will be incorporated into the inter-departmental business register which is being set up by the CSO.

As a result of all these measures, estimates of invisibles in the balance of payments, particularly the early estimates, will be more securely based. This should lead to further reductions in balancing items and reduce revisions to data.

Financial institutions and sector financial accounts

Following a recommendation in the Eason Report, CSO is taking over responsibility for some statistical inquiries to non-bank financial institutions carried out by the Bank of England, mainly for national accounts purposes. It is also taking over, from the Association of British Insurers (ABI), the collection of data from insurance companies. The transfer of inquiries will take place gradually through 1992.

The coverage of some surveys of financial institutions will be extended to provide more accurate quarterly data. For example, the quarterly and annual insurance and pension fund inquiries will be enlarged and become statutory from the first quarter of 1992. These measures should reduce sectoral balancing items not only in the financial sector, but in other sectors, such as the overseas sectors, where the counterparts lie. They will also help to reduce the size of revisions to early estimates of GDP.

Subject to further consultation, the CSO will extend and improve the inquiries into industrial and commercial companies' financial positions. It is expected that the quarterly survey will then be made statutory. Firmer quarterly estimates will reduce revisions in the financial accounts.

Other measures

In addition to those measures announced by the Chancellor, the CSO is continuing to look at ways of improving the quality of economic statistics. An article in the December edition of Economic Trends described the use of input-output tables in systematically examining discrepancies between output and expenditure components in GDP estimates. Work on input-output tables, for 1989 and then subsequent years, will help in exploring discrepancies between income estimates and output and expenditure estimates.

The CSO is taking the lead in establishing an inter-departmental business register (IDBR) which will be used in a wide range of inquiries by government departments. The CSO is also committed to producing balanced national accounts from which all inconsistencies have been removed. Both balanced accounts and the IDBR will be the subjects of articles in future editions of Economic Trends.

Summary

The full impact of the Chancellor's initiatives on economic statistics will take some time to feed through. However all the proposed new or enhanced enquiries in phase one are now in place and beginning to have positive results. The measures in Phase Two are in the process of being introduced. The results from these initiatives will contribute substantially to the improvement in economic statistics in future years.

There has inevitably been some increase in the reporting burden. However every effort has been made to keep this increase to the minimum necessary. This has been achieved by the use of optimum sample designs and by careful consultation. The improvements to the quality of statistics are widely recognised as being vital for decision making by both Government and business.

IMPROVEMENTS TO ECONOMIC STATISTICS

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Introduction

In May 1990 and November 1991, two sets of measures aimed at improving the reliability of economic statistics were announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. These packages of improvements have become known as phases One and Two of the Chancellor's Initiative.

It is now two years since Phase Two was announced and what improvements have been made to economic statistics? This article explains the measures the CSO took to improve economic statistics and assesses their impact.

Background to the Chancellor's initiative

Each phase of the Chancellor's initiatives had three key objectives;

- To improve the reliability of early estimates of gross domestic product (GDP) and the overseas current account,
- To reduce the discrepancies between the different approaches to measuring GDP,
- To reduce the size of the balancing items in the sector accounts.

Phase One was aimed at improving the measurement of services, companies and the balance of payments. This was achieved by the increased use of quarterly inquiries, making existing voluntary inquiries statutory and launching of new inquiries.

Phase Two developed much of the work which began under Phase One. Many projects used similar techniques to those in Phase One such as improving existing surveys by making them statutory and enlarging them. An article in the February 1992 edition of Economic Trends described the important areas which would be affected under Phase Two of the initiative. These included retail sales, output of goods and services and the balance of payments.

The announcement of Phase Two of the Chancellor's initiative coincided with the launch of the CSO as an Executive Agency. As an agency, the CSO has a framework document which includes a set of performance measures. These monitor the revisions to statistics and other aspects of quality such as coherence and timeliness. The improvements to economic statistics resulting from Phase Two will be apparent in these measures of performance. An article in the June 1993 Edition of Economic Trends examined CSO's success at meeting its performance targets.

The following paragraphs highlight the main improvements resulting from Phase Two and assess their impact on key economic statistics.

THE EFFECTS OF PHASE TWO OF THE INITIATIVE

Retail sales and consumers' expenditure

The monthly retail sales inquiry was enlarged and made statutory in January 1992. This has improved its coverage to include all large retailers and give a more representative sample of smaller retailers. As a result the survey is more soundly based and has strengthened the areas which were considered weak or volatile. Results have been used for the index of retail sales and initial estimates of consumers' expenditure since April 1992 and are expected to reduce revisions to early estimates. These measures will increase the reliability of the index of production and GDP estimates.

In addition, several measures have been taken to improve estimates of retail sales by individual commodity. A quarterly commodity inquiry was introduced in the second quarter of 1992 and the existing annual inquiry now features a more detailed commodity breakdown than in some previous years. Both these inquiries were used for estimates of consumers' expenditure in the 1993 Blue Book. Results from the quarterly inquiry were validated once four quarters' information had been collected. These are being used to inform estimates of consumers' expenditure alongside the existing methodology.

Several projects have improved the timing and basis of estimates of categories of consumers' expenditure. The processing of the Family Expenditure Survey has been advanced by three months since February 1992 and this has reduced the need for revisions to consumers' expenditure. Firmly based benchmark figures have been established for final expenditure by charities, people living in residential and nursing homes and people living in military establishments. These benchmarks have proved valuable in compiling estimates of consumers' expenditure. More reliable data sources for expenditures on financial services have been identified and estimates are now more robust, although further work remains to identify additional data sources. Improved estimates of consumers' expenditure will improve the reliability of GDP figures.

Output of goods and services

The monthly sales inquiry has been extended to cover an additional twenty one indicators of sales. Most indicators have been used in the monthly index of production for at least a year. However, some work still remains to incorporate the last two indicators. The extension of this inquiry has increased accuracy and reduced the revisions to the index of production. This will contribute to further improvements in early estimates of GDP.

Quarterly turnover inquiries were introduced as part of Phase One of the initiative and are being introduced progressively into the estimation of GDP. Phase Two extended these inquiries to cover the catering, motor trades, miscellaneous services and wholesaling industries. These statutory inquiries were introduced in the first quarter of 1992. The results will, in due course, replace the existing V.A.T. based estimates of output. This will improve the quarterly estimates of output.

A further project looking at measures of price changes of trade in goods, was completed as part of Phase Two. This project aimed to improve the quality of deflators applied to the output of exported goods. Traditionally in output measures, the volume of trade in goods was estimated by deflating output using producer price indices. However, in the balance of payments, volume of trade was broadly measured using the actual weight of goods exported.

The project verified that alternative methodology was needed to ensure consistency between output measures and the balance of payments. The first improvements ensured consistent deflation of output of exports and exports in the balance of payments for the 1993 Blue Book. This has improved the measurement of export prices particularly at a time when exchange rates have been changing quickly. The project also recommended that export prices be collected from manufacturers. In time, this will allow changes in export prices to be measured accurately and improve the quality of export deflators. Work has already been started to collect these prices and it is hoped that they will be used from the end of 1994.

An additional monthly voluntary inquiry, covering stock changes in the computer, shipbuilding and aerospace industries was launched in January 1992. The monthly inquiry, covering around 150 businesses is supplemented by a statutory quarterly inquiry to those who do not participate in the monthly inquiry. Together these inquiries represent around 90 per cent of employees in these industries. The results have been used in estimates of the index of production since January 1992. The monthly inquiry should improve the reliability of the 3 week output based estimate of GDP. Further work will examine the possibility of extending the survey to other industries.

Producer prices

The CSO publishes an index of producers' prices every month. This is used widely in economic statistics to measure price changes and estimate output in volume terms. The inquiry was made statutory in January 1992 and enlarged to collect prices on around a thousand additional items. This has increased the coverage of the inquiry significantly; 43 per cent of manufacturers' sales are now covered, compared with 36 per cent before.

The prices of products from certain industries such as aerospace and shipbuilding, are difficult to collect. Work to collect prices from these industries has begun and results have been published since August 1993. The improved inquiry has been used in the producer price index since August 1993 and has allowed better estimation of price movements in the manufacturing industry. In time, these improvements will affect estimates of the index of production, most components of final expenditure such as stockbuilding and consequently GDP.

Balance of payments

Estimates of some areas of the balance of payments were known to be poor and this led to a large overseas sector balancing item prior to 1990. Phase One of the Chancellor's initiative included a review of balance of payments statistics carried out by Richard Eason published in June 1991. This suggested a number of improvements for the measurement of the balance of payments. These recommendations formed projects under Phase Two of the Chancellor's initiative. These projects focused on improving data collection and most projects are complete or nearing completion. It is not possible to assess the full impact of the Eason Review yet but the coherence of the balance of payments has improved as the review has been implemented. This is illustrated by the relatively small balancing items in recent years. Charts 1 and 2 show the reductions to the company and overseas sector balancing items as a percentage of GDP. There have been clear reductions since 1987 and 1989 respectively.

