

# EPILOGUE OF THE HEALTH- POLLUTION CONFERENCE

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1. *General remarks.* The papers published in this volume represent the result of the effort to compile a realistic cross section of the contemporary statistical thinking on the problems of pollution and health. The first seven papers stem from public institutions and, with unavoidable differences as to the amount of detail, reflect these institutions' interests. The next seven papers illustrate the sharp dispute about health effects of radioactive pollutants. The subjects of the remaining papers are varied, each representing a different "case history" connected with the problem of pollution. Thus far the problem of health and pollution has not attracted the attention of many mathematical statisticians and this volume contains just one paper, by Richard E. Barlow, that contains a theorem.

Four papers of the first group, one by Totter and the other three by Finklea, by Riggan, and by Nelson, with collaborators, describe in detail the very impressive programs of activities of the Biology-Medicine Division of the Atomic Energy Commission and of the Division of Health Research, Environmental Protection Agency. To a considerable extent, this includes not only the work of the two important agencies of the Federal Government, but also that conducted by the various contractors. As a result, these four articles do give a firsthand account of a large section of the contemporary statistical work on pollution. The paper by Sirken illustrates the commendable concern with the reliability of data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics.

While this coverage of institutional research is gratifyingly broad, it is regretted that the information in this volume on the impressive amount of work (with 468 papers published up to June 1969!) performed under the aegis of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council is only secondhand, being fragmentarily reported by several speakers. In particular this applies to the NAS-NRC biology-health studies of the atomic bomb casualties in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Even though the announced ultimate goal of the conference was to discuss and to plan a comprehensive statistical study of the relationship between human health and the various pollutants, and even though four skeletal plans have been submitted and published above, other material in the volume shows little enthusiasm for the project. In fact, Gofman and Tamplin are explicit in opposing

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