Book Reviews

Medical Surveys and Clinical Trials: Some Methods and Applications of Group Research in Medicine, 2nd ed. Edited by L. J. Witts. (Pp. 367; illustrated; 42s.) London: Oxford University Press. 1964.

It is pleasing to welcome a new edition of this book which deals with clinical studies of groups as opposed to individuals. The book is a compendium of essays on methods and applications by 18 well-known English workers. A unifying thread is found in the contention that the individual cannot be fully understood except by knowledge of the groups to which he belongs. Subjects include diagnosis, prevalence, aetiology, follow-up, prophylactic and therapeutic trials, operational research, genetics, cancer, nutrition, child development, mental disorders, diseases of the chest (including occupational) and cardiovascular system, and tropical disorders.

Since the first edition was published this type of work has proceeded at an ever increasing rate, and this edition has some alterations and additions, but what criticism there is, is that the editing is not always sufficient. In the first edition, in Chapter 12, we read the promise that 'there is every prospect that during the next few years several popular ideas based on incomplete or unsatisfactory data will have to be revised'. Now, five years later, the same promise appears, and the particular chapter has only one new reference in its list although a lot of work on the subject has been published elsewhere. One feels also that the approach to operational research in medical care will need to be more sociologically orientated than that suggested for studying hospital needs. However, these are examples of small defects in a book that is both interesting and informative on many topics. The bibliographies alone are a valuable addition to a library.

We are at present on the brink of developments in data handling techniques by computers which may well change our way of thinking. Although this book does not deal with computers, it deals expertly for the general reader with many of the concepts on which we base our studies of medical data in the mass.

A. M. ADELSTEIN

Medical Microbiology, 11th ed. Edited by R. Cruickshank. (Pp. 1067; illustrated; 55s.) Edinburgh: Livingstone. 1965.

Ever since the first edition appeared in 1925 Mackie and McCartney's *Handbook of Bacteriology* has been an indispensable part of the equipment of every laboratory devoted to medical or veterinary bacteriology. Essentially a practical manual, it was a favourite with the laboratory

staff of all grades, but had less appeal to anyone not directly concerned with practical bacteriology. There are to be no more editions of Mackie and McCartney; instead Professor Cruickshank and his colleagues in the Department of Bacteriology in the University of Edinburgh have replaced it with a much larger book intended for a wider circle of readers. A thorough revision of the text begun in the tenth edition of Mackie and McCartney has been completed, and a great deal of new matter has been added. It now runs to over 1,000 pages and seeks, according to the editor, to cater for the needs of 'all those concerned with the laboratory diagnosis and control of infection in man' including medical students and their teachers, general practitioners and house officers as well as 'bacteriologists' and 'laboratory technicians'. In the opinion of the reviewer, it is difficult to see how any volume can cater for needs so diverse while remaining one coherent whole and not becoming in effect several distinct books bound between a single pair of covers. Professor Cruickshank and his colleagues have come as near to success as could be expected. However, the mass of technical detail will tend to deter the ordinary medical student and the practitioner not concerned directly with work in the laboratory (six modifications of the Gram stain are included!); any but senior technicians may easily get lost in so large a book. Nevertheless, like its progenitors, the new work should find an important place in every medical or veterinary bacteriology department; not only in the laboratory but in the library as well. It is to be hoped that the publishers will consider issuing future editions in two volumes: Parts I to IV in the first volume and Part V in the second.

T. S. L. BESWICK

Fringe Benefits, Labour Costs and Social Security. By G. L. Reid and D. J. Robertson. (Pp. 336; 48s.) London: Allen and Unwin. 1965.

'Fringe benefit' is an expression of recent origin and, like the word *Paris*, means different things to different people. Was a truck shop in an isolated eighteenth century mining community a fringe benefit? Certainly the expense account and company car for the executive, and the canteen and the luncheon voucher for the workers, would be included in the term. What about holidays with pay, and the employer's contribution to National Insurance and what about medical services?