Substantial improvements have been made in the coverage of trade in services. Work continues to enhance existing data sources which were previously regarded as inadequate. Several new surveys have been set up to collect data on consultants' earnings, education services, commodity trading and foreign embassy expenditure. The annual survey of royalties and other services has been expanded. Most estimates of trade in services included in the 1993 Pink Book were estimated directly from official inquiry sources. The response to the surveys has been high, above 90 per cent in most cases. Work continues to increase the proportion of data collected on a quarterly basis, which is now nearing the long term target of 90 per cent of data.

Several other ongoing projects are expected to improve the balance of payments in the long term. At present, the UK has little information measuring overseas transactions by the personal sector. The CSO contracted the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) to collect such information over the twelve months beginning in April 1993.

Chart 1

Note: The chart shows the balancing item as percentage of GDP for a particular year as published in the CSO Blue Book the following year.

starting to show in the published estimates and should continue to do so in the coming years. The CSO has met all its performance targets for the first two years. Some targets have been tightened up and the CSO plans to tighten targets further where appropriate.

There is still some work remaining. A number of projects under Phase Two are not quite complete. For example, work still remains on incorporating the quarterly commodity inquires into consumers' expenditure estimates and implementing all of the recommendations of the Eason Review. Some of the surveys (particularly the annual inquiries) have not been running for long enough to validate data. The OPCS survey, looking at personal sector transactions overseas, has only just started and full data have not yet been received. In addition, some of the exploratory work has revealed possible areas where further improvements may be possible. For example, extending the monthly sales inquiry and the monthly production stocks inquiry to other industries.

The impacts of each phase of the Chancellor's initiative will continue to feed through to the published economic statistics; in particular, the index of production, the balance of payments, GDP and the sector balancing items. For example, chart 3 illustrates the recent reductions in revisions to the growth rate of GDP between first and second publication dates. Phase two will also lead to improvements to trade in goods and services, stockbuilding, consumers' expenditure, output of construction and the financial accounts.

At this stage it is difficult to evaluate the full impact of these improvements on the published estimates because there is insufficient data. However, this article indicates the areas where improvements will show and highlights evidence to suggest the improvements are already apparent. The CSO will also continue to build on these improvements to enhance further the quality of the service it provides.

Further information

"Improving Economic Statistics - The Chancellor's initiative", *Economic Trends* February 1991.

"Improving Economic Statistics", Economic Trends February 1992.

"Sectoral analysis of banking statistics: a joint Bank of England/ CSO study", *Economic Trends* March 1992.

"The inter-departmental business register", *Economic Trends* April 1992.

"Investigating the inter-bank difference", *Economic Trends* June 1992.

"Producer price indices - present practice, future developments and international comparisons" *Economic Trends* July 1992.

"Developments in balance of payments statistics: problems and some solutions", *Economic Trends* December 1992.

"Improving macro-economic statistics", *Economic Trends* January 1993.

"CSO's success in meeting performance targets", *Economic Trends* June 1993.

"Integrating the builders' address file with the CSO building register", *Economic Trends* July 1993.

"A survey of expenditure in residential and nursing homes", *Economic Trends* November 1993.

"Charities contribution to GDP", Economic Trends December 1993.

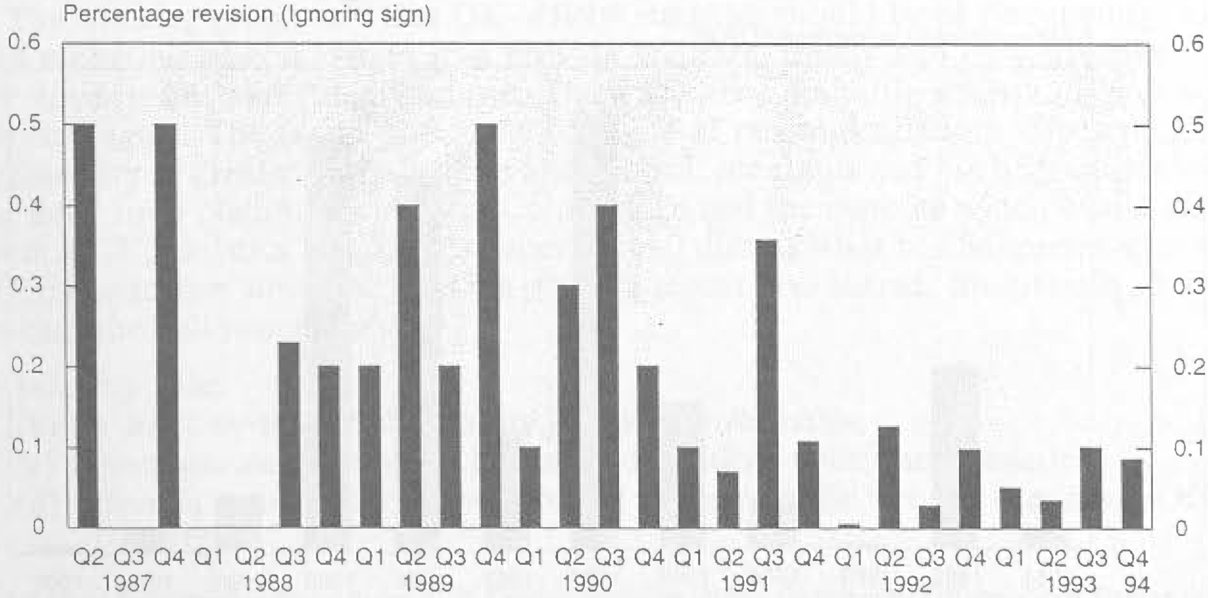
CSO Bulletin, issue 59/92 "Methodological issue - Quarterly turnover inquiry".

CSO Bulletin, issue 86/92 "Methodological issue - Overseas transactions of UK consultancy firms (1991)".

Copies of the Eason Review are available from the CSO Library, Cardiff Road, Newport, NP9 1XG.

Chart 3

Revisions to gross domestic product



Note: The chart shows the revision to the quarter on quarter growth rate in GDP between the estimates published three & twelve weeks after the quarter. Prior to 1993 Q3, the graph compares the six week and ten week estimates.

In many cases, improvements to the balance of payments result from improvements to the counterpart estimates in the domestic accounts. The Eason review also recommended a number of changes to the way estimates in the financial accounts were prepared. These are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Financial institutions and sector financial accounts

The Eason review recommended several improvements to the collection of financial statistics. One recommendation was for the CSO to take responsibility for inquiries to certain non-bank financial institutions from the Bank of England. These inquiries have been transferred to CSO and it is now possible to publish the quarterly information on institutional investment earlier. The registers used for sampling for this inquiry has been improved and the coverage of the sector is now more complete and consistent. These improvements are expected to lead to fewer revisions to early estimates of financial statistics and reduce balancing items in the sector accounts. This is illustrated in charts 1 and 2 which already show reductions in balancing items. The CSO's performance targets monitor the magnitude of these balancing items and the CSO is committed to keeping them to a minimum to improve coherence of the accounts.

Both the annual and quarterly inquiries into insurance and pension funds were made statutory in the first quarter of 1993. This led to an increased and more timely response. Some of the quarterly figures have been used in balance of payments and GDP estimates and are subject to fewer revisions than under the previous method. The effect of these improvements will be apparent in estimates of financial companies profits, consumers' expenditure and consequently GDP.

The Eason report recommended that the CSO examine making the quarterly financial assets and liabilities survey statutory. This survey to large industrial and commercial companies (ICC's) was made statutory in the first quarter of 1993. Results have already been used in preparing ICC financial accounts and the capital account of the balance of payments. This is expected to improve early estimates but the full impact will not be known until results are compared to those from the end-1993 annual survey.

An additional improvement to financial statistics involved the British Bankers' Association carrying out a survey on behalf of the CSO. The survey examined banks' records of inter-bank loans and deposits. It revealed that some transactions had been correctly reported but mis-classified. The Bank of England issued guidance on definitions for reporting and banks checked and corrected their returns. Consequently, the adjustment made in the accounts for the discrepancy between inter-bank loans and deposits has been updated.

