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An Error Profile is a systematic and comprehensive review of survey operations which calls for the measurement of the differences between what is done and what is ideal. (A paraphrase of TD)

From the examples at hand (BB and LM) we are not sure this work can be done. The evidence is not strong that a systematic or comprehensive effort is needed.

It is most doubtful that all the sizes of sources of error can be measured (TD) but maybe an expert could locate the major sources of error; presumably that is what BB and LM attempted. Notice there are several ways of measuring sizes of error sources: (1) For a particular data set compare with benchmarks (LM); (2) By studying the process and estimating the mean, variance, etc., associated with source of error.

The consumer of statistics cannot be interested in the error profile -- his concern is with expected losses from potential decisions. Total error will often be a useful measure for that purpose. The statistician likes the pro-

file because it indicates good places for him to increase effort. The public, including scholars, want the profiles so that they can understand the work of the data producers.

My casual reading of the papers has not given me a good idea of the nature of the camel, although TD assures us the gnat is sampling error. I conjecture the camel is the lack of coordination between the producer and consumer of statistics. Methodology and resources are lacking to:

(1) Measure the utility of imperfect data in policy making or administrative action.

(2) Communicate data needs to data producers.

Although it is not always possible to study all aspects of a problem and the detailed technical work must be done, practical statistical programs should be directed at real problems. Before substantial expenditures are made we should attempt to make sure we will be analyzing the camel rather than another gnat.