

SPECIAL COURSES IN STATISTICAL QUALITY CONTROL

The application of statistics to quality control is now being furthered in a program in which the War Production Board and the U. S. Office of Education are cooperating to assist statisticians in various industrial areas to provide suitable courses of instruction sponsored by their own institutions.

The general plan of the program has been influenced by two conclusions drawn from the experience gained in ESMWT courses carried on by Stanford University during 1942-43.¹ These conclusions were: (1) that a short full-time course in statistical quality control tends to be peculiarly effective; and (2) that it is vital to have the initial courses followed by meetings in which the course members gather to report on applications they have made and to receive encouragement and any needed assistance.

The giving of short full-time courses presents a problem of assembling a suitable staff, since four instructors will ordinarily be needed. If this problem were solved by arranging for a single staff to tour all the principal industrial regions giving courses in quality control, the local leadership necessary for establishing widespread use of statistical methods of quality control in industry would not be developed. The program adopted seems to offer an effective solution of these problems.

Under the program now in effect, the War Production Board, through its Office of Production Research and Development supplies an experienced person to assist with the arrangement of courses and to participate in the instruction.² Two of the instructors in each course will ordinarily be provided by a local educational institution, which will also promote the course and make necessary local arrangements through its institutional representative of the Engineering Science and Management War Training program. It is not considered necessary that the instructors provided by the institution have previous experience with statistical quality control provided they are sufficiently competent in the theory of sampling, but it is desirable that at least one of them have practical experience with quality control. It may often happen that one of the instructors can be a quality control man from a local industrial establishment. The representative of the WPB will assist with arrangements for bringing in one (or, where needed, two) additional outside instructors.

The sponsoring institution costs for the courses, which do not include the salary and expenses of the representative of the WPB, may be provided through the ESMWT program. The follow-up work with men who have taken the initial courses may be arranged also as part of the ESMWT program of the

¹ A description of these courses offered by Stanford University appeared in the *Annals of Mathematical Statistics*, March 1943, p. 96.

² At present Professor Holbrook Working is serving in this capacity.

educational institution sponsoring the original course. The follow-up work should be handled by a local instructor who participated in the original course.

The two basic courses and the one follow-up course that have already been given by Stanford University were conducted under essentially the plan outlined above, except that they did not have the benefit of assistance from the WPB. Three courses have thus far (May 25) been arranged under the new plan: one sponsored by Rhode Island State College, to be held during May 27 to June 2 at Newport, and two sponsored by Stanford University, to be held respectively in Los Angeles, June 13 to 20, and in San Francisco, June 22 to 29. Preliminary steps have been taken toward the arrangement of several additional courses.