The inter-departmental business register (IDBR)

This new register (a list of businesses and information used to select and process inquiries) has been developed between the CSO, Employment Department and other departments. It is more comprehensive than existing registers and its use will lead to improvements in the quality of data collected by inquiries. It will increase consistency between inquiries, assist in the running of inquiries and allow monitoring of the overlap between inquiries. Work is underway to link all existing registers of trade to the IDBR by the end of 1994. The first stage of the project to link the register used for collecting data on construction output to the IDBR has also been completed.

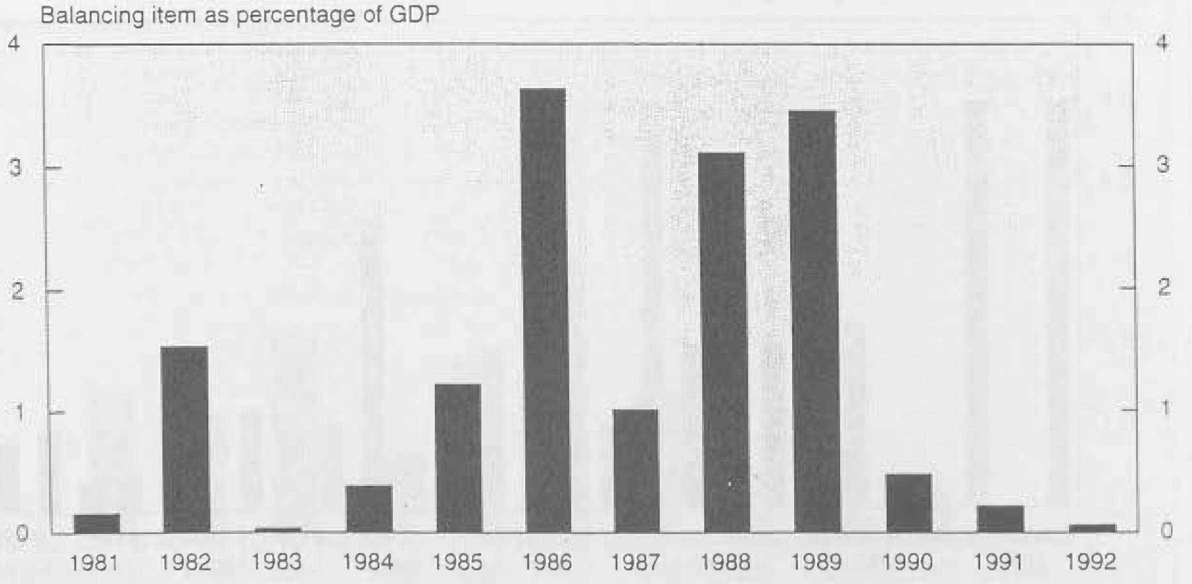
The register has already been used for the Northern Ireland quarterly employment survey and the CSO is expecting to move to the register in 1994. An article in the April 1992 edition of Economic Trends gives further details of the inter-departmental business register.

Summary of improvements to date

In the two years since Phase Two of the Chancellor's initiative was announced a great deal of work has been completed. The results are

Chart 2

Overseas sector balancing item



Note: The chart shows the balancing item as percentage of GDP for a particular year as published in the CSO Blue Book the following year.

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You Can Count on Us – with Confidence

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SUMMARY

Since the early 1990s significant developments have occurred in official statistics, including new responsibilities, structures, collections, outputs and policies, and these will be described briefly for each of these separate but related roles. Similarly, many challenges remain relating mainly to effectiveness and cohesion which will be canvassed, together with the plans which are in hand to move the UK official statistical system forwards. The paper also comments on the international dimension of official statistics work, emphasizing in particular current developments with the European statistical system. The future for UK statistics is full of promise and challenges, and the author expresses his confidence that the Government Statistical Service will respond positively.

Keywords: INTEGRITY; OFFICIAL STATISTICS; ORGANIZATION; PERCEPTIONS; QUALITY

1. BACKGROUND

In July 1990 the Royal Statistical Society (RSS) published *Official Statistics: Counting with Confidence* (Royal Statistical Society, 1990). The report of the working party, chaired by Professor Peter Moore – the then President of the RSS, was designed to

> 'provide an independent review of the criteria and mechanisms for monitoring the integrity and adequacy of, and public confidence in, official statistics'.

Much has happened since then, and I hope in this paper to demonstrate that you can count on us – with confidence.

The working group said that UK official statistics should be of fine quality, earn and enjoy public confidence, and provide accurate, timely and cost-effective data for government and for public use. These are very desirable goals and ones with which I agree. The group also made four sets of recommendations concerning the desirability of greater centralization and control, the status and use of methodology, the need for a National Statistical Commission and the benefits which would result from a UK Statistics Act. In this paper, I shall discuss what has happened with UK official statistics since the working group's report was issued. Specifically, I shall discuss the following topics:

(a) my role;
(b) a brief review of the history of official statistics;
(c) government-sponsored changes in statistical policy and practice;
(d) developments which have occurred recently in the Central Statistical Office (CSO);

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(e) developments which have occurred recently elsewhere in the Government Statistical Service (GSS);
(f) what remains to be done?;
(g) how can we be judged?

2. MY ROLE

So that the developments which have occurred in UK official statistics can be understood fully, it will be helpful for me to describe my role. I am Director of the CSO and Head of the GSS. However, what does this mean, and what responsibilities does it place on me?

The CSO, which is a Whitehall Department as well as carrying executive agency status, is responsible for compiling and publishing the key statistics needed for central economic management. As its Director I am responsible for its operation, its performance in accordance with its plans agreed to by government and for developing its activities into the 1990s. In this role I have a direct managerial influence on what it does, how it is done and the people involved.

The GSS provides the UK with most of its official statistics. It collects, processes, analyses and publishes figures about all areas of our national life. It comprises the people in statistician posts across most government departments and agencies and their associated staff. However, the GSS is not the sole provider of UK official statistics. Several other organizations work in close co-operation. These include the statistical offices in the Bank of England and those in the government departments in Northern Ireland.

Because statisticians are spread across departments, undertaking statistical work and providing statistical advice and assistance to Ministers and policy advisors, the GSS can be described as decentralized. This decentralized system helps to ensure that statisticians keep in close contact with policy makers, and that statistical analysis plays its full role in shaping and monitoring government policy. In the GSS, the CSO has a co-ordinating role. Appendix A shows the departmental composition of the GSS and the scale of the CSO in relation to the GSS as a whole.

As Head of the GSS, I am the government's Chief Advisor on Statistics and in this role I have particular concern for the reliability and integrity of government statistics and public confidence in them. I am also Head of Profession for statisticians and exercise influence on the personnel side through recruitment, career development and promotional activities. I, assisted by a small staff, represent UK statistics internationally, mainly within the context of the European Union and the United Nations. In all these general roles, as there is little managerial responsibility, I can exert influence only.

My approach to my complex task, in general terms, has been to build good practices, procedures and approaches in the CSO, and then to diffuse them when the opportunities offer to the rest of the GSS. You will see that this approach has had some success.

3. HISTORY OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS

3.1. *The Beginning*

Official statistics in the UK have a long history. Sir John Boreham traced that history back to the Augustan census which presumably included Roman Britain and the massive Norman enterprise of the *Domesday Book* (Boreham, 1984). Records relating to imports and exports go back to the 17th century, the first modern population census was conducted in 1801, the collection of statistics of births and deaths began in 1837 and the first census of earnings was in 1886. The first statistical office was set up in the Board of Trade in 1832 to arrange and make abstracts from Parliamentary returns. Later other departments also developed their own statistical units.

This structure of independent statistical units continued until the Second World War when Winston Churchill in 1941 established the CSO to ensure coherence. The aim, in Churchill's words in 1941 was (Ward and Doggett, 1991)

> 'to consolidate and make sure that agreed figures only are used. The utmost confusion is caused when people argue on different statistical data. . . . The various Departmental statistical branches will, of course, continue as at present, but agreement must be reached between them and the Central Statistical Office.'

This basic structure has remained since then, with the CSO also becoming responsible for compiling the national accounts.

3.2. *The Moser Reforms*

In the late 1960s, following a report of the Estimates Committee of the House of Commons, Sir Claus Moser, as Head of the CSO, succeeded in a reorganization which established two main statistical collection units, the Business Statistics Office (BSO) and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS), and gave the CSO an enhanced role in managing government statistics. He coined the term 'Government Statistical Service' to describe their combined activities.

The BSO, which came into being at the beginning of 1969, took over most of the government collection of statistics from businesses irrespective of the department requiring information. The OPCS was established in 1970, through the merger of the General Register Office and the Government Social Survey, and was responsible for most of the collection of statistical information from individuals and households through its programmes of censuses, surveys and registers. Within the CSO a computer and data systems unit, a statistical standards and classifications unit, a survey control unit and a programme development unit were set up.

