

**THIRTEENTH CENSUS:
HEARINGS, 1ST SESSION,
60TH CONGRESS**

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Thirteenth Census: Hearings, 1st Session, 60th Congress by Various

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THIRTEENTH CENSUS

HEARINGS

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U.S.
BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON THE CENSUS OF
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

1ST SESSION, 60TH CONGRESS

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SIXTIETH CONGRESS

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THIRTEENTH CENSUS.

ROOM OF THE COMMITTEE ON CENSUS,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, D. C., January 22, 1908.

The Committee met at 10 o'clock a. m., Hon. E. D. Crumpacker in the chair.

STATEMENT OF MR. S. N. D. NORTH, DIRECTOR OF THE CENSUS.

Mr. Chairman and gentlemen of the Committee, the sections of the pending bill are on the left-hand side of the document which has been printed, and the corresponding sections of the Twelfth Census act, or the permanent Census act, as the case may be, are on the right-hand side.

The changes in the language which are suggested by this bill are all indicated by the italics, so that it will be possible for any member of the Committee to refer to the corresponding sections of the bill and the law and note without any difficulty any change that is suggested in the drafted bill.

These changes are not numerous. The lines of the Twelfth Census act, in accordance with the instructions received from the House Census Committee and the Senate Census Committee, are followed literally, or with mere verbal changes, wherever it was possible to do so, taking cognizance of the establishment of the permanent Census Office in the interval, and wherever it was desirable for purposes of greater efficiency and greater economy to introduce more marked changes.

The great problem in connection with the drafting of this bill was to fit the temporary decennial period into the permanent Census Office, and it is believed that that has been successfully accomplished by section 2 of the bill, which is the string upon which the whole thing hangs; that is the section which describes the three years beginning one year before and continuing two years after the decennial census as "the decennial census period." The bill provides that during that period the whole Office, including the permanent Census as well as the temporary clerks, shall go on to a lump-sum appropriation, abandoning for that interval the annual appropriations in the legislative, executive, and judicial appropriation bill which are now made for the permanent Office, that situation to continue during this three-year period, at the end of which time employment of temporary clerks then on the roll would terminate, the annual appropriations would begin again as they now are made, and the Office would fall back automatically into the situation which now exists.

Under the provisions of the bill, no permanent Census Office clerk would lose his status in that way although it might be necessary, as this bill provides, to transfer him during that period from his permanent position into a position on the temporary roll. On the other hand, no temporary clerk, although the bill provides that such clerks may be put temporarily into permanent positions, would retain his position at the end of the decennial census period.

I believe that with one or two slight changes the bill is so drawn as to effect that automatic transformation from the permanent into a temporary office and back again without the necessity of any legislation in addition, and without the possibility of any friction.

Mr. HALE. Pardon me, but with your knowledge of the situation, would there legally be many transferred from permanent into this temporary; and if so, where?

Mr. NORTH. Well, to positions drawing higher salaries and involving greater responsibility.

Mr. HALE. In the Office here?

Mr. NORTH. In the Office here. The number of permanent positions provided for by the permanent Census act is not sufficient to properly equip the Office with supervisory places during the decennial period, and yet the people who are best qualified to perform those supervisory duties are undoubtedly those who have been trained in the Office and who are now there. But if they are to have greater duties and greater responsibilities, it is proper and right that they should, during that temporary period, receive higher pay.

Mr. HALE. Does this temporary employment referred to here include work here—it does not include the field work?

Mr. NORTH. Not the force that I am referring to, because it makes no reference to that.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. North, I understand that this bill would transfer the Office here in Washington into what might be called a temporary office, beginning July 1, 1909; that is, an office whose chief function would be to provide for the Thirteenth Census, and the temporary office is to exist for a period not to exceed three years, and during that period the Director will have such control over the clerks and employees in the Office that he may assign them to duty according to their experience and aptitudes and capabilities, without regard to whether they are temporary clerks or permanent clerks; but when the decennial period ceases, then the temporary clerks—

Mr. NORTH. Disappear.

The CHAIRMAN. Disappear, yes; their employment ceases, and those that are in the permanent service are assigned back to their several positions?

Mr. NORTH. Yes, at reduced salaries, which will probably follow. That is an exact statement of the purpose and the provisions of the bill.

Mr. ROBINSON. Has this three-year decennial period ever been provided for before?

Mr. NORTH. It never has. It was never necessary, because there never existed a permanent census until after the last census. That is therefore an absolutely new feature in the law.

Mr. ROBINSON. This new feature provides at one place a sufficient appropriation in this bill to carry it for three years, does it?

Mr. NORTH. Yes; for three years.

Mr. ROBINSON. And you think it pays to do that, because an annual interruption by an annual appropriation might impede the work, or might stop the work right in the middle of it?

