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**INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS
INVESTIGATIONS IN INDUSTRY AND LABOR**

**WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY:
A STATISTICAL PROGRAM**

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WORKERS' HEALTH AND SAFETY: A STATISTICAL PROGRAM

BY
ROBERT MORSE WOODBURY

WITH THE AID OF THE COUNCIL AND STAFF
OF THE INSTITUTE OF ECONOMICS

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DIRECTOR'S PREFACE

This volume is the first in a series of monographs concerned with the improvement of economic and social statistics. The collection of statistical data, in whatever field, is to be justified only on utilitarian grounds. Statistics should be a means to an end, not an end in themselves, and that end is the improvement of economic and social conditions. It has, however, been the unfortunate experience of students of economic and social problems that much of the statistical material that is currently assembled is inadequate for the purposes of social control. This situation appears to be the result of two facts; first, a tendency on the part of statistical agencies to follow stereotyped patterns in the assembling of data; and, second, a failure to modify the scope and character of statistical programs to meet the needs of changing conditions or of shifts in emphasis in connection with current problems. On the one hand, our statistical compilations commonly include much material which no longer serves a useful purpose; while on the other hand, material bearing upon pressing current issues is all too frequently omitted.

In this study the Institute of Economics has attempted a constructive criticism of available resources in the field of accident and health statistics. We have not begun with a study of existing statistics merely with a view to pointing out improvements in methods of collection, tabulation, and presentation of data that might be effected. The approach has been to study, first, the present problems in the selected fields of health and safety with a view to ascertaining the objects and purposes for which statistical material is required. These

objects and purposes when analyzed are then used to point the way to detailed specifications for the data to be collected. With the specific needs in view the next step is to appraise the adequacy of existing statistics—to ascertain whether they meet the requirements, in what ways they fall short, where gaps are found, or where faulty methods unfit them for the purposes they should serve. The final step is to set forth a feasible program of statistics adequate for use in the control of current problems. This program includes two types of recommendations: First, the abandonment of superfluous compilations and the introduction of such changes in methods and tabulations as can be made without any major reorganization of existing methods and procedure, and, second recommendations for guiding the further development of statistics to meet present or future requirements.

HAROLD G. MOULTON,
Director.

Institute of Economics,
March, 1927.

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For the recommendations made and for any errors that may have crept into the discussion, the author assumes full responsibility.

He sincerely hopes that this book may be helpful to men of practical ideas in their efforts directed toward preventing accidents and wiping out disease.

ROBERT M. WOODBURY.

Washington, D. C.,
March, 1927.

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