Sir Claus Moser said of the changes (Moser, 1971) that

> 'their essence, which aims to combine the advantages of centralised and decentralised arrangements, is the setting-up of two major agencies – the Business Statistics Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, and the establishment at the CSO of four units which together provide a system of central management services for the Government Statistical Service'.

Other thrusts helping towards integration and central management were a CSO-based committee structure dealing with subjects of interdepartmental interest, direct managerial links between the CSO and the BSO and OPCS, and the existence of a statistician class providing a cadre of professional statisticians across government. It was hoped that these various thrusts would together yield most of the advantages of a centralized system with the very numerous statistics divisions which still remained in departments hopefully devoting substantially more time to analysis and interpretation.

3.3. *The Rayner Report*

A rapid expansion of the GSS took place during the 1970s paralleling the higher profile of statistical information in government policy making. A change in fortunes for the GSS began in January 1980 with the start of a wide-ranging review conducted by Sir Derek Rayner. Rayner regarded the primary duty of the GSS to be to service central government requirements. He said (Her Majesty's Government (1981), p. 15)

> 'Information should not be collected primarily for publication. It should be collected primarily because the Government needs it for its own business.'

The Rayner report acknowledged that statistics could not be turned on and off like a tap. But the government was entitled to expect its statistical services to be responsive to its changing requirements and data should be cut out where they cease to give value for money. The government's response to the review (Government Statistical Service (1981), p. 2) was to aim at

> 'a total saving of over £25 million by 1984 involving about 2500 fewer posts. This would amount to a reduction of about a quarter in both staff and administrative costs.'

This policy was pursued vigorously with the result that GSS staff numbers fell dramatically between 1981 and 1989.

As the 1980s progressed, however, concern about the quality of government statistics, both inside and outside government, grew.

As recorded on p. 2 in the first section of Royal Statistical Society (1990), numerous expressions of concern alerted the Council of the RSS to a serious erosion of public confidence in UK official statistics. These concerns centred principally on unemployment and various forms of social statistics. The then President (John Kingman) and the President-elect (Professor Peter Moore) met the Cabinet Secretary and the Permanent Secretary of the Treasury. It was agreed that the Head of the GSS would introduce a discussion on 'Public confidence in the integrity and validity of official statistics' at an open meeting of the Society. This was held, in collaboration with the Institute of Statisticians, on December 6th, 1989. In his introduction to the discussion, Hibbert (1990) noted

> 'Despite the well-established practices and conventions for the compilation and dissemination of official statistics in the UK, scepticism about the statistics and their interpretation persists. Perhaps government statisticians should not be too surprised or aggrieved about this, regarding it as the sign of a healthy society. But it is my aim as head of the Government Statistical Service (GSS) to ensure that the statistics are accepted as an objective representation of the facts.'

During the well-attended meeting, Peter Moore announced the formation of the Official Statistics Working Party which led to the report.

Concern had also been raised in Parliament. In its report on the 1988 Budget (Her Majesty's Treasury, 1988a) the Treasury and Civil Service Committee said

> 'We regard the problems of official statistics as sufficiently serious to warrant a thorough review. Accordingly we recommend the Government undertakes an investigation into the operation of the various Departments involved in the collection of national accounts statistics with a view to improving their reliability.'

4. GOVERNMENT-SPONSORED CHANGES

4.1. *The Pickford Report*

The government's response to the concerns expressed by the Treasury and Civil Service Committee was to establish a review, headed by Stephen Pickford (Her Majesty's Treasury, 1988b), to

> 'examine the present interdepartmental arrangements for the production of Government economic statistics and make recommendations for achieving cost effective improvements where necessary'.

The resulting report (Cabinet Office, 1989) completed in November 1988 made recommendations in three principal areas:

(a) changes to the way that macroeconomic statistics are collected or compiled;
(b) further work on statistical issues, to identify additional improvements to the statistics;
(c) changes designed to create a statistical organization that would be more likely in future to meet the needs of users in a cost-effective manner.

As a result a new expanded CSO was established in July 1989 bringing together responsibility for collecting business statistics (previously with the BSO), for compilation of trade and financial statistics (previously with the Department of Trade and Industry) and for the retail prices index and Family Expenditure Survey (previously with the Employment Department) with the old CSO.

4.2. *The Chancellor's Initiatives*

In the early part of 1990 the quality of economic statistics continued to be of concern to the Treasury, and to the CSO. John Major, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, indicated to the Treasury and Civil Service Committee (Major, 1990) in April 1990 his continuing concern about the statistical base. This was quickly followed by an announcement in May 1990 of a package of measures (known as the Chancellor's initiative), backed up by substantial additional resources, to improve quality, particularly for statistics relating to services, companies and the balance of payments (Economic Trends, 1991).

The next step in the development of the CSO was a further package of measures to improve the quality of statistics (known as the Chancellor's initiative—phase II). This package (Caplan and Daniel, 1992) developed much of the work begun in 1990 and affected important areas such as retail sales, output of goods and services and the balance of payments.

4.3. *Agency Status for Central Statistical Office*

The announcement of these measures in November 1991 accompanied the launch of the CSO as an executive agency under the 'Next steps' initiative. Executive agency status was an important development in itself in two key respects as the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Norman Lamont, recognized in his foreword to the *Agency Framework Document* (Central Statistical Office, 1991):

(a) first, it put the focus on the quality of service provided to customers, inside and outside government;

(b) second, it gave an opportunity to restate publicly the arrangements to ensure the integrity and validity of UK official statistics.

The *Agency Framework Document* spells out clearly the role of the CSO and also sets down the relationship between the agency, in the person of its Director, and the government, in the person of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Put simply, the Chancellor of the Exchequer determines, on the advice of the Director, the policy, resources and overall objectives within which the CSO operates. The Director is responsible for running the CSO to meet the agreed objectives and targets. This process is facilitated by a management board set up to advise on issues relating to the management of the CSO, comprising the senior managers of the agency together with two non-executive members, one an economist and one a management consultant. The board is mainly interested in policy formulation, strategic thinking, supervising the management of the CSO and external accountability issues.

In addition an advisory committee was established to inform the Director of the views of CSO customers and data suppliers on the work of the CSO. Members of the committee are drawn from a wide range of groups including government, the European Commission, the statistical profession, economic analysts, financial organizations, the Bank of England, business and commerce and the Press as well as GSS representatives.

Most importantly the framework document also gives some operating principles for the CSO, safeguarding the independence of the Director, notably as follows. On definitions and methodology:

> 'The Director is responsible, within the framework of international agreements and conventions, for the definitions and methodology in relation to statistics issued by the CSO with the exception of the Retail Prices Index (RPI), the scope and definition of the index continues to be a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Director will continue to take the lead in advising on methodological questions concerning the RPI and to chair an RPI Advisory Committee to which the Chancellor will refer issues for consideration as appropriate.'

On integrity and validity of CSO output:

> 'The Director will be responsible for ensuring that the statistics produced by the CSO are the best estimates it can make and will seek to promote public confidence in the integrity and validity of those statistics. Ministers will ensure the freedom of the Director to maintain and demonstrate the integrity of CSO output.'

And on timing and coverage of publications:

> 'The Director will decide, taking account of the views of customers, the form, coverage and timing of CSO publications. The Director will ensure that the statistics that the CSO compiles are published in a timely way and wherever possible on pre-arranged and regular release dates. The practice of advance notification of publication dates of key economic series will be continued.'

There have already been many occasions where these statements have been used to assist in drawing the boundary between Ministerial responsibilities and my responsibilities as Director of the CSO.

In addition the framework document states that, as Head of the GSS, the Director of the CSO continues to have access to the Prime Minister through the Head of the Home Civil Service on matters concerning the integrity and validity of government statistics.

4.4. *Targets*

A further feature of the *Agency Framework Document* is a system for performance assessment and targets. The targets do not constitute a statement of the levels of performance that the CSO, or the Treasury, regard as desirable or acceptable in the longer term, but rather represent the standards that are considered achievable in each year given past experience and the progress that has been made. Targets for each year are published before the beginning of the period.

Implementation of the Chancellor's initiatives has been closely tied to the targets that have been set, and with impressive results (Cook, 1994). In its first three years as an agency the CSO met 92% of its performance targets for key economic statistics and there has been a progressive tightening in many areas. Improvements in the key sector balancing items are illustrated in Fig. 1.

Shortly after the establishment of the CSO as an agency the then Chancellor of the Exchequer made an announcement (Lamont, 1992) which gave the CSO a platform to build on its new status:

> 'There is no conflict between efficient and well-funded public services and a thriving private sector. On the contrary, we have always recognised that there are some services that only the public sector can provide.

