

SUB GROUPS

HEALTH

To our surprise, our first 735 copies of 'Whose Priorities?' sold out very quickly and we had to have another run printed. This time 750 emerged ; the reason for these unusual numbers was that Phil, our printer delegated the job of counting the piles of paper to statisticians, with bizarre results. We have now sold most of the second run, 100 of them to the National Union of Public Employees, and have a modest surplus to carry us into further productions.

At our meeting on January 15, at which we were delighted to meet some new members, we decided on two main projects for the next few months. The first was already under way, in that several people had already compiled some comments on 'Sharing Resources', the report of the Resources Allocation Working Party (RAWP). This document excels itself in statistical mystification. Its star exhibit is a statistical formula covering half a page and which obviously mystified the authors themselves as it contains a gross and obvious error. David Jones volunteered to collect comments on RAWP and to organize a meeting to decide what to do with them. This meeting, on February 22 will most likely be a thing of the past by the time this newsletter reaches you, so for details of the next one please contact David Jones, 18 Gloucester Gardens, Sutton, Surrey. Tel 01 644 0515 (home). 01 643 8901 (work). ext 291.

The other project arose out an invitation, which came via the 'New Scientist', to give a left wing view of the health scene at the British Association's meeting in September. This would be juxtaposed with the right wing views of Professor Denis Lees of Nottingham University. We were unhappy with the proposed arrangements so may turn down the invitation, but decided to do a pamphlet attacking Professor Lees known views advocating a return to a 'fee for service' system in the National Health Service anyway as this is an important issue. The British Medical Association and other parts of the medical establishment are yelling loudly for it in their evidence to the Royal Commission on the National Health Service. We split the contents into four main areas and allocated coordinators to three of them: Evidence for the ineffectiveness of much medical treatment (Iain Chalmers, 20 St Angela Road, Cardiff). Control and organization of the present medical system (Tom Heller, 8 Winter Road, Norwich). Distortion caused by 'fee for service' systems (Andy Haines, 57B Leghorn Road, London N10). Alternatives.

The next meeting about 'fees for service' will be on Sunday March 13 11am to 5pm at 57B Leghorn Road, London N10. Please let Andy Haines or me know if you are coming.

Apologies to anyone new to Radical Statistics who would have liked to come to our last meeting, but only read about it after the event. To try to avoid this happening again, please write to me, with your address (NB home addresses are usually shorter than work ones and thus quicker to write on envelopes!) and telephone number, if any, and ask to be put on the health group list.

Alison Macfarlane
40 Warwick Road
St Albans
Herts

EDUCATION

"There is not very much to report from the Education Group at the moment"