

THE CENSUS OF 1901.

ROYAL STATISTICAL SOCIETY.

THE Preliminary Report of the Census (1901) Committee, appointed by the Council in April, has already appeared in the *Journal*.* The Committee in question has since been pursuing its labours, and on November 18th, 1899, it presented the following Second Interim Report. This having been unanimously adopted by the Council, was by its direction forwarded to the President of the Local Government Board, to the Secretary of State for Scotland, and to the Chief Secretary for Ireland.

CENSUS (1901) COMMITTEE.

SECOND INTERIM REPORT.

In their preliminary report, presented to the Council in May, 1899, the committee recommended the drafting of a letter to the authorities responsible for the taking of the census, renewing and emphasizing the recommendations in the report of the committee for the census of 1891, in favour of the early passage of a Census Act when a census has to be taken, and also in favour of making arrangements at the time of the Census Act for a quinquennial census, embracing at least particulars as to sex and age, to be taken five years after the decennial census.

These matters appeared so urgent, and the policy of the Statistical Society regarding them so well defined, that it was thought desirable to take action at once, a view in which the council of the society fully concurred. The committee have reason to believe that as far as the introduction of a Census Act early in the next Session is concerned, the policy of the society is receiving consideration. In the present report accordingly it is proposed to take up some further questions, chiefly those which are likely to arise in the preparation of a Census Act itself, and on which it may be desirable therefore that their recommendations should be in the hands of the census authorities while the necessary Bills are being prepared.

Date of the Census.

1. The committee recommend that the date of the census of 1901 be the night of Sunday, the 31st day of March, 1901, being one of the two Sundays nearest to the ten years' interval allowed for

* See *Journal of Royal Statistical Society*, lxii., p. 385, and *PUBLIC HEALTH*, xi., p. 677 (July, 1899).

between two censuses. It is likewise the Sunday before Easter-day, while the Sunday following would be Easter Sunday itself, and for that reason inconvenient, owing to the great displacement of population which takes place at the Easter holidays.

“Story” and “Tenement.”

2. The committee recommend that in the Census (England and Wales) Act the word “tenement” be substituted for the word “story” in Section 3,* as being the more comprehensive term and more accurate. A “story” occupied separately by a householder would be a “tenement,” but there may also be a “tenement” which is only part of a “story.”

For a similar reason, in Section 5† the word “tenement” should be substituted for the word “story,” and the word “tenements” for the word “stories.” The effect would be that a householder’s schedule would be left for each tenant of a separate tenement or holding, whether a “story” or not, the object which it is desired to arrive at.

Copying the Schedules.

3. The committee recommend that in Section 6 the direction that the enumerator is to copy each householder’s schedule into a book provided for that purpose, should be so modified as to give the Registrar-General a discretion to dispense with such copying. Such a direction appears to the committee to lay down a rigid rule for dealing with the documents upon which the compilation of the census must be based, and they are of opinion that it will be to the advantage of the administration if no rigid rule is laid down. It is a pure question of administration how the primary documents, when once brought into existence, are to be utilized; and a hard and fast direction apparently tends to needless expense and delay in compiling the results. Were the department left quite free, it might or might not order copying into a book, and it would be free to substitute the use of cards for after-compilation, which is general in foreign countries. At any rate, nothing seems to be gained in an Act of Parliament by meddling with details of statistical administration in a manner which is found quite unnecessary in other statistical work.

The adoption of this recommendation would involve a good many consequential amendments in the Act, as the payment of the enumerators and other officers according to the Act is made dependent on the verification of the books into which the schedules have been copied; and the amount paid and mode of payment may both

* This should read, “Sub-section 3 of Section 5.”—Ed. P. H.

† This should read, “Sub-section 5 of Section 5.”—Ed. P. H.

have to be adjusted if copying into books is not to be insisted upon. Possibly in some districts fewer enumerators may be able to do the work if such copying is not insisted upon. The alteration, however, is not to be judged by its possible economy in some cases. Verification and supervision of the enumerators' work would still be necessary, and this must be provided for in the Act in connection with the scale of payments for the officers employed. It would be out of place for the committee, however, to suggest in detail what these consequential amendments should be, as they are obviously questions for the department and the Parliamentary draftsmen, if once the recommendation to abandon the hard and fast direction to copy into a book is adopted.

The committee understand that this recommendation is in accordance with the existing practice in Ireland.

Unoccupied Houses.

4. The committee recommend an amendment in Section 7, with a view to obtaining an account of the number of "occupied" houses which are not "inhabited"—that is, in which no persons slept or abode on the census night. The amendment, it is proposed, should take the form of an addition at the close of the clause after the words, "all other uninhabited houses," of words to the following effect: "distinguishing those that are occupied from those that are unoccupied."