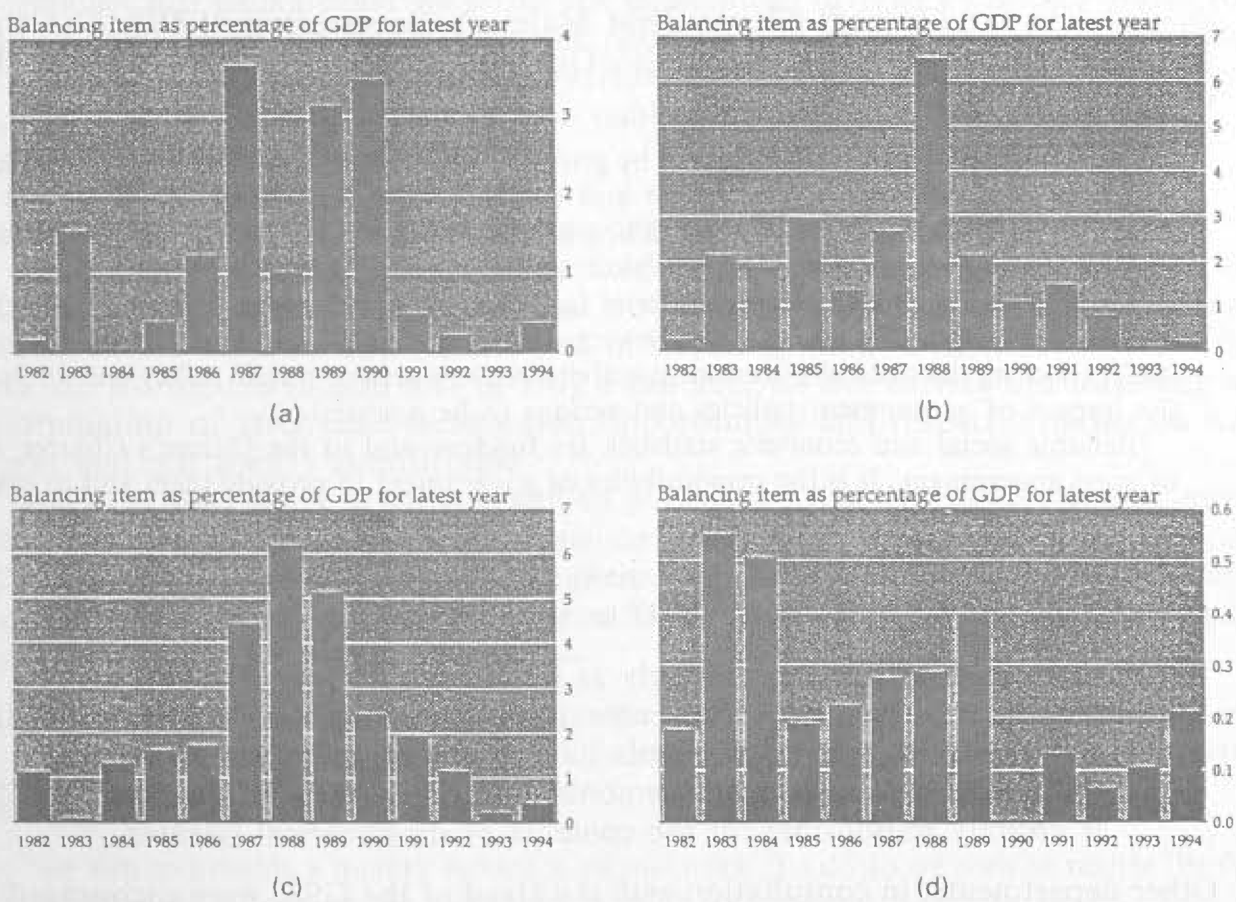

Fig. 1. Sector balancing items: (a) overseas sector balancing item; (b) company sector balancing item; (c) personal sector balancing item; (d) public sector balancing item

'One such service is of course the provision of official economic statistics. There is no doubt in my mind that weaknesses and gaps in Britain's statistics have made the task of economic management more difficult. While we must always be careful to avoid adding to the burdens on business, it is vital that the Government should have the information it needs. But official statistics are produced not just for the Government, but for the benefit of business and for the public at large.

'Over the last two years we have taken a number of measures designed to strengthen the reliability of the official statistics, building on earlier reforms. The Central Statistical Office, under its new director Bill McLennan, has become a Next Steps Agency, with demanding and quantified targets for the accuracy of the figures it produces. I know the CSO intends to make increasing use of the data businesses themselves collect; and it will be paying increasing attention to the needs of business and industry, both as suppliers and consumers of statistics.

'The 1981 White Paper, which contained the so-called Rayner doctrine on government statistics, has been much misunderstood. I hope the CSO's new framework document will dispel any remaining confusion. It states that the CSO will consider requests to collect a wider range of data than that needed simply for the conduct of government business. An Advisory Committee, including a representative from the CBI, will help inform the CSO of the views of its customers and data suppliers.'

4.5. *Open Government White Paper*

A more general political focus on the citizen provided an opportunity to extend this message. Indeed reliable social and economic statistics were recognized as fundamental to the *Citizen's Charter* (Her Majesty's Government, 1992). The Open Government white paper (Her Majesty's Government, 1993) published in July 1993 went further, noting that

> 'Official statistics . . . are collected by government to inform debate, decision-making and research both within government and by the wider community. They provide an objective perspective of the changes taking place in national life and allow comparisons between periods of time and geographical areas.
>
> 'Vital as this is, open access to official statistics provides the citizen with more than a picture of society. It offers a window on the work and performance of government itself, showing the scale of government activity in every area of public policy and allowing the impact of government policies and actions to be assessed.
>
> 'Reliable social and economic statistics are fundamental to the Citizen's Charter and to open government. It is the responsibility of government to provide them and to maintain public confidence in them.'

The white paper also reaffirmed new arrangements for the release of CSO statistics introduced in February 1993 to ensure that

(a) statistics are published as early as possible,
(b) data are made available to all users at the same time (subject only to limited advance access on a strict basis to those who need to know) and
(c) the integrity of statistics is demonstrated by making it clear that the CSO is entirely responsible for the contents of its statistical releases.

Other departments, in consultation with the Head of the GSS, were encouraged by the Prime Minister to adopt similar practices. The position now is that, although some departments have initially been reluctant to do so, most have begun to release statistics in a way which is very similar to and compatible with the CSO's approach. Sometimes making such changes seems frustratingly slow but the positive directions are clear.

These fundamental changes in practice and emphasis have been widely welcomed by users of statistics, by the media, and, I believe, by the statistical profession. I have viewed them as a paradigm shift in the responsibilities of official statisticians.

Interestingly, the changes have also been welcomed by politicians. Opening the 80th Conference of Directors General of National Statistical Institutes in the European Community in May 1994 (Clarke, 1994), the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, emphasized the white paper's commitment that 'statistics are for everyone'. He also noted that

> 'to be really effective the statistician needs to maintain the trust of all sections of society'

and, drawing from his own experience as Minister for Employment, stated

> 'I am well aware how impossible it is to have a sensible public debate in the face of unfounded suspicions of statistical integrity'.

There have indeed been significant developments in the 'unwritten constitution' of UK official statistics!

5. DEVELOPMENTS IN CENTRAL STATISTICAL OFFICE

Against this background we seized the possibilities offered by agency status for the CSO to develop a new system for planning and priority setting to meet the challenges and to make the most of opportunities ahead, to produce better and more accurate products and to improve the public's perception of UK statistics.

5.1. *Planning and Management*

Early in 1992 the CSO identified strategic management as an important engine for effective change. At its inaugural meeting in July 1992 the CSO Advisory Committee started an open, frank and far-reaching analysis of the CSO's performance. During the second half of 1992 a full analysis was carried out including an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Discussion was open and not always comfortable.

By July 1993 the CSO was ready to publish its first corporate plan (Central Statistical Office, 1993a). The plan included a statement of intent defined in terms of the need to make sure that CSO statistics are used—both within government and within the wider community. The vision for the future CSO is encapsulated in the corporate plan: be outward looking—

> 'we are an outward looking organisation focused on the users of our products and services, but always taking full account of the load our inquiries place on providers of data';

be effective in the use of resources—

> 'we aim to provide a quality service in all our work. To do so we seek to realise the full potential of all our people and improve value for money';

invest in the tools for the job—

'underpinning our work are common standards and the best methodology. All our work is supported by effective information systems';

play a wider role—

'we also have a wider role to play in international statistics and in the work of the government statistical service as a whole'.

