

CARIB/INT 77/7

Distribution: POS only

Date: 5 August 1977

ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA
Office for the Caribbean



The Compilation of Statistical Periodicals -
A Semi-Annual Bulletin/Digest,
or a Bi-Monthly Bulletin
and
Implications on Form, Content and Collaboration



by
Lancelot Busby
Statistician

THE COMPILATION OF STATISTICAL PERIODICALS - A SEMI-
ANNUAL BULLETIN/DIGEST, OR A BI-MONTHLY BULLETIN AND
IMPLICATIONS ON FORM, CONTENT AND COLLABORATION

The publication of statistical data is for most consumers of statistics, the final stage of the statistical process. This is not really the case, as documentation and storage remain to be done. In many cases, this final stage is considered to be a library service. The need for dissemination of data on a timely basis, and the need for identifying a set of indicators, both economic and social, has been clearly registered.

A periodical publication that would supplement the existing reports whether themselves periodical or occasional, and which addresses itself to the analysis of social and economic change in the CDCC region, must examine at minimum, the set of areas as indicated below:

1. Trade, with a CARICOM sub-total
2. Prices and the methodology employed
3. Money and Banking - (the analysis of loans and overdrafts, etc.)
4. Production of Main Agricultural and Industrial Commodities
5. Electricity generating capacity and number of kilowatt hours generated
6. Tourism statistics, structure of the industry and average length of stay of visitors
7. Construction statistics and indicators of construction activity
8. Social indicators

A suggested list of tables is provided in Appendix I to this note.

One major problem that must be resolved is that of availability and timeliness of data. The publication would be of little use if it were published one year after the period to which it relates. A time lag of four months would seem to be a reasonable target date for publication of the Bulletin/Digest, but this

estimate carries with it, certain assumptions of content, supply of data, and availability of staff man-hours.

In the light of the data collection experience of the annual Overview, the prospect of a response to postal requests for data is not very encouraging. If the document is to foster a more prompt analysis of the performance of countries for purposes of the Economic Survey of Latin America and the Survey of Economic Activity, the periodicity of publication should be on a semi-annual basis. Semi-annual requests for data are likely to result in a more prompt flow of data to this Office, especially by year and when the country analyses are being done. A publication of this nature would carry very little or no analysis, but concentrate on tabular and graphical presentation.

On the other hand, if the intention is to produce a bi-monthly bulletin of which one portion would deal with statistics of the CDCC countries, then the coverage must of necessity be less comprehensive. Such a bulletin could conceivably perform two functions at one and the same time. It could educate the population at large about the functions of the CDCC, the staff profile of the CDCC Secretariat, major policy decisions emanating from past meetings, and achievements to date. Each aspect of the work programme can be explained and reported on, on a revolving basis, with the spotlight focussing on a different area of the work plan for every issue.

The statistical section of the bulletin should pull together interesting statistics on each country of the CDCC, more or less after the fashion and coverage of the Trinidad and Tobago Statistical Pocket Digest, so as to promote greater awareness of the characteristics of the member countries. As time would have witnessed a full staff profile, it would be useful to highlight various aspects of life in various member countries, or treat the structure of the major industry or industries in a well-written, informative and easily understood article. In this case, the statistical content would be less at any given point in time, though over a period, the stock of data could be so great as to

warrant separate publication, more or less of the nature of the Digest referred to above. In the case of the Bi-monthly bulletin now under discussion, the content suggested can be found at Appendix II to this Note.

Either or both of the projects discussed above would be most satisfactorily approached if the inputs came from the specialist sectors and were co-ordinated at the centre by the statistical unit. The suggestion is that a meeting should be convened to discuss the mechanics of collaboration within the Office. One approach to the internal organization of Statistics is presented in Appendix III. The question of storage and retrieval of data has been discussed on a preliminary and informal basis with the Librarian. These talks are to continue upon her resumption of duty.