The Section, as amended, would then run as follows: "Every enumerator shall also take account of the inhabited houses, and of the houses then building, and therefore uninhabited, and of all other uninhabited houses, distinguishing those that are occupied from those that are unoccupied within his division."

It appears to the committee unnecessary to go into details as to this recommendation, as the necessity of distinguishing between uninhabited houses that are legally "occupied" and those that are not so "occupied" is obvious. The distinction, it is understood, will be especially useful in connection with the comparison of the numbers of houses as returned in the census with the numbers of houses on the rate-books.

Uniformity of the Schedules in the three Kingdoms.

5. The above recommendations apply specifically to the Census Act for England, but the committee wish it to be understood that they should be applied, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Census Act for Scotland and Ireland, so as to have as much uniformity as possible throughout. For the same reason the committee would recommend

strongly that the schedules in the three kingdoms should be as far as possible uniform, the responsible departments consulting together. The existence of different ministerial departments for taking and compiling the census in each country is from this point of view to be regretted; but the good feeling and patriotism of the separate Ministers should be specially appealed to in a matter like this, which involves no politics.

It should be understood, of course, that the recommendation of uniformity does not extend to the omission from the census of one of the three countries of particulars which have long been obtained without objection, and which it may seem desirable to continue—such as the particulars as to religious profession in Ireland. The schedules may remain substantially uniform in all other respects, although one includes a subject not dealt with in the others.

The form which it would seem most desirable to follow for all the three kingdoms appears to the committee to be the schedule for England and Wales. The bulk of the population of the United Kingdom being in England and Wales, it is reasonable, when uniformity is introduced, that the forms now used for the majority should be followed as far as possible throughout.

British and Foreign Subjects.

6. The committee recommend that in col. 10 of the schedule the heading should read as follows: "If born in foreign parts, state if British subject, naturalized British subject, or foreign subject."

At present no specific statement as to the individual being a foreign subject is required, that depending apparently upon an inference from the statement as to his being a British subject or not, but an explicit declaration would no doubt conduce to accuracy.

The Schedule in Ireland.

7. The committee recommend that as far as practicable the householder in Ireland should fill up the schedule himself, in accordance with the practice observed in England and Wales and in Scotland.

The committee would have preferred postponing their observations on the above points relating to the Census Act and the schedules, until they had had an opportunity of considering the whole subject of the census in connection with the tabulation and report by which the results to be obtained from the householders' schedules are finally focussed and placed before the public. But rather than delay, they believe it is the most useful course to submit to the Council at once, with a view to immediate communication

to the census authorities, if the Council approve, a few practical observations which may be taken notice of in the preparation of the Census Act and of the schedules themselves. This will not prevent a further consideration of the whole subject if other points occur to the committee in reviewing the census tables as finally published, but meanwhile it may help to secure that some important points are not overlooked, whatever additional suggestions may afterwards be made.

The committee propose now to consider mainly subjects connected with the tabulation of the census and the report to be made by the census authorities, with any other matters bearing on the subjects of their interim reports which may occur to them. The results, it is hoped, will be embodied before long in a concluding report.

R. GIFFEN
(Chairman).

PERSONAL INFECTION IN ENTERIC FEVER.—There is a disposition in many quarters to regard typhoid fever as only slightly infectious, if indeed it is infectious at all. I wish to express my very strong conviction that direct contact with the person or belongings of either a known or unrecognised typhoid-fever patient is one of the greatest factors in the spread of the disease. That certainly appears to me to be one of the lessons taught by the recent outbreak. I earnestly hope that this opinion will be accepted by all who have to deal with typhoid fever cases, and that they will neglect no single precaution against the spread of infection to others. Amongst the most important precautions are the strict isolation of the patient, thorough cleanliness on the part of the nurse, who should wash her hands very frequently, thorough cleanliness also of the patient's body and bed-clothing, and immediate disinfection of the stools.—Dr. Alfred Hill, Birmingham, Report Fourth Quarter, 1899.

DIFFICULTIES IN FIXING MILK STANDARDS.—The Committee appointed to fix a standard of purity for milk have a difficult problem to solve. They have to face, not only the question of milk naturally poor in quality, in consequence of the inferiority of the cows or the rations upon which they are often fed for the purpose of forcing a great yield, but also the considerable variation in the richness of the morning and evening milkings, caused by the wide difference in the intervals between them. The latter is the chief difficulty, because, whereas there need be no hesitation in requiring milk-sellers to keep their herds up to a fair standard, and to feed the animals so that the milk will not be impoverished, the exigencies of the supply in towns govern the periods of milking absolutely. That the difficulties are not insuperable, however, is proved by the fact that, day after day and year after year, many milk suppliers manage to satisfy town dealers who test their milk regularly. It is as much to the advantage of honest producers as to that of consumers that a fair standard for milk should be fixed by law, and they may be advised, therefore, to help the Committee by suggestions, instead of objecting to everything that may cause them a little inconvenience.—*The Standard*.