Alongside the corporate plan a rolling three-year-forward work programme was developed to provide for medium- and short-term planning, taking account of the resources available. A work programme for 1993–96 was published with the corporate plan (Central Statistical Office, 1993b).

The three-year-forward work programme has been developed on two levels—the programme level which reflects the key CSO outputs and the main internal services, and the project level which reflects the basic units of resource allocation. Each element is drafted by the relevant programme or project manager; this reinforces the role of that manager as the person responsible for the completion of the plan and encourages commitment to it. The resulting documentation provides a key management tool in pursuing the objectives in the corporate plan.

The programme strategies are submitted to the Minister for approval and once approved are laid before Parliament and published thus making a public commitment to the service that the CSO plans to provide using the resources allocated to it.

Already the new planning process is yielding dividends and in 1994 we announced plans (Central Statistical Office, 1994) for four new initiatives and three major cross-cutting developments each designed to push the CSO decisively in the direction described in the corporate plan.

5.2. *Better and More Accurate Products*

We have been working to improve all our products. The effect of the changes brought about by the two major initiatives launched in 1990 and 1991 to improve the quality of economic statistics is now really becoming apparent. For example, Fig. 2 illustrates the recent reductions in revisions to the growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP). As the effect of the 1991 initiative continues to feed

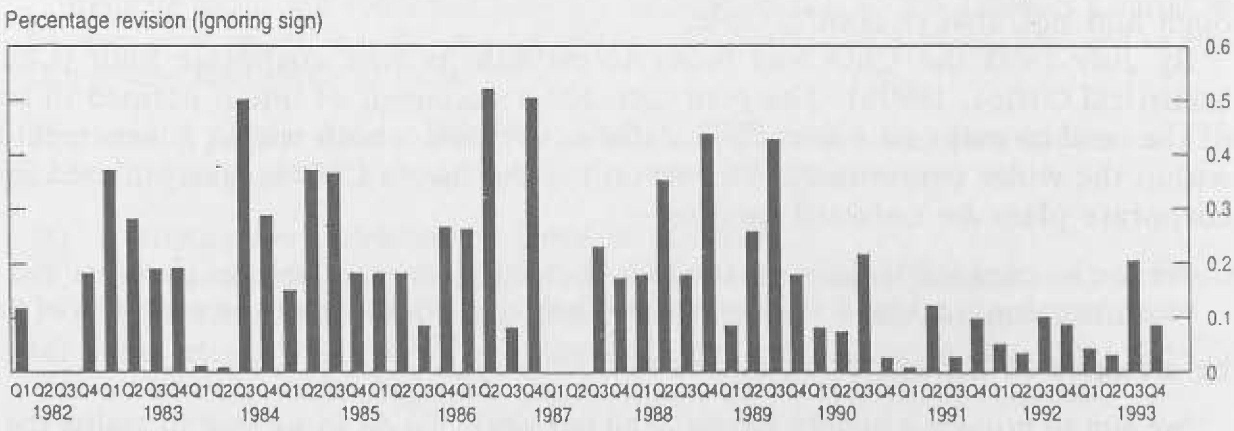

Fig. 2. Revisions to the growth rate of GDP: revision to the quarter-on-quarter growth rate in GDP between the estimates six and 10 weeks after the quarter; the revision at 1993, third quarter, reflected the rebasing onto 1990 prices

through to published figures, further improvements will become evident in the statistics on balance of payments, stock building, consumer expenditure, GDP analysed by output and the financial accounts.

In a fast moving world better products often mean faster products. To illustrate our response to this challenge we now publish

(a) a provisional estimate of the growth of GDP from the previous quarter $3\frac{1}{2}$ weeks after the end of the quarter, 4 weeks earlier than before,
(b) expenditure, output and income breakdowns of GDP a month later, after $7\frac{1}{2}$–8 weeks, and
(c) full national accounts, including balance of payments, personal sector and industrial and commercial sector accounts, after $11\frac{1}{2}$–12 weeks.

Improvements to the timing of some monthly releases have also been made:

(a) *index of production*, advanced by 1 day in 1992–93 and a further week in 1993–94;
(b) *producer price index*, advanced by 1 day;
(c) *overseas trade* (non-European-Community), advanced by 1 day;
(d) *retail prices index*, advanced by 2 days from July 1993.

The timetables have also been advanced for *Family Spending, Economic Trends* and *Regional Trends*.

Each year the CSO publishes about 130 monthly, quarterly and annual releases of key economic estimates. These have been revamped to make them more relevant and easy to use, and have been renamed CSO first releases. Rapid access to statistical data has been assisted by greatly increasing the range of data made available through the CSO databank. The databank is released on disc and tape under headings which correspond to the main publication titles. This service is being continuously improved. In addition the CSO Statfax service, which delivers macroeconomic data to customers within a very short time of publication, has been expanded.

The new initiatives announced in 1994 also focus on better and more accurate products. The initiatives are as follows.

(a) *Strengthening macroeconomic statistics*—a significant shift in priority towards service sector statistics and an increased attention to regional economic statistics is envisaged: plans include the monthly collection of turnover data from the service sector to parallel the existing monthly sales inquiry in the manufacturing sector, improved service sector prices, a whole-economy price index covering not just household expenditure but also other forms of expenditure including capital expenditure, government consumption, exports and imports, improving the quality of regional estimates of components of the GDP, improving the quality of the financial accounts and bringing them into line with international standards and further improvements to balance-of-payments statistics.
(b) *Making markets work better*—a twin-track approach is aimed at minimizing the respondent load and providing a more useful statistical service to industry: to achieve the first of these aims, work will build on the recommendations flowing from seven business deregulation task forces established by

the Department of Trade and Industry; there will be an enhanced role for the CSO's survey control unit and development of electronic data interchange for data on product sales; for the second, plans include the collection and publication of quarterly rather than annual product sales data for selected sectors in response to requests from industry and the development of a new series of sector reports which will be of use both to government and to business.

(c) *Adding value—making statistics work harder*—we aim to add more value to our statistics so that they become more useful to analysts, forecasters and researchers: plans include the establishment of a historical database of census of production information, a collection of statistics on the income and expenditure and balance sheets of a sample of charities and the development of an international consultancy service.

(d) *Informing debate—a picture of society and window on government*—a range of proposals aims to allow us to paint a fuller picture of society: these include the development of a UK statistical year-book, improved bibliographic material, more *Social Focus* publications, a new *Digest of Public Sector Statistics* to bring together data that are already available, the development of UK and European Community industrial statistics and greater contact with schools and libraries.

Our new marketing strategy aims to project the CSO and to promote both new and existing products to a wider market. A new branch is responsible for marketing and sales, led by a Head of Marketing appointed from the private sector. At the same time, the role of our press and public information branch will be strengthened to ensure that our statistics are widely and readily available to non-commercial users.

In addition we are making available substantial new resources for our methodology function which now has the published aim to ensure that the CSO uses, and is known to use, the best possible statistical methodology and that it measures the quality of its outputs. It also provides advice to other government departments and agencies on statistical methods and quality assessment.

5.3. *Perception of the Public*

Users of statistics can seldom check the quality of official statistics directly. The confidence that they have in our data is therefore necessarily a function of their confidence in our government statisticians (Felligi, 1989). For this reason we have been stressing the professionalism of our approach and our objectivity, and emphasizing quality throughout the CSO. I, and my senior colleagues both in the CSO and in the rest of the GSS, have taken every opportunity to explain our practices and approach in public, and we have made ourselves accessible to the media.

In my view, the reputation of the CSO, and the GSS, in the eyes of users and the public has improved significantly during the 1990s. This view is shared by my senior colleagues. Significant factors in this change, as I mentioned earlier, have been the effect of the *Citizen's Charter*, the Open Government white paper and the changes in release practices. However, there is no doubt that the CSO's public image has also benefited from the improvements in the quality of data which have been made, and mentioned earlier in this paper. Further, we have all been taking more trouble to explain ourselves to users, being open about our methodologies and consulting widely. In this respect, we have participated in many seminars organized by user groups, such as the Statistics Users' Council, and other external bodies.

6. DEVELOPMENTS IN GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE

6.1. *Osmosis*

The progress made in the CSO provides a platform for developments across the GSS. To describe the activities of the GSS and to enable its work to be better understood a new annual guide to its work has been launched (Government Statistical Service, 1994). The first of these guides describes the work undertaken department by department, reports the main achievements in 1993–94 and shows the main plans for 1994–95. It highlights the enormous quality and range of statistical work undertaken by the GSS and the complexity of the tasks that it is engaged in.

