Book reviews

Elements of Accident Investigation. By T. S. Ferry. (Pp. 75; \$6.00). C. C. Thomas: Springfield, Illinois. 1978.

This is an informative introduction to methods of investigation of accidents now in use in North America. The number of alternatives may well surprise a British reader. There is a variant of the familiar 3 Es: they now read Education, Engineering and Environment, from which might be derived the 4 Ms (Man, Machine, Media and Management). A more systematic investigative approach is that of the National Safety Council's Accident Prevention Manual. Other systems approaches include Johnson's Risk Tree, the Bell Fault Tree Analysis and multilinear sequencing which has been developed by Benner.

The intention of the present book is to introduce these methods to an untrained person who might be required to investigate and report on an accident. It is, therefore, appropriately written in a popular rather than a scientific style and, inevitably, the treatment is sometimes incomplete. The book will be of interest to doctors in industry to indicate the different types of accident investigation which might be used and which may help in prevention of injury.

J. P. BULL

The Handicapped and their Employment. By Georges Y. Rouault. (Pp. 214; £4.20). Statistical Office of the European Communities: Luxembourg.

This is a paperback book of 214 pages in typescript form.

Mr Rouault was commissioned by the Statistical Office of the European Communities in 1976 to carry out a study of the statistics of the handicapped and their employment in the member states of the European Communities. In order to collect as much information as possible on handicapped persons in all categories

(physical, sensory and mental handicap), Mr Rouault visited each community country and made contact with the ministries and various public, semi-public and private services and organisations involved in the particular aspects of education, training and placing of physically or mentally handicapped persons, with a view to their social and economic integration. The sources of information are not always the same in each country; the administrative system and the departments responsible differ. They nevertheless have the same aim and classifications could be found to cover them all. This procedure was adopted to make it possible to compare the statistics from each community country.

In each case, the first part of the report provides a summary of the legislation applicable. This was taken from documents published by the Council of Europe on legislation covering the rehabilitation and employment of handicapped persons, and completed during the visits with any additional texts which had been implemented more recently. Reference should be made in this connection to the three volumes entitled *Comparative Study on the Rehabilitation of Handicapped Persons in the Countries of the Community*, published by the Directorate General for Social Affairs, which provide yet more detailed information on administrative and legal aspects.

The population age groups have been standardised, the main categories being 5-14 years (approximately school years) and 15-64 years (the working years: classified under accidents, other disabilities, training and rehabilitation centres, workshops etc.). The statistical data of the report are based on the actual number of handicapped persons found in each section. For the few cases where no exact figures were available, particularly in road and industrial accidents, the information has been completed with estimates based on the other countries. This does not appear to distort the final

results and percentages to any great extent.

Reference to general information on pensions and degrees of incapacity has, on the whole, been avoided because of the difficulty of establishing a direct connection between invalidity attributable to various causes, and its possible result, the handicap, which poses problems of social and economic integration or re-integration, whose solution depends on a set of complex factors peculiar to each individual.

As one would expect with this type of book, it is not easily readable because it does no more than set out a series of statistics. Nevertheless it is a worthwhile study which provides much information on the subject, and which will be of interest to anyone who wants to see how the problem is tackled in the different countries of the European Community, and also how figures compare for different disability groups.

A. ZINOVIEFF

Alcoholism and its Treatment in Industry. Edited by Carl J. Schramm. (Pp. 191; £8.50). The John Hopkins University Press: Baltimore and London. 1978.

There is a mass of detail in this relatively small book. It emphasises all too clearly how far ahead of us in Britain America has progressed in the setting up of programmes to provide assistance to the problem drinker. It is chastening to read, however (though the treatment programmes there have been proliferating for over 30 years) that, despite this, there is still little scientific knowledge available to guide policy makers charged with setting up and administering industrial treatment programmes.

The subject of abuse of alcohol in industry is slowly beginning to gain recognition in this country and recently the Minister responsible for Social Services stated that the six million working

days lost through strikes and stoppages in 1975 was relatively small compared with the days lost through alcohol abuse: a measure of the attention it should attract.

