

bility. When the senior members of the community accept such an estimate of their personality even these, otherwise fit, become candidates for the compassion of their juniors.

It may not be amiss to call attention to the findings of a group of specialists working with the Age Center of New England. After a 5-year assessment of 1000 healthy volunteers aged 65 or over, they say "not so" to most derogatory labels that are too often the unthinking daily impressions of their contemporaries. Their considered estimate is that "healthy aged folks are not very different from [their juniors] except for the stress of being denied the privilege of social usefulness." It is, of course, recognized that 1000 out of 17½ million is not a convincing sampling and that New England oldsters are not typical of the entire country. However, it does call attention to the fact that there are those who are not "miserable, unpredictable byproducts of our age."

Is it then, perhaps, fitting to propose conscious care in the oversell of the plight of such victims in the interest of a curb to the faulty (almost fearsome) folklore that is becoming evident in the current emphasis on aging? May we conserve the able as well as salvage the less privileged?

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Statistics Section of AAAS

In the 7 December issue [*Science* **138**, 1801 (1962)] Jerzy Neyman expressed his opinions concerning activities of the new AAAS Section U (Statistics). What follows is not intended to be a criticism of Neyman, whose contributions to science and statistics speak for themselves, or a criticism of any organization. But if trends in other statistical organizations are reflected in the growth of the new Section U, it will become only another outlet for papers on mathematical statistics. Is there any justification for this rather strong statement?

Neyman points out that the Institute of Mathematical Statistics now takes care of the communication problem in statistical theory and that this activity overlaps, a little, the activities of the giant American Statistical Association. How I wish this were true! Statistical theory dominates all statistical

publications with which I am familiar, especially the *Journal of the American Statistical Association*.

The American Statistical Association may be a giant among other statistical organizations, but it is pygmy sized when compared with organizations such as the AAAS. It employs not a single professional statistician. Neyman points to the diversity of subjects presented at a recent ASA meeting. It is true that if one reads programs and other written material, such as the constitution of the ASA, he obtains an impression of diversity of interests. If one attends the sessions and reads the journal, however, he will hear and see little but theory.

Several years ago, I was privileged to organize a session at an ASA annual meeting on "Problems in medical statistics." I violated precedent and asked a congressman, who was also a physician, to tell us about national medical problems to which statisticians could contribute. The congressman's paper was rejected by the two ASA publications. A past president of the ASA who chaired the session was so impressed by the need for recognition of medical statistical problems on the part of the ASA that he wrote a letter urging that a section on medical statistics be established. However, the only new section seriously under consideration at present is one on mathematical statistics.

This is only one of many experiences I have had that support my claim that the ASA is not the diverse organization Neyman would have us believe it is.

The Eastern North American Region of the Biometric Society is much the same as the American Statistical Association. Five years ago [see *Biometrics* **13**, 555 (1957)] this region voted to establish a committee that would improve communication with the medical organizations. No functioning committee has ever been appointed. Yet 3 months ago I sat in the office of the associate editor of one of the largest medical journals extant and listened to his pleas for a series of articles on basic statistics. So if I am skeptical of Neyman's claims concerning activities of statistical organizations, it is because my feelings are based on years of experiences that do not support his statements.

Those who control the activities of the statistical organizations are just as sincere in their views as I am in mine. My point here, however, is that the

AAAS may base its own program on mistaken beliefs if Neyman's statements about statistical organizations are taken at face value.

He says that Section U should be "largely limited to the popularization and decompartmentalization of research." This sounds to me more like the job of a science writer than the function of a section. He also states that Section U might bring statisticians and scientists together for exchange of information. I have already mentioned what the Eastern North American Region of the Biometric Society accomplished in this regard! The American Statistical Association has a similar record.

Is there anything positive which might be said about the functions of Section U? By all means, yes! It should perform a statistical-service function for the AAAS. I do not know enough about the statistical problems faced by the AAAS and its members to describe these services in detail. If someone were to appoint me "chief of Section U," however, I would first go around asking AAAS officials what they thought their statistical problems were. Then I would attend many AAAS sessions, listening to the programs through "statistical ears." From the resulting information, a program for Section U would be designed. I have practiced this statistical-service philosophy in my own field, medical statistics, for years. I would not want to do otherwise.

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Science Fairs

Perhaps some comments by a former entrant may be relevant to your editorial on science fairs [*Science* **140**, 1055 (7 June 1963)]. Although the science fair movement in Canada and particularly in Alberta is quite new, it has all the faults you mention.

A distinction may be made between a creative science project and a display. The latter is often a collection or illustration of some process or law that is made solely for a fair and is all too often abandoned afterwards. The creative project—very rare in a city-wide fair—is well described in the editorial: "... to formulate a problem, design his approach, make the necessary observations, and then attempt