Mr. NORTH. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. I believe it would be proper, Mr. North, for the Committee to hear something about the general work of the permanent Census Office and some reasons for its existence; if you are inclined to make a statement upon that question, we will be glad to hear it.

Mr. NORTH. The permanent Census Office has been very busy ever since it was created; it has never seen the time when it did not have plenty of work ahead of it, and it will just about be able, as near as I can figure it, to finish all the work assigned to it before the time when it must begin work upon the Thirteenth Census.

We have all sorts of experiences, however, to encounter, and I may be disappointed in that. We first had the Philippine census assigned to us, and we compiled that census. We then had the census of Oklahoma given to us last summer, and within the last week we have received orders from the President to compile and tabulate the census of Cuba, which has just been finished by the War Department. The governor of Cuba, Governor Magoon, who sent the director of the Cuban census to Washington last week, stated to the President in his letter that they had no facilities in Cuba for the tabulation of that census, and therefore proposed that the work of tabulation be given to the United States Census Office, but with the understanding that all of the expenses connected with the tabulation of the census should be paid by the Cuban treasury. In order to accomplish that, it will be necessary to have an additional force, not paid out of our own appropriation, and to transfer temporarily to the Cuban rolls certain of our best people to supervise the work.

The CHAIRMAN. How long do you think that will take?

Mr. NORTH. We figure it will take about three months to do it. That will not interrupt our regular work except in a very slight degree.

Mr. ROBINSON. In what division of this bill we are now considering is the Cuban census?

Mr. NORTH. It is not in it at all.

Mr. ROBINSON. You now refer to that to show the additional work that is required of the Bureau?

Mr. NORTH. Yes; the unexpected work.

The CHAIRMAN. The increase of force made necessary by the tabulation of the Cuban census will have to be provided for by temporary appointments?

Mr. NORTH. Yes, sir. We anticipate that it will require about 100 clerks to do that work in three months; and in view of the fact that the schedules are all in Spanish, it is quite probable that the great majority of these 100 clerks will be drawn from those former clerks of the Twelfth Census living here in the city of Washington who tabulated the Philippine census, which was also in Spanish; they will possess the great advantage of having had some training in a census taken in that language.

The CHAIRMAN. How did you come to take the Oklahoma census?

Mr. NORTH. It was taken under an order of the President, and that order was based on a provision in the law for the establishment of

the Department of Commerce and Labor, section 8, I believe, it is of the act, which gives to the Secretary of Commerce and Labor the authority to make such special investigations and reports as he may be required to do by the President, or by either House of Congress, or which he himself may deem necessary or urgent.

I think that is almost the exact phraseology of the provision of the law. Under that provision the President issued this order to the Secretary. He passed it on to me, as it were. The President having first ascertained that the money required to make the enumeration could be taken from our appropriation for the current fiscal year, provided we postponed or delayed some of the work for which that money was appropriated, and the Attorney-General as well as the Comptroller of the Treasury having decided that the terms of the appropriation act were such as to make it proper for the President to order that some of that money should be used in making one of these reports or investigations, which he was authorized to order under the departmental act.

We therefore postponed the census of fisheries, which the law authorizes and directs the Census Office to take, and which we had intended to take during the present fiscal year. It cost about \$70,000 to take the Oklahoma census, and that was about the figure that we estimated it would cost to take the fisheries census.

We shall ask the Appropriations Committee to give us that \$70,000 again for the next year, in order that we may do that work, which was simply postponed, the question as to the order in which the reports authorized and directed by law shall be taken up being left to the discretion of the Director under the terms of the law.

The CHAIRMAN. I understand the Oklahoma census was ordered by the President, to enlighten him in his consideration of the Oklahoma constitution, and it was a piece of emergency work?

Mr. NORTH. It was alleged in regard to the Oklahoma constitution, which carried an apportionment for the legislative districts, that there had been a gerrymander of those districts in the constitution, and it was alleged if that was the case it would constitute a valid ground upon which the President might decline to sign the constitution; I think the census was primarily deemed desirable in order to ascertain whether that objection to the constitution was a valid one.

Mr. ROBINSON. I take it, then, that the census discloses the fact that that objection was not a valid one; that that state of affairs did not exist?

Mr. NORTH. It did not exist. I think most people were surprised to find out how evenly the districts were apportioned, in view of the fact that they had no census by which to be guided.

Of course, apart from that reason for taking the census of Oklahoma, it was an extremely desirable thing to do, because they had no knowledge whatever in that State what was the population of the minor civil divisions which they had established for the several counties and towns; the census has proved of enormous value to the people of the State, and particularly to the local, county, and other officers in establishing their offices.