Through covering several different approaches, the book underlines some basic principles which I think would be accepted in this country as cornerstones of an official alcohol abuse programme for any firm or organisation. These basic principles are:

- 1) an overt written policy which states the procedures for identifying, confronting and referring employees who may have a drinking problem;
- 2) the policy should be applied evenly throughout the work force without regard to occupational status or position;
- 3) supervisory and management personnel should be trained as to their responsibilities in implementing the policy;
- 4) the importance of the co-operation and consent of the trades unions involved.

In the majority of the programmes described, the supervisor who observes primarily declining work performance (including absenteeism) confronts the employee with the facts and tells him that help will be made available if he wishes; if so, he refers the patient, whose trouble incidentally may not be in any way caused by alcohol, to a counselling service where the nature of his or her problem is determined, be it medical or social or both. This so-called 'broad brush' approach to the problem avoids the stigma of exclusive application to alcohol problems.

It is important that confidentiality should be stressed, as is also the fact that the patient's job and promotion are not at risk if he avails himself of the assistance offered: on the other hand, failure to take advantage of this opportunity and/or failure to improve work performance thereby, may make him subject to discipline or discharge. As is pointed out, management and labour, not unnaturally, tend to regard the objectives of these policies from a slightly different angle. Involvement of, and help from, Alcoholics Anonymous seems to be of vital importance in most of the programmes.

This is a valuable and timely book. Some of the material is inappropriate for this country but, bearing in mind the medico-social treatments and facilities

available in our National Health Service, it will still provide invaluable reading for anyone who is seriously concerned with, or involved in, setting up company alcoholism programmes. This would include doctors, nurses, supervisors, managers, representatives of Alcoholics Anonymous, voluntary workers and trade union officials. One would think the question of confidentiality obtrudes and could not easily be assured.

The need for policies to deal with alcohol abuse in industry in this country is irrefutable.

DICK CALDWELL

Notices

International Conference on Industrial and Environmental Xenobiotics: Bio-transformation and Kinetics

This Conference, organised jointly by the Permanent Commission and International Association on Occupational Health, the J. E. Purkyně Czechoslovak Medical Society and the Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology, will be held at Charles University, Prague, Czechoslovakia, 27-31 May 1980. Topics to be discussed will include rate-determining factors in xenobiotic metabolism, disposition and elimination; the interactions of these factors; and the role of metabolic activation in tissue toxicity, together with its effects on exposure tests. Contributions (papers and posters) on any of these topics are invited, and abstracts should reach the Conference Secretariat not later than 30 November 1979. Further information may be obtained from the Conference Secretary, Ivan Gut, MD, Czechoslovak Medical Society, Vítězného února 31, 120 26 Praha 2, Czechoslovakia.

Second International Congress on Toxicology: Mechanisms of Toxicity and Hazard Evaluation

This Congress, which will be held in the Brussels Congress Centre (Palais des Congrès), 3 Coudenberg, B-1000 Brussels, from 7 to 11 July 1980, will include six Symposia on the following topics: Recent Developments in Mechanisms of Neurotoxicity; Short-term Tests for Predicting

Long-term Effects; Early Changes in Chemical Carcinogenesis; Long-term Exposure to Occupational Intoxicants Clinical Toxicology; and Legislative Scientific and Socioeconomic Considerations Underlying Toxicological Testing of New Chemicals. In addition to these proposed themes, free communication and poster sessions will be selected by a Committee. Registration fees before April 1980 are BF 3750 for participant and BF 1950 for accompanying persons. The fees after that date will be BF 4500 and BF 2550, respectively. Further information can be obtained from the Congress Secretariat, SdR Associated 16 Avenue des Abeilles, B-1050 Brussels Belgium. Telephone (02) 647.87.80.

BOHS Fifth International Symposium on Inhaled Particles 1980

This Symposium, which is being organised in association with the Commission of the European Communities, will be held in the City Hall, Cardiff, Wales, 8-11 September 1980. It continues the series of symposia held at five-yearly intervals, the first in Oxford in 1960 and since then in Cambridge, London and Edinburgh. The aim will again be to provide a forum for the presentation and discussion of the results of recent research concerning the entry of particles into the body via the respiratory system, their disposal, and the ensuing biological reactions. Emphasis will be on basic mechanisms and quantitative dose/response relationships. Further information can be obtained from Mr D. A. Phillips, Joint Organising Secretary, MRC Pneumoconiosis Unit Llandough Hospital, Penarth, Glamorgan CF6 1XW, United Kingdom.