

THE WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

News-Letter for February 1946

Meeting February 15, 1946

The next meeting of the Society will be held Friday February 15, 1946 at 8:15 p.m. in room 101 Hall of Government, George Washington University, 21st and G Streets, N.W. This is a joint meeting with the Washington Chapter of the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. The program, as announced last month, is devoted to the Sampling Program of the Bureau of Internal Revenue, and will include a discussion of both the technical and administrative aspects of the problem of sampling individual and corporation income tax returns.

Notes on the Cleveland Meeting

The recent annual meeting of the American Statistical Association in Cleveland provided a rather full program of interest to the professional statistician. Meetings which drew large audiences included those on experimental design, statistics in wage-price policy, statistics in economic policy formation, sampling in the social sciences, and acceptance sampling. The presidential address and the business meeting were also well attended.

The keynote of the meetings was really statistics as an applied science—a science applicable to the problems of peace as well as those of war, to the problems of government and to those of industry.

In the presidential address on the Advancing Statistical Front, Walter Shewhart stressed the need for expanding the fields of application of statistical principles and techniques, of developing the professional responsibilities of the statistician, and of thinking of statistics as an applied science rather than as a mere "tool". He described specifically how the ASA could, by means of joint committees and meetings and through publications, advance the application of statistical principles in the three broad fields of pure research, background research, and applied research. His challenging blueprint could well become a kind of "five-year plan" for the ASA.

Dr. Yntema, at the luncheon on the Statistical Needs for Economic Policy Formation, pointed out the need for a more careful definition and analysis of current economic problems, for a higher level of objectivity in handling statistics, and suggested a code of ethics for the purpose of outlawing statistics as mere propaganda. His statement to the effect that we need to raise the economic I.Q. of statisticians and the statistical I.Q. of economists and administrators, no doubt will meet with widespread approval.

It is hoped that future meetings of the ASA will continue the example set by the 1946 meeting, but at the same time attempt to work out in the program more of a balance between speakers from the government, academic institutions, business, and industry.

Proposed Reorganization of the American Statistical Association

The Committee on Structure of the American Statistical Association, with Willard Thorp as chairman, made a report at the annual meeting at Cleveland and submitted to the Association a revised constitution and set of by-laws. The major changes have to do with membership and organization. The Association takes on the character of a federation by accepting other societies as associates or affiliates. Associated societies are those directly concerned with statistics; an affiliated society is one whose purpose is not

inconsistent with that of the Association. Four to six geographical district branches are to be established which will coordinate the activities of the chapters in the district. A president, president-elect, and past president will hold office at the same time. The Association will be governed by a council which will consist of the officers of the Association, two from each associated society, one from each affiliated society, one from each section committee, and one from each district, a total of about 30 members. More information on this proposal will be given in the News-Letter next month.

Proposed Washington Social Science Federation

The Washington Statistical Society, as the local chapter of the American Statistical Association, has been invited to appoint a representative to the proposed Washington Social Science Federation. A committee has already drawn up a constitution for the proposed federation, in which it is proposed that the executive council consist of one representative from each of the following organizations: American Anthropological Association, American Economic Association, Association of American Geographers, American Historical Association, American Political Science Association, American Psychological Association, American Sociological Association, and the American Statistical Association. It is recommended that the affiliate to the Federation be the local group or chapter of a national association. It is proposed that the Federation be financed by annual contributions from affiliated social science groups, the amounts to be determined by the Federation's executive council, and to be allocated proportional to the size of the local membership.

The Executive Committee of the Washington Statistical Society has asked A.C. Rosander to confer with the organizing committee in order to obtain more information relative to the specific program contemplated and the nature of the financial obligations involved.

In considering the question of affiliation with these social science organizations, it is the writer's opinion that we should make clear that statistics is a universal science applicable to many diverse problems and fields of study. We are interested in social sciences as a field of application, just as we are interested in the physical sciences and the biological sciences as fields of application for statistical principles and techniques. What this suggests is that the Society not only consider affiliation with the proposed social science federation but that it consider also affiliation with the Washington Academy of Science, a group composed largely of organizations interested in physical sciences and engineering.

Future Programs.

To date 52 returns have been received from members in response to the poll announced in December. This is about 15 percent of our membership. As a result special conferences on sampling, opinion polls, and statistics in management are now being considered. It is hoped to get the first two started before spring.

Topics being considered for meetings in March, April, and May include opinion polls, statistics in local business, questionnaire design, statistics for wage-price policy determinations.

The State of the Society

As of January 17, 1946 the Society has 325 paid members for the year 1946 with the likelihood of a number of additional members before the end of the year. While we have lost some members due to the end of the war, we are obtaining new ones from returning veterans and from others heretofore not members of the Society. Consequently by June 1946 our membership may not be very far from the 425 paid members we had in June 1945.

Members of the Society who have not yet paid their 1946 dues are asked to do so now! 50 cents for one year, \$1 for two years. Remember, no dues, no News-Letter! Send dues to American Statistical Association, 1603 K St., N.W., Washington, D.C. Those who have paid their 1946 dues but are not receiving the News-Letter should call A.C. Rosander, Internal Revenue, extension 2605.

February 1, 1946.