The demand for the census has been unprecedented. I think we have had a larger call for that publication than for any of our recent publications. We have been obliged to get out a new edition to meet the demand, and I expect that there will have to be a third edition.

The CHAIRMAN. What about the general improvement in methods of making inquiries, and tabulating and systematizing statistics and facts?

Mr. NORTH. I think the improvement is very much greater than it is possible to adequately express in words. The work is done with more care and more knowledge and more discrimination than it was ever possible to exercise on corresponding work during the rush and turmoil work of decennial censuses. The basis of the reform in that direction appeared in the Twelfth Census act, which provided that that census should be confined to the four inquiries of population, agriculture, manufactures, and vital statistics, and that all the other inquiries and investigations which the law provided for should be postponed and not taken up until after the work upon these four great reports was completed and published; and that was the procedure followed.

The Twelfth Census act, by containing that provision, practically provided for a permanent Census Office without realization of the fact by Congress, because it made it necessary for the Office to continue in existence after the completion of the Twelfth Census.

However, Congress has in the meanwhile put a number of additional duties upon the Office not contemplated by the Twelfth Census act or the permanent Census act, the most important and expensive of which was the report on marriage and divorce, which was authorized by Congress as the result of a special message from the President, and which made it necessary for us to send an agent to every county in the United States, 2,800 of them, to ransack their court records for a period of twenty years. We have just recently completed the field work on that report and are now engaged in its compilation and tabulation, and we hope and believe that we shall be able to publish it before the end of the present fiscal year.

Still another duty placed upon the Census Office unexpectedly, that was not contemplated in the original law, was the compilation of the biennial Official Register. Our first biennial register was published on the day Congress came into session. That is the first time in a great many years that it has been published on December 1, the day the law requires that it shall be published. It has usually appeared in February or March.

We put a great deal of study on the Official Register, which had become an impossible book. The two volumes of the Register together made a pile of paper that high [indicating] and the weight of it nearly 30 pounds. We have succeeded by various devices in cutting the two volumes down to two books about that thick [indicating], and about one-fourth of the number of pages that there were in the old Official Register, and the bill for printing it was approximately \$50,000 less than the cost of the last Official Register.

I believe that is a good practical illustration of the general benefits which come from having a permanent Census Office. It shows what can be done by an office which devotes its entire attention to the doing of just such things.

The CHAIRMAN. In relation to its usefulness, what have you to say?

Mr. NORTH. The usefulness of the Register?

The CHAIRMAN. The Official Register, yes, as compared with the usefulness of the old Register.

Mr. NORTH. I believe it is far more convenient and useful than the old Register. The old Register contained an index, which represented about one-third of its contents, and in order to find the data regarding any person you had to first turn to this index and there you learned the page upon which you would find the name of the person, and you would have to turn to that. Our register is what you might call a directory. We have abandoned the index and we have arranged the names alphabetically, like a city directory, and you can turn to a man's name and you have right there the information that you want to find, and all which the register furnishes.

The CHAIRMAN. I have examined the new Register and I think you are right about it, and I suppose each member of the committee will have occasion before long, when we get them in the Office here, to compare the old Register with the new one.

Now, Mr. North, to what extent has there been an increased demand on your Office for special reports, and for statistical information by the public?

Mr. NORTH. Well, it has been very extraordinary, Mr. Chairman. The volume of correspondence which comes into the Office from all parts of the country in the way of inquiry for statistical information is beyond all expectation that I ever supposed it would reach, and it is increasing all the time. We make it a point in our Office to answer every letter of inquiry, whether it relates strictly to census work or to the work of some other Bureau or Department of the Government. We feel that it is a part of our duty to be a sort of general information bureau of the Government. Any letter which relates to the statistical work of any other Department which we can answer just as well as that Department we answer ourselves, instead of referring it to that Department.

We have quite a little division in our Office whose sole duty it is to prepare answers to letters of inquiry.

In the winter time we are obliged to very materially increase the size of that division, in order to answer inquiries that come to us from Members of Congress.

The number and character of these inquiries that come to us from Members of Congress are extremely gratifying, and of course we always make it a point to supply them with all the information they desire if we possibly can.

The CHAIRMAN. In the employment of special agents to make these various inquiries in the field, what do you do—what class of people do you employ?

Mr. NORTH. Well, except at intervals like that during which we were taking the quinquennial census of manufactures, which the permanent census provides for, we have employed very few. The law establishing the permanent census permitted the detail of the permanent clerks of the Office to field work, and, as a rule, since the manufacturing census was completed, we have confined our field work to the official force, and that is the way in which we have been able to keep the force busy, without incurring expenditure for temporary service.

The CHAIRMAN. While clerks of the Office are in the field their salary is the same?