

Communicated to
the Council.

Geneva, September 2nd, 1935.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF STATISTICAL EXPERTS
ON THE WORK OF ITS FOURTH SESSION.

Report by the Representative of Australia.

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1. The Report of the Committee of Statistical Experts on the work of its Fourth Session, which was held from June 3rd to June 6th, 1935, has been circulated to Members of the Council (Document C.268.M.136.1935.II.A).
 2. It will be recalled that, during the early part of 1934, the Committee of Statistical Experts compiled a uniform classification of commodities for use in international trade statistics. That classification was, for reasons of convenience, entitled a "Minimum List". The Council decided, on May 14th, 1934, to forward that "List", and a statement regarding the principles upon which it was based, to all the Governments of States - Members of the League of Nations and non-Member States for their observations.
 3. At its session in June last, the Committee revised the "Minimum List" in the light of observations received and, in accordance with the desire expressed by several Governments, a system was elaborated for grouping commodities entering into international trade by stage of production and use. That supplementary classification is appended to the Committee's Report together with an explanatory statement.
 4. The Committee directs attention to the fact that when the International Statistical Conference of 1928 recommended the compilation of a uniform classification for use in trade statistics, it was contemplated that such a classification could be based on the uniform customs tariff nomenclature which, at that time, was in course of preparation. The uniform Customs nomenclature was not adopted, however, and the Statistical Committee now expresses some doubt whether the majority of Governments would be prepared, prior to the general modification of the customs nomenclature, to disturb the historical sequence of their trade statistics by introducing new systems of classification. In these circumstances the Committee recommends that the "Minimum List" should be used as a basis for supplementary trade statistics. A number of countries already publish such supplementary statistics based on the classification established by the Brussels Convention of 1913 which, it will be remembered, was the first important step in the direction of establishing international uniformity in the presentation of trade statistics. That convention is being maintained from year to year pending the adoption of a classification which will meet the requirements of the present day. The Committee of Statistical Experts hopes that the "Minimum List" it has compiled will prove to be a suitable substitute for the Brussels classification and that it will be employed generally as the basis for comparable international trade statistics.

5. On September 8th, 1934, the Council decided to bring to the notice of the Committee of Statistical Experts the Economic Committee's recommendation that methods of compiling statistics of tourist traffic should be improved and standardised. That problem was discussed, in the first instance, by the Committee, by whom it was agreed that a Sub-Committee should study the economic side of the problem in its international aspect. It is expected that the sub-Committee referred to will meet during the autumn and will report on the specific questions which have been referred to it.

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6. I submit the following resolution for the approval of the Council:

"The Council

"1. Takes note of the Report of the Committee of Statistical Experts on the work of its Fourth Session and adopts the present Report:

"2. Instructs the Secretary-General to communicate the Revised Minimum List drawn up by the Committee of Statistical Experts, together with the classification of commodities according to stage of production and use to all Governments of States, Members and non-Members of the League of Nations:

"3. Expresses the hope that Governments may see their way to publishing at least annually supplementary statistics of their imports and exports classified in the manner indicated in the Minimum List:

"4. Draws the attention of Governments to the usefulness of publishing, in addition, monthly, or at least quarterly, summary statistics showing the total value of trade falling within the several sections and chapters of the Minimum List and classified in the manner indicated in the List by stage of production and by use."