

this enables the surgeon to 'protect . . . the underlying major vessels' (which should not be encountered), nor how deliberate pressure on the abdominal veins during the operation 'in order to render the epidural veins more visible . . . makes it easier to avoid injuring (the latter)'. Dr. Semmes is curiously conservative about bilateral exposure, even when the leg pain itself is bilateral. He rightly stresses an adequate removal of disc tissue and a routine exploration of two disc spaces. Dr. Semmes is opposed—probably rightly—to the routine use of spinal fusion in the management of disc lesions, but his discussion of this point is too brief and dogmatic to be very helpful.

In describing his results, Dr. Semmes has analysed the results of a questionnaire circulated to 3,000 patients, taking (apparently arbitrarily) the first 1,500 answers received. Although the great majority of patients felt benefited by their operation, only 48% were completely relieved of backache and 53% of sciatica. Just over 6% of the patients required a second operation. Although it is said that 72% of the patients are back in their original employment and that 12% are doing heavy work, we are not told how many had been doing heavy work before operation, nor is there any way of deducing this from the figures given.

This book will be read with interest by those who are engaged in the management of the lumbago-sciatica syndrome as the point of view of a sensible and experienced clinician. Unfortunately for the surgeon-in-training, there is no adequate survey of the views and methods of others.

A. N. GUTHKELCH

Occupational Disability and Public Policy. Edited by Earl F. Cheit and Margaret S. Gordon. (Pp. 437; 90s.) London and New York: John Wiley. 1963.

This book, one of a series from the Research Programme of the Institute of Industrial Relations, University of California, has as its hopeful purpose the reduction of the gap between Workmen's Compensation critics and the mood of the state legislature in the United States of America.

The work consists of essays by 14 authors, including the two editors, dealing with major policy issues relating to the industrially disabled. Although the work is intended mainly for readers in the United States of America, the student of the social and economic consequences of industrially induced disablement in any country will find much to interest him. The two chapters in Part 2 dealing with foreign experience both before and after the second world war are to be commended to readers in this country. It is a sad fact that, although the National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act has been in operation here for more than 15 years, the general public, including the medical profession, is still largely ignorant of its detailed provisions. The more people in this country, both medical and lay, who are informed of the basic facts of past and present provisions for the industrially disabled in this and other countries, the better the outlook for future developments will be.

J. WATKINS-PITCHFORD

The Handicapped School-Leaver. Report of a Working Party Commissioned by the British Council for the Rehabilitation of the Disabled. (Pp. 172; 15s.) London: The British Council for Rehabilitation of the Disabled. 1964.

These two reports, one for England and Wales and one for Scotland, were commissioned to investigate the needs of physically and mentally handicapped school-leavers, to study means of meeting their needs, and to make recommendations. They are to be welcomed for drawing attention to these problems, which concern at least 3.6% of school-leavers, and no doubt it would be expecting too much of a slim paperback volume to look for complete answers.

Attention is called to the needs of many handicapped youths for further education, vocational guidance, and training if they are to be settled into productive and satisfying roles in adult life. At present there are many gaps in the services available to them in the difficult years after school leaving. The reports are a timely reminder to all concerned, school doctors, youth employment officers, industrial medical officers, and welfare workers in particular, of the danger that the work of the well developed system of special education for handicapped children should be undone for lack of adequate follow-up services for school-leavers.

JOYCE LEESON

Safe Handling of Radioactive Materials. Handbook No. 92. Recommendations of the National Committee on Radiation Protection. (Pp. ix + 107; 40 cents.) Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards. 1964.

In this handbook, which supersedes Handbook 42 issued in 1949, an attempt is made to include the main considerations of safety in the handling of radioactive materials gained from experience in research and the atomic energy industry.

The present handbook has been produced with reference to the adequate protection of the user in research and industry generally, where the quantities of radioactive material and the complexities of operation are not as great as in the atomic energy industry.

The handbook will be especially useful to all those concerned with the safe use of radioactive materials as a supplement to any local regulations. This well sectionized set of recommendations includes 87 entitled references.

G. E. HARRISON

Radioactivity. Handbook No. 86. Recommendations of the International Commission on Radiological Units and Measurements. (Pp. viii + 53; 40 cents.) Washington, D.C.: United States Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards. 1963.

One of the important objects of the International Commission on Radiological Units and Measurements is to collect and evaluate the latest data and to make recommendations on the measurements of radioactivity and dosimetry. The present handbook is one of a new series, each of which is intended to cover development in a special field.



Occupational Disability and Public Policy

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