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EDITOR'S CORNER

With this issue, the *Annals of Economic and Social Measurement* begins its second year. The list of articles published in 1972 gives an indication of the wide variety of topics treated in this journal. However, all are related to computer applications, data analysis, and research methodology. This emphasis on quantitative analysis is part of the research tradition of the National Bureau of Economic Research. And the *Annals* represents a new forum for stimulating developmental efforts and disseminating the results of quantitative research—particularly those generated in the NBER's research program or through the Conference on the Computer in Economic and Social Research. For example, papers presented at a September 1972 Conference on the Current Population Survey will appear in the next issue of the *Annals*. In a new section, *Conference Notes*, Joel Popkin describes another conference, the Conference on Prices and Consumer Expenditure Data, to be held in May, 1973.

The lead article in this issue is by Julius Shiskin; he explores a topic which has been part of the focus of NBER activities since its inception in 1920: the measurement of economic fluctuations. A new "noise" to "signals" ratio is calculated and a measure of Months for Signal Dominance is derived. For most of the indicators of business activity, one or more months must be added to the comparison span suggested by the commonly-used Months for Cyclical Dominance index.

The next three articles apply econometric techniques to particular problems. Gregory Chow and Ray Fair examine the maximum likelihood estimation of linear equation systems when the residuals follow an autoregressive scheme. They use an eight equation quarterly model of the U.S. economy to illustrate the techniques developed in the article. Mark Eisner and Robert Pindyck describe a generalized approach to estimation as implemented in the TROLL/1 system, which is used by the NBER Computer Research Center for Economics and Management Science. Their paper presents the background of the methods and algorithms used in the system; TROLL/1 provides the capacity to combine most state-of-the-art procedures into one consistent framework. They show how and what procedures to combine in order to assure consistency and efficiency of estimates. The calculation of standard statistics is discussed in the context of combined techniques. Thus, the paper also serves as a review of estimation techniques.

The paper by Malcolm Cohen, Robert Gillingham, and Dale Heien assesses the effectiveness of estimation techniques for determining lag structures. With the use of Monte Carlo techniques, they conclude that some standard statistics are of only marginal help in determining the correct shape of the lag structure (for the power estimator approximation of the polynomial).

The notes in the *Research Methodology* section address some fairly specific problems. Gail Cook and David Stager comment on an article by Stephen Dresch and Robert Goldberg which appeared in the first issue of the *Annals*. In the com-

ment, they examine the implications of non-participants in the labor force for the design of income contingent loans. Dresch responds by noting that break-even points for variable term loans will be highly sensitive to the income base. Paul Taubman's note addresses a very special problem of survey questionnaire development and analysis. He observes that differences in coding rules and in coders can lead to relatively large differences in the processed data; precoding occupations eliminates some of these problems.

Finally, in the *Programming Software Notes* Alan Frieden describes his program for the estimation of dynamic economic relationships from a time series of cross sections. We hope that such announcements help eliminate some duplication of effort in this area.

SVB

FORTHCOMING

Annals of Economic and Social Measurement, Volume 2, Number 2, April 1972;
Special Issue on the Current Population Survey

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| Sanford V. Berg | "The CPS Viewed from the Outside" |
| Marvin M. Thompson and
Gary Shapiro | "The Current Population Survey:
An Overview" |
| James D. Smith | "New Perspectives in Government
Data Distribution: The CPS" |
| Richard D. Porter | "On the Use of Survey Sample
Weights in the Linear Model" |
| Frederick Scheuren | "Ransacking CPS Tabulations:
Applications of the Log Linear
Model to Poverty Statistics" |
| <i>Research Methodology Notes</i> | |
| John F. Moeller | "Development of a Microsimulation
Model for Evaluating Implications
of Economic Income Transfer and
Tax Policies" |
| <i>Data Banks and Files</i> | |
| Jodie Allen | "A Guide to the 1960-1971 Current
Population Survey Files" |
| Nelson McClung | "Editing Census Microdata Files for
Income and Wealth" |
| Terence Kelly | "The Creation of Longitudinal Data
from Cross-Section Surveys:
An Illustration from the Current
Population Survey" |
| Richard Taeuber | "Problems of Access: Some
Comments" |