

COMMONWEALTH SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH ORGANISATION  
DIVISION OF MATHEMATICAL STATISTICS  
University of Adelaide  
Adelaide, S.Aus.

Prof. P. C. Mahalanobis,  
Indian Statistical Institute,  
204, Barrackpore Trunk Road,  
CALCUTTA 35, India.

Dear Prasanta,

Thanks for the last lot of data which brings the Calcutta series back to 1900. I am afraid I have not much hope of the Indian data filling in the story from the Southern Hemisphere.

Sincerely yours,

R. A. Fisher

do, base irreversible decisions upon what we learn from a test of significance, this contingent and accidental fact has nothing to do with the logical status of the test itself. Equally in the course of purely scientific work there are accessory technological jobs such as the selection of a set of pipettes suitable for a particular purpose.

So individual workers and indeed institutions cannot easily be labelled as wholly scientific or wholly technological, and although I lay all my emphasis on freeing processes recognized to be scientific in aim, which are carried out with the purpose of learning from the experience gained from the implications of the acceptance procedure, it may well be that such mechanical acceptances are not really central even to purely technological work, by which I mean work aimed not particularly at learning, but at achieving a particular purpose.

Anyway, I am not anxious to enter into the special criticisms to which the theory of decision functions is exposed in its own field, but I am anxious to expose the nonsense of Wald's claims that it covers or even touches the field of experimental design. It is clear, of course, that Wald in complete ignorance of scientific work was misled by Neyman, whose self-confidence is in inverse proportion to his actual experience in these fields.

You may have heard that I have prepared a small book on statistical methods and scientific inference. I do not know how much longer my publishers will be in getting it out, but in a cautious sort of way they seem to be moving.

Sincerely yours,