APPENDIX I

Statistical Tabular Content for Proposed Bulletin/Digest (Semi-Annual) - (Data to be collected quarterly)

1. TRADE

- 1.1 Balance of trade including and excluding CARICOM trade, by country, by quarter
- 1.2 Value of imports and Domestic and Foreign Exports by Section of SITC
- 1.3 Value of imports of selected commodities, by country
- 1.4 Value of domestic exports of selected commodities, by country
- 1.5 Exports of Agricultural products (volume) - Total
- 1.6 Trade in Agricultural products under AMP (Volume and Value) - Exports and Imports by country

2. PRICES

- 2.1 Brief description of price index - weights and manner of construction
- 2.2 Retail price indexes by section, by country, with a common base year
- 2.3 Trade indexes by section of SITC by country - common base year

3. MONEY AND BANKING

- 3.1 Commercial Banks: Analysis of loans and advances (by country)
- 3.2 Analysis of Total deposits by depositors
- 3.3 Factors affecting the Money supply

4. PRODUCTION

- 4.1 Production of main Agricultural export crops, by country

PRODUCTION (continued)

- 4.2 Petroleum Mining - Method of Production
- 4.3 Petroleum - Analysis of Refinery throughput
- 4.4 Natural gas - Production, Consumption and Disposal
- 4.5 Asphalt production and exports
- 4.6 Bauxite Mining - Output by country
- 4.7 Production of alumina and exports by country

5. MISCELLANEOUS

- 5.1 Electricity generating capacity and number of kwh generated
- 5.2 Electricity consumed by type of consumer
- 5.3 Tourism statistics and average length of stay and hotel capacity
- 5.4 Indicators of Construction (approved building plans, etc.)
- 5.5 Rates of exchange of national currencies with the US dollar
- 5.6 Social indicators (to be shown)

APPENDIX II

(Tabular content of proposed Bi-Monthly Bulletin)

1. Population by age-structure, by CDCC country
2. Rate of population increase, by CDCC country
3. Area of country and population density in capital
4. GDP and GDP per capita (unified currency)
5. Type of national currency and rate of exchange with
US dollar
6. Retail Price Index
7. Major exports and percentage contribution to GDP
8. Cargo statistics - Sea cargo loaded and unloaded
(excluding transshipment)
9. Trade - Imports and Exports by SITC Sections

APPENDIX III

THE INTERNAL ORGANIZATION OF STATISTICS - ONE APPROACH

The Statistical unit is supposed to supply or to foster the supply of data on the areas of operation of the Office as outlined in the CDCC documents. The Office at the same time, utilizes the services of sector specialists in:

- Agriculture
- Industry
- Social Affairs
- Transport
- Economic Affairs

and a Regional Adviser, apart from a Statistician whose duty, among other things, is to publish an annual survey of Economic Activity of the CARICOM countries (to be expanded to cover CDCC countries).

There are six Research Assistants who collect data for their respective sector specialist. The collection of data is not coordinated among the six, the result being duplication of effort and no doubt, differences in standards of collection.

The statistical unit has at present one Statistician and 1.5 man months of Research Assistant help per month, on average. This would seem to constitute a very small complement, given the workload of the Office that the Statistical Unit must service. With goodwill on all sides, and without the statistical unit assuming administrative control over the Research Assistants in Agriculture, Industry, Social Affairs and Transport, the Unit can function as if it were comprised of six Research Assistants and one Statistician, with the occasional help (in an advisory capacity) of the Librarian.

The Statistical Unit should be appraised of the receipt of all data of a statistical nature in an attempt to increase the awareness of what is available and to minimize the duplication of effort.

In the case of new projects, whether on an ad hoc or continuing basis the Statistical Unit should be informed as to the aims and objectives of the new undertaking and the proposed status of the report.

SPECIMEN

PRICES

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

Official title: Index of Retail Prices.

Official base: September 1960 = 100.

