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EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN SAMPLING

Report on comments received at the Secretariat on the
syllabuses proposed for a course in sampling

The comments from three more countries have been received since the
preparation of document E/CN.3/Sub.1/21 of 5 July 1950. These are given below:

1. FRANCE

Comments from the Director of General Statistics, Institut National de la
Statistique et des Etudes Economiques:

- (i) Re. Mahalanobis' syllabus. Very advanced in theory in the
first part; it seems to me, however, a little too much concerned
with practical problems in the other three parts.
- (ii) Re. Yates' syllabus. It is very complete. In my opinion, there
appears to be missing in it one subject namely, sampling by
pre-determined choice (quotes), their advantages and shortcomings,
and this is a subject worth knowing. Other points which seem to be
missing from the Yates' syllabus are the provision for practical
experience in the field which is indispensable to sampling
specialists, and the study of certain sampling surveys carried on in
various countries.

2. GERMANY (WEST)

Comments from Federal Statistical Office, Wiesbaden:

- (i) The syllabus drafted by Mr. F. Yates appears to be the more
suitable one for the German conditions, since it makes considerable
allowance for the requirements arising in practice. The excellent
compendium of Mr. F. Yates would be a most suitable record for
carrying this syllabus into effect.

/(11) For the
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- (ii) For the German statisticians, whose education in the field of mathematical statistics has been relatively limited so far, it would be most suitable to supplement the syllabus mentioned under paragraph (i) by a mathematical introduction.
- (iii) As experience shows, the mathematical statistics seldom get away from the requirements, problems and sphere of work of the practical statistics. The realization of the respective syllabuses and training courses should therefore be done in close connexion with the practical statistics. It will eventually be suitable to carry them out at a statistical office.
- (iv) Because of the great mathematical requirements contained in the syllabus of Mr. P.C. Mahalanobis, the great scientific value of which has been appreciated in all comments, this syllabus can be arrived at in the far future only, when considering the German conditions. It is particularly objected that the mathematical theorems would be given without proofs. The student concerned would therefore have to reproduce this proof out of his own knowledge. But most of the German students are generally not yet in a position to do so. It seems necessary that **part I** of the syllabus should deal also with the Gauss Theorem and the principles for the preparation of graphs.
- (v) To begin with, it could be imagined that a similar syllabus could eventually be carried out at a few German Universities maintaining chairs of statistics. This may be sufficient for the practical requirements of the official statistics because a detailed knowledge as envisaged in the latter syllabus will be passed on **only** to a smaller circle of mathematical statisticians even if a wider application of sampling methods is taken into account. It should be sufficient for the practical requirements that a few trained experts be available at some universities and at the most important offices dealing with the official statistics, whereas the knowledge provided for in the syllabus of Mr. F. Yates appears to be fully sufficient for the mass of statisticians and their practical work.

/(vi) Finally,

- (vi) Finally, it is emphasized again that, according to German experience, it appears to be necessary, in the first instance, to adjust the work of the mathematical statistics (and each training to be provided for the purpose) to the practical requirements of the statistical fields of work.

Apart from this, it would without doubt be most suitable for the efforts in German statistics, to give some German statisticians the chance of attending international courses, so that they may obtain the necessary stimulation directly from a practical glance into the field of work of international statistics.

3. MEXICO

Comments from the Director-General of Statistics

After consultation with two of our experts on this subject, which is very important for continental statistics, I have to inform you that one expert stated that the programmes were for advanced courses, that is to say, for persons with a thorough knowledge of mathematics and statistics. He also thought the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling should, in addition to the syllabuses for advanced courses, draw up another syllabus for an elementary course for persons less advanced in mathematics and statistics.

The second expert who gave his opinion said that the two syllabuses were designed in a logical and orderly manner to provide an exposition of the method of sampling, and given the importance of the subject, if such courses of study were provided in any American city and the attendance were poor, it would be desirable to provide correspondence courses.

This Department is of the opinion that each of the three syllabuses (if it is decided to add an elementary syllabus) should be accompanied by a detailed bibliography since many people are interested in working such syllabuses by themselves, and they would then be able to study the texts considered most important by the Sub-Commission on Statistical Sampling.