In carrying forward GSS developments I have used a process like 'osmosis', building out from progress in the CSO. I have also been pleased to receive the personal support of the Prime Minister for four GSS-wide activities:

(a) to focus and co-ordinate statistical work with Europe;
(b) to investigate the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the GSS, including where the gaps might be in the overall statistical picture;
(c) to provide up-to-date information on statistical data sources;
(d) to develop a code of practice.

6.2. *European Union*

With the introduction of the single market at the beginning of 1993 and the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, the importance of Europe in UK statistical work has increased significantly. The inclusion of the principle of subsidiarity in the treaty has done much to clarify the relationship between the member states and the European Commission. Where there is a clear need for statistical information at the community level, common standards are vital and the community is best placed to set these. Collecting and processing statistics to achieve the common standard is a matter for national decision.

The GSS has responded to the increased importance of Europe in a range of ways, working hard to build alliances to influence statistical programmes. Overall, we have been much more proactive in our approach. Specific examples of our effect include

(a) promoting the development of a new system of planning for European statistics,
(b) seeking amendments to European draft legislation on data protection designed to safeguard statistical interests and
(c) contributing to the considerations of a proposed European statistical law.

The pace of developments in Europe is increasing. Examples of work at the European level during 1994 alone include

(a) the preparation of a draft regulation for the compilation of harmonized consumer price indices to help to monitor economic convergence,

(b) the preparation of a draft regulation on the European system of national and regional accounts to provide comparable statistics not least for a calculation of budget contributions of the member states (the fourth resource),
(c) developing a range of statistical tools for monitoring and making best use of the single market (including product sales (PRODCOM), intra-European-Community trade (INTRASTAT) and a proposed regulation on enterprise statistics),
(d) proposals for a regulation on statistics of air transport,
(e) an action programme for employment statistics and
(f) proposals for developments in information technology.

In addition, the creation of the European Monetary Institute has heightened the activity of the Committee for Monetary, Finance and Balance of Payments Statistics and the need for the UK to put its distinctive case for institutional and data collection matters in this field.

We shall continue to be proactive in shaping events in line with the principle of subsidiarity.

6.3. *Efficiency and Effectiveness*

Our investigation of the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the GSS has focused to date on gaps in statistics. We have undertaken three studies looking at economic statistics, regional statistics and social statistics, involving extensive consultation within and outside the government.

Results so far suggest that the coverage of economic statistics, particularly macroeconomic statistics, is quite good. Many additional topics were suggested which might be worth covering, but in the main a good coverage already existed in most subject fields. The main exception to this was service industry statistics but, as I noted earlier, the CSO has recently added several output and price collections to its current work programme in this field. Other initiatives under way will improve quarterly industrial product data (utilizing the PRODCOM system) and estimates of capital stock.

Also, it was felt that the provision of statistics in each area of social policy is reasonably good. Only a handful of absolute gaps were identified (e.g. statistics on language literacy). The most interesting point was that many users of GSS social statistics thought that there was room for improvement in our guidance, dissemination and international comparisons, and that we should make fuller use of the data available to the government. The most pertinent comment along these lines came from Professor Bynner of City University who said

> '. . . Although each series in itself is impressive and meets probably a good proportion of needs, overall there is fragmentation and inconsistency in content and approach. There is no feeling of a statistical profile/compendium of Britain coming through them. Links between national statistics coming from different sources is tenuous, and links with the continuous surveys designed to supplement them, often non-existent. Within each series the attention to user needs could be improved both in content and presentation. . . .'

The exercise assessing gaps in regional statistics shows that there is a strong demand for more regional statistical series. Indeed, the geographic dimensions of UK statistics may be the class of statistics which could benefit most from more attention.

The conclusions of each of these studies will be followed through.

6.4. *Bibliographic Information*

Turning now to the need to improve the bibliographic information on the statistical data sources of the GSS, during 1994 we have issued a new version of 'Government statistics: a brief guide to official sources' and, for the first time, 'Regional statistics: a brief guide to official sources'. The comprehensive 'Guide to official statistics' will be updated and reissued in 1995, and the feasibility of producing an electronic version is being investigated. Further, we are in discussions with the Statistics Users' Council over a proposal to develop an electronic guide to all statistical sources – official and unofficial.

6.5. *Code of Practice*

We are also making good progress on a code of practice: a draft was issued in October 1994. The code will build on the commitments in the Open Government white paper, and on the forward thrust of the *Citizen's Charter*. It will aim to standardize and promote good practice throughout the GSS, and to engender trust among our users and contributors. The code will be based on the key principles which underpin our work, as shown below. Members of the GSS will

(a) set challenging service and quality standards and seek always to achieve them,
(b) operate with integrity – that means behaving honestly and striving for objectivity,
(c) be open about all aspects of the statistical process,
(d) consult with interested parties, both inside and outside government, when planning,
(e) place no undue load on respondents,
(f) respect the privacy of all information given in confidence,
(g) complement statistics with interpretation and advice,
(h) make statistics accessible to all, in accordance with open government procedures,
(i) communicate effectively with all involved in the statistical process – respondents, users, colleagues and anybody seeking information,
(j) continuously seek to improve professional competence, with respect to both technical and management skills, and
(k) employ cost-effective methods.

In the full code, these principles will be expanded to show how they can be applied to each stage of our statistical work. I expect this code to have a positive and beneficial effect on statistical work across government, defining the GSS and what it stands for.

I intend to release the final version of the code in 1995, after full consultation with interested parties. (Editor's note: the code of practice was published on April 3rd, 1995 (Government Statistical Service, 1995).)

6.6. *Deregulation*

A final GSS-wide thrust that has been affecting our work has been deregulation. All members of the GSS seek to minimize the load that they place on businesses through the collection of statistics, through better design of forms, use of samples, the collection of data electronically, etc. This is a fundamental part of the job of statisticians, which if ignored would eventually result in the collapse of the collection process itself.

Of course statistical surveys account for only a very small part, probably 2% or less of the total form filling load on businesses and, as the British Chambers of Commerce (1994) has reported, this may reflect the considerable efforts made by government statisticians to simplify forms and procedures.

Within the CSO, however, the Survey Control Unit (SCU) is very active in fulfilling its government-wide responsibility to ensure that the load placed on respondents by all new statistical surveys is rigorously justified, and that all regular government surveys are kept under frequent review, including consultation with contributors. To assist in this task, the SCU is developing a manual of best practice to help to make the surveys which are needed as simple as possible for respondents. Further, the SCU has taken an active part in the work of the business deregulation task forces, and following its proposals the SCU has strengthened the instructions on survey control which will have a positive effect across the GSS.

6.7. *Government Statistical Service Committee System*

Helping to bring the whole system together we are actively developing the GSS committee system which provides a formal mechanism for co-ordinating activities across the GSS. This has already been revitalized in the last couple of years. The Policy and Management Committee, chaired by me, determines the direction of the GSS. Reporting to this committee are seven subsidiary GSS committees for methodology, dissemination, social statistics, economic statistics, regional statistics, international matters and computing. In addition the senior staff of the GSS meet once a year to formulate corporate planning, to develop strategic thinking and to review overall GSS performance.

Increasingly some of these committees will be supported by strengthened CSO central units. I have already mentioned our plans for the CSO methodology unit, which will act as a centre of excellence on methodology and be a resource available to all working in government statistics. I also intend to work along similar lines with respect to training and personnel, classifications and standards, computing, and dissemination and marketing.

Taken together these GSS-wide activities are having a major effect and are bringing us towards the aim of delivering a full statistical service to everyone.

7. WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE?

7.1. *Challenges*

Observers of the UK system of official statistics are often perplexed. Indeed Georges Als's humorous and perspicacious assessment of the GSS in his report for Eurostat called 'The distinctive features of the British statistical organisation' (Als, 1992) went so far as to say

> 'The fact is simple enough: a system such as this, in which everyone is virtually free to do as he likes, is only workable with the British, that is with people who have a quite extraordinary *esprit de corps* and sense of discipline. Without those qualities the system would disintegrate under the effect of centrifugal forces.'

Als's report was published as recently as December 1992 but even in the short time since then much has been achieved in moving towards a National Statistical Service with a clearer vision of what this means both for each of its members and for all its potential users, both inside and outside government. The review of the CSO *Agency Framework Document* is a further opportunity to consider possibilities for building further from what has been accomplished so far based on an evaluation of the developments described in Section 4.

The key challenge for official statisticians everywhere is to get our statistics used, and to improve decision-making, to stimulate research and to inform debate. This is essentially about marketing in its widest sense. There are five areas where I see scope for building on the successes that we have already had:

(a) better dissemination;
(b) improving standards;
(c) a possible merger of the CSO and the OPCS;
(d) working with user groups;
(e) a Statistics Act.