The book opens with a chapter examining the scope and meaning of fringe benefits. From the definition evolved no distinction is made between statutory services and services provided voluntarily by the employer. There follows an account of a survey of fringe benefits to

manual workers conducted by postal questionnaire, the data collected being grouped:

- Holiday pay
- Pension plan
- National Insurance
- Education
- Other payments:
 - (i) Sick pay
 - (ii) Long service payments
 - (iii) Redundancy payments
 - (iv) *Ex gratia* pensions
 - (v) Insurance schemes
 - (vi) Medical services
 - (vii) Seasonal bonus
- Other welfare benefits:
 - (i) Housing
 - (ii) Travel
 - (iii) Clothing
 - (iv) Canteen facilities
 - (v) Sports or social facilities
 - (vi) Discounts on products
 - (vii) Profit sharing
 - (viii) Other expenditure

The firms approached were all public companies in the U.K. and 350 (only 10%) returned usable questionnaires. The limitation of any quantitative deductions from the results are as obvious to the authors as to the reader.

However, the greater part of the book contains a series of essays on different aspects of the subject and it is here and in the discussion that the industrial medical officer will find much food for thought. Recent advances in sophisticated techniques of cost accounting, together with a dispassionate assessment of employer services in the light of changing social circumstances lead to re-appraisal. The industrial medical officer who is tempted to quote 'The good we do can't be measured in cash terms', should read the chapter entitled *Company Welfare Benefits* dealing largely with canteens and sports and social clubs.

If the industrial medical officer is prepared to accept the authors' premises he will find industrial medicine looked at from a refreshingly new angle and free from some customary rationalizations.

W. R. LEE

Design of Circular Dials. By J. G. Allen (Pp. 15; 1 fig.; duplicated; no charge.) Australia: Ergonomics Group, Division of Occupational Health, New South Wales Department of Public Health, 86-88 George Street North, Sydney, Australia.

For centuries the dial has been an all-important connecting link in the chain of communication between an external event and the human mind. The sun-dial, with its unwieldy Roman numerals, is one of the earliest and most leisurely examples of this; and the jet aircraft altimeter, the inaccurate setting or reading of which carries the death penalty, is one of the latest. Dial design is linked to the important subject of accident prevention, and the present interest in automation serves still further to bring the subject to mind.

This report on the design of circular dials which comes,

rather intriguingly, from a department of public health, is therefore timely and welcome. Such subjects as required accuracy of reading, scale length, viewing distance, and design of numerals are mentioned. There is also a check list of 48 items against which any existing dial presentation can be assessed. A list of references is given on the concluding page.

Two suggestions can perhaps be made for improving the presentation of this pamphlet. It is duplicated, and on some of the pages the ink has not run evenly over the stencil, thus giving a patchy impression. It would have been better printed or reproduced by a plate Xerox technique. But perhaps the budget was the limiting factor here. A nought should always be inserted when using decimals if there is no unit value before the point. If this safeguard is not adopted and a typist omits the decimal point, an error of 10^n can be made—and n may have a disastrously high value.

R. C. BROWNE

Progress in the Biological Sciences in Relation to Dermatology: 2. A symposium edited by A. Rook and R. H. Champion. (Pp. 499; illustrated; 130s.) London: Cambridge University Press. 1964.

The so-called 'Consultants' course' in Cambridge has become established as part of academic dermatological life in Britain, and the second of the scientific symposia was as successful as the first. This is no heavy textbook but a record of live lectures given on a variety of topics of interest to dermatologists. 'The Functions of Connective Tissue' is a typical main heading with Dr. L. E. Glynn dealing with 'Connective Tissue as an Antigen'. Under the heading 'Ageing of Skin', Professor Tunbridge's paper produced a lively discussion which is faithfully recorded. Other sessions produce chapters on a wide variety of subjects, for instance 'Keratinization', 'Percutaneous Absorption', 'Hair', 'Cutaneous Circulation', and 'Bulla Formation'; in this way a collection of essays is provided which gives up-to-date scientific knowledge on dermatology which no specialist in the subject can afford to ignore.

The Cambridge team of dermatologists is making substantial contributions to dermatological biology. Moreover, they know how to assemble a group of speakers able to provide a most stimulating course for those interested in the skin. Each speaker, an expert in his field, has provided a modern bibliography for his subject which is most valuable. We await further contributions of this kind.

M. GARRETT

W.H.O. Expert Committee on Tuberculosis, Eighth Report. *W.H.O. Tech. Rep. Ser.* No. 290. (Pp. 24; 3s. 6d.) Geneva: W.H.O. 1964.

The W.H.O. Expert Committee on Tuberculosis met in August 1964, and this report gives their views on the control of a disease which remains a major public health problem in almost all countries, developed or not.

This publication contains concise and up-to-date information on the epidemiology, diagnosis, and control