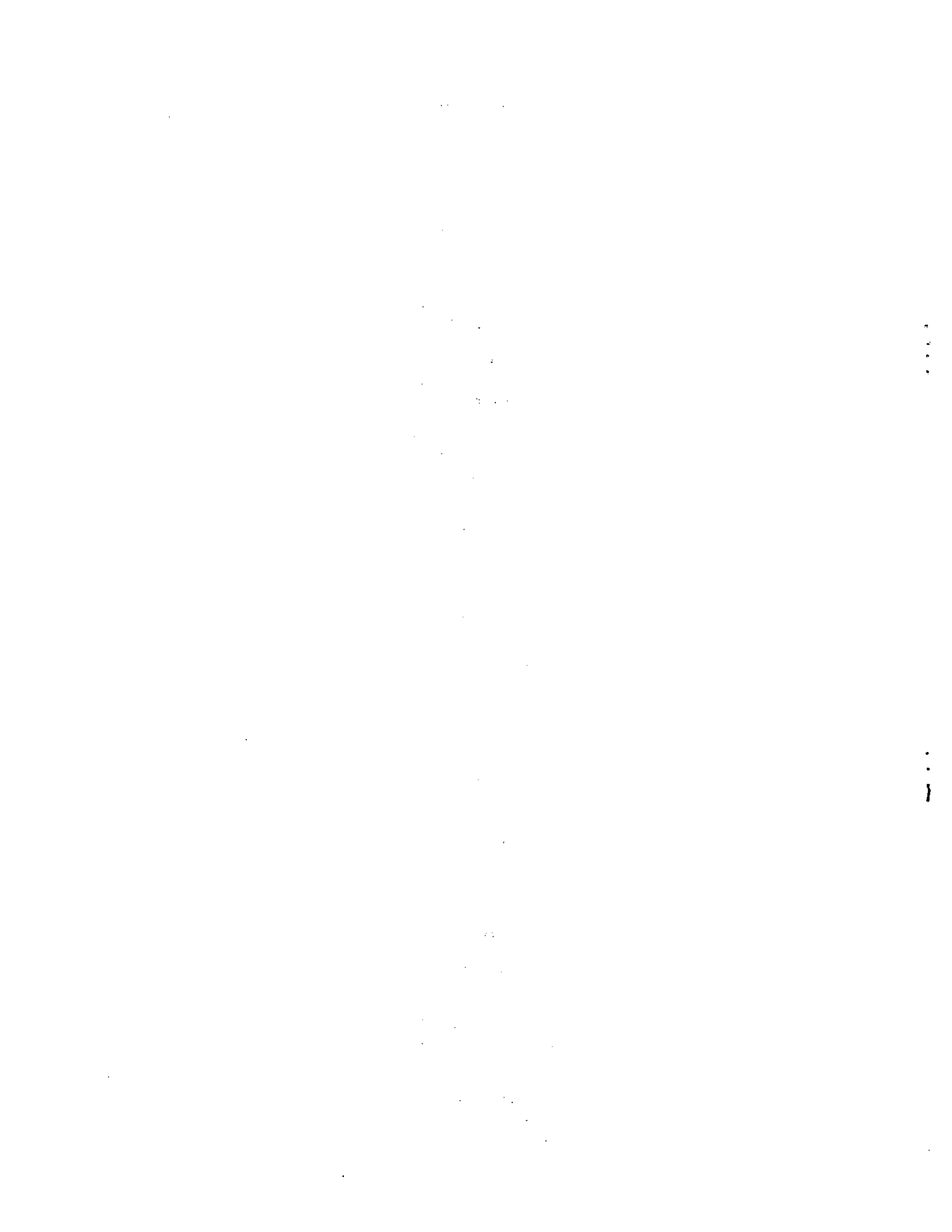
Computation: The index is computed as a weighted arithmetic average base, the weights corresponding to the base period.

Weights and composition: The weights and selected items were derived from a family expenditure survey conducted between December 1957 and June 1958 among a random sample of 1,056 households in Trinidad and Tobago, and relate to the expenditure patterns of households with an income up to \$200 per month for households of at least two persons, and up to \$150 per month for one person households. The number of items and the weights used in the computation of the index are as follows:

Group	Number of items	Weights
Food	107	490
Drinks and tobacco	7	77
Housing:		
Rent	1	25
Owner-occupation costs	15	52
Fuel and light	6	29
Clothing	33	99
Furniture and household supplies ..	57	67
Services and transport	25	142
Drugs and toilet articles	23	19
Total	274	1,000

Price data: Prices for most items are collected monthly by agents from 98 retail outlets distributed over eight areas and refer to the eight-day period commencing the second Wednesday of each month. Prices of market products are collected four times per month on different mornings each week to account for daily price fluctuations. Rent quotations are obtained quarterly from a sample of 200 dwellings; owner-occupation costs comprise rates and taxes, labour charges in house building costs and repairs as well as maintenance charges. Seasonal fluctuations in the prices of fresh fruits and vegetables.

National Publication
"Trinidad & Tobago Gazette (Extraordinary)"
General Post Office
Port-of-Spain



5
1
2

1
2

