

CHAPTER XVII.—CONSTRUCTION

CONSPECTUS

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NOTE.—*The interpretation of the symbols used in the tables throughout the Year Book will be found facing p. 1 of this volume.*

The purpose of this Chapter is to co-ordinate available official statistics on the construction industry and to give, as far as possible, a complete summary of construction from year to year. The official statistics of the annual Census of Construction (given in Subsection 1 of Section 1) cover all new construction, maintenance and repair work completed during a given year by contractors, builders, public bodies, industrial plants, etc. This information is supplemented by data from an outside source (Subsection 2) on construction contracts awarded, which are in the nature of a forecast of the amount of construction work contemplated in a given year. Usually some time elapses after contracts are awarded before work actually is begun and, in the case of contracts for large-scale undertakings, the work is seldom finished within one year.

Section 1.—Statistics of the Construction Industry

Subsection 1.—Annual Census of Construction*

In conducting the Census of Construction for 1949 and 1950, sampling techniques were employed for the first time. A study of the characteristics of the components of the industry revealed a predominance of firms whose annual production was very small in relation to the total value of work performed by the industry as a whole in the same year. Therefore, it was decided that a less detailed report form could be completed by the majority of these small firms and a sample group chosen to which the regular form would be mailed. On the basis of this sample, estimates could be calculated for data not called for on the short form but necessary for the presentation of construction statistics.

The regular form requested the respondent to give, in addition to details of the type and value of work performed, information on such operating expenses as salaries and wages paid, monthly employment of wage-earners and cost of materials. The short form asked only for a classification of work by type and value. Estimates for salaries and wages and other details of operations were made for the short-form group, based on the answers to the regular-form questions. Thus, the value of work figures presented are not estimates but are tabulations of actual reports, since all known construction operators were canvassed for that information. Also, it

* Revised in the Construction Section, Industry and Merchandising Division, Dominion Bureau of Statistics. More detailed information is available in the D.B.S. annual report, *The Construction Industry in Canada*.