

27th February, 1952.

My dear Kermack,

I was approached nearly eight years ago now by the A.R.C. on the project to establish in various appropriate centres, departments capable both of teaching and of advisory work in statistics. Naturally, I am very strongly in favour of such a move, though it certainly is full of great difficulties.

I think one must regard the problem as analagous to that of the technological studies engaged in, let us say, by M.I.T., linking advanced physical investigations with entirely practical engineering problems. The experience of such places seems to be impressive and unanimous in favour of the view that it is essential for adequate or competent teaching that the teachers should have constant experience of the technological problems arising in industry and that this experience should refer to current problems and not to older problems which have ceased to be of interest.

A department of Mathematical Statistics ^{with} which any imagination beyond the realm of the classical theory of probability (and statistical teaching is certainly undertaken by a good many University departments knowing no more than this), would certainly do more harm than good. Studies under such names as the design of experiments, decision functions, acceptance tests, quality control, sequential analysis, sample survey

are now an integral part of the study of Mathematical Statistics and have obviously spilt over into commerce and industry on a large scale.

With all this in view I have no hesitation in advising that such a centre as you have under discussion should plan to integrate teaching closely with project work in which practical experience can be gained by those who are capable of learning from it in contradistinction to the ruinous ^{process} progress of segregating the keener minds into a completely sterile atmosphere.

Needless to say, I have much difficulty in combating the latter tendency at Cambridge.

Sincerely yours,