There is also a further opportunity for us to take advantage of the recent white paper on the civil service (Her Majesty's Government, 1994).

7.2. *Better Dissemination*

Official statisticians in the UK now have a mission to go out and make sure that statistics are used to affect decision-making, research and debate across the community, not just to produce statistics for the sake of it.

We must build on the improvements already made to our products and aim them at specific users. To do this we must be much more adept at combining data to give them a better focus.

Our marketing and information strategy is designed to be closely targeted, both to commercial and to public interest users. We have several commercial partnership ventures under way. In parallel we are hoping to establish a statistical library and shop and, subject to finance, to embark on a significant library and education extension programme to ensure that all potential users of official statistics can have access to the whole range of our data.

To assist in this process we shall continue to improve the information that we have about our information – the vital metadata that enable users to find the data they need. I believe this area remains a big challenge which requires much attention.

7.3. *Improving Standards*

To maximize the value of statistics they must be underpinned by good standards to allow data to be related in a productive way. I believe that UK statisticians have not in the past been good at contributing to this either at home, for example in influencing accounting standards or standards for the collection of administrative data, or abroad, for example in the United Nations or European Community contexts.

This is changing and although the issues are rather different for economic statistics, where much progress has already been made, and for social statistics, where some standards are only just beginning to emerge, UK statisticians are putting

The challenge for the GSS will be to deliver an improved service in an environment that allows for much greater diversity. This is a challenge which I am confident we shall rise to meet.

8. HOW CAN WE BE JUDGED?

I have described a plethora of changes and activities that have been taking place in official statistics in the last few years. But the answer to the question 'how can we be judged?' remains elusive.

One attempt is made by *The Economist*, which asks an international panel of statisticians to rank official statistical agencies according to the objectivity of the agency, the reliability of the figures, statistical methodology and the relevance of the published data. Based on their views the UK jumped from ninth on the list to sixth in the most recent survey (Economist, 1993). But clearly we still have far to go in changing perceptions; as *The Economist* pointed out, on the basis of the size of revisions and timeliness of publications UK statistics should come out top. It certainly brings home the point that 'integrity is a perceived fact in which perception is as important as the fact of integrity' (Bonnen, 1980).

An alternative way of answering the question is to make an interim assessment against the recommendations in Royal Statistical Society (1990) which were grouped under the headings 'Centralization and control', 'Methodology', 'National Statistical Commission' and 'UK Statistics Act'.

8.1. *Centralization and Control*

The RSS report recommended that the major activities of data definition, collection processing, primary analysis and publication should be centralized in a central statistical service. I do not believe that this is either feasible or desirable in the context of the UK. It is not feasible because history and the way that the civil service operates are against it. It is not desirable because it is vital that the GSS builds on its existing comparative advantage. The relevance to policy that the GSS enjoys by being decentralized is a significant asset both to government decision-making and to the wider community.

The trick for the GSS is to build on this relevance to policy while living up to a 'national' rather than only a 'government' vocation and safeguarding the operational and methodological independence of statisticians against actual, or perceived, political interference. This is not an easy task but I believe we have already made worthwhile gains, especially in the Open Government white paper which lays particular stress on our national vocation. Operational and methodological independence is already enshrined in the CSO *Agency Framework Document* and in new practices for the release of statistics across the GSS. The new code of practice will further enhance this progress.

Centralization of data collection activities would be significantly increased by the merger of the CSO and the OPCS but, even without this, improved co-ordination between the two agencies at the managerial, advisory and technical levels could achieve most, if not all, of the benefits of the proposed merger—especially in the short term.

Taken together I believe that we are on the threshold of delivering the benefits sought by the RSS working party, but without the scale of organizational changes envisaged in their report.

8.2. *Methodology*

With some notable and creditworthy exceptions I must admit that methodological research, academic liaison and publications have all been weak in the UK statistical service. I can, however, emphasize our intention to do something about it. As an illustration the CSO's objective to use the best statistical methodology is underpinned by several strategies including

(a) development of methodology – we will promote methodological research and debate, keep abreast of new methodological developments and implement best practice in all our statistical activities,
(b) publication of methodology – we will ensure that our methods are documented and openly available and
(c) professional bodies – we will foster relationships with the RSS and other academic and professional bodies in the UK and overseas.

Increasingly the contributions that individual statisticians make to these matters will form part of their personal performance indicators.

As I have mentioned earlier we intend that the CSO methodology unit will be developed into a centre of excellence, available to all working in government statistics. Progress has been slow, not least because we must ensure that we recruit the right people, but resources for the unit are strongly increasing and plans include partnerships with academic and other institutions enabling us to make the best use of top expertise both within the UK and internationally. Our project on time series analysis, where we are receiving assistance from Dr Estelle Dagum, formerly of Statistics Canada, and the world expert in her field, is a good example of our intentions in this respect. Another example is the involvement of David Sless, of the Communications Research Institute of Australia, in revamping our outputs.

8.3. *National Statistical Commission and UK Statistics Act*

The CSO Advisory Committee, set up to advise on the needs and priorities of users of CSO statistics, as well as the concerns of other bodies supplying data to the CSO, fulfils at least in part the remit of a National Statistical Commission along the lines envisaged in Royal Statistical Society (1990). The Committee has been of significant value to me in the couple of years since it was established.

This and other changes in recent years have substantially improved what Royal Statistical Society (1990) calls the constitutional position of the GSS. A UK Statistics Act would be a further step, but as I have said currently remains no more than a gleam in my eye.

9. CONCLUSION

In his editorial for *RSS News* in January 1994 (Maclean, 1994) Ian Maclean noted that the changes made to date have all the hallmarks of the start of a golden age for the users of official statistics. Before the end of the decade we must cement the progress that has been made and really live up to our mission to improve decision-making, to stimulate research and to inform debate within government and the wider community by providing a quality statistical service. My central message is, you can count on us—with confidence.

APPENDIX A: DEPARTMENTS AND OTHER BODIES EMPLOYING MEMBERS OF GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE†

	GSS staff‡		
	Statistician	*Other*	*Total GSS staff*
Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, Ministry of	28	148	176
Building Societies Commission	1	9	10
Central Statistical Office	109	1214	1322
Civil Service College	1	0	1
Her Majesty's Customs and Excise	8	540	548
Defence, Ministry of	22	99	121
Education, Department for	30	85	115
Office for Standards in Education	2	9	11
Employment Department	49	339	388
Environment, Department of the	41	129	170
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	1	2	3
Forestry Commission	1	3	4
General Register Office for Scotland	5	63	68
Health and Safety Executive	11	16	27
Health, Department of	52	190	241
Home Office	32	154	186
Inland Revenue	26	112	138
Lord Chancellor's Department	4	8	12
National Heritage, Department of	0	1	1
National Savings, Department for	2	4	6
Office of Manpower Economics	6	7	13
Overseas Development Administration	7	10	17
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys	26	953	979
Office of Water Services	2	0	2
Scottish Office	29	101	130
Social Security, Department of	37	70	107
Trade and Industry, Department of§	30	66	96
Transport, Department of	29	88	117
Treasury, Her Majesty's	14	38	52
Welsh Office	22	51	73
Total	624	4505	5131

† In addition, there are a number of bodies employing statistical staff who work in close association with the GSS: the Audit Commission; the Bank of England; the British Geological Survey; the Civil Aviation Authority; the Energy Technology Support Unit; English regional health authorities; the Equal Opportunities Commission; the Further Education Funding Council; the Higher Education Funding Council for England; the House of Commons Library; the National Audit Office; Northern Ireland departments; the Registry of Friendly Societies; the Scottish Health Service, Information and Statistics Division. On April 1st, 1994, 33 GSS members were on secondment to these and other organizations, both in the UK and overseas.

‡ Full-time equivalents, April 1st, 1994. Statistician Group staff working outside the GSS have been excluded. Numbers may not sum owing to rounding.

§ Includes the Office of Fair Trading, the Monopolies and Mergers Commission and the Office of Telecommunications.

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Regards à l'étranger

LA STATISTIQUE AU ROYAUME-UNI

Le 1[er] avril 1996, a été créé au Royaume-Uni un *Office for National Statistics* (ONS), regroupant le *Central Statistical Office* (CSO) et l'*Office of Population Censuses and Surveys* (OPCS). Ainsi ce pays est désormais doté d'un grand service statistique, plus centralisé qu'auparavant, dont l'organisation et l'activité sont analysées dans ce dossier.

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La série **Regards à l'étranger** présente des dossiers sur les statistiques publiques de pays étrangers, comparées à la statistique française. Ces dossiers portent soit sur des systèmes statistiques nationaux et leur insertion dans l'administration et la société du pays, soit sur des questions thématiques précises.