BOOK REVIEW

Publishers are invited to send in their recent mathematical publications for reviewing. Reviews of books of mathematical interest are solicited from readers. Books or reviews should be sent to Mr. Lim Chee Lin, Hwa Chong Junior College, 661 Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 10.

Practical Statistics and Probability by Robert Loveday. Cambridge University Press, London, 1974, xiii + 205 pp. + 6 tables, £1.00.

Being an elementary text, the book is a good source of reference for such basic definitions as those in sample designs (cluster, systematic sampling, etc.) and measures of location and dispersion, and it introduces well the topics of correlation, time-series analysis and data presentation and collection. The nature and use of Normal probability papers are also mentioned.

There are sufficient problems, mostly taken from the various examination boards, for the reader's practice. (Besides the exercises after the various sections, there is an 81-problem miscellaneous exercise). The opening chapter on frequency distribution is well written, and the closing chapter on significance levels quite detailed. However, in the chapter on Normal distribution, where the author introduces the Normal distribution as an approximation to the Binomial distribution, the book tends to be misleading in that the reader may suppose the former to be a consequence of the latter, and not an entity in its own right.

To make it an introductory text, the author has throughout the book minimised the use of mathematics, replacing it with heuristic arguments. This is especially evident in the chapter on significance tests. He has also brought whatever mathematics there is to a lower level for the sake of those not well prepared in pure mathematics. Because the book is not sufficiently mathematically oriented and because it has omitted such topics as the Poisson distribution, t-distribution and the concept of a random variable, it is not suitable for 'A' level statistics syllabus.

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