Book reviews

Occupational Disease in California Attributed to Pesticides and Other Agricultural Chemicals—1969. (Pp. 33; 12 tables; copies available free upon request as long as the supply lasts from: The Bureau of Health Education, California State Department of Public Health, 2101 Berkeley Way, Berkeley, California 94704.)

Previous reports have been reviewed in earlier issues of the *Journal* (**25**, 157, 1968; **27**, 294, 1970). The contents of the present report are similar in form and are open to the same general criticisms.

By British standards pesticides are used on such a scale in California that the relevance of the report to conditions here is not obvious. A few points, however, stand out. The organophosphates were much more dangerous in terms of casualties per ton used than any other compounds. Several cases of poisoning from residues of organophosphates on foliage are reported, some only developing symptoms five weeks after the spraying of the orchard they worked in with parathion and Delnav. More details of these cases would have been interesting. In addition, there were the usual tragic cases of children dying from ingested poisons, including TEPP. The uses of organochlorine insecticides, 2,4,5-T and methylmercury, are being restricted for well-known reasons.

It is curious that the report should state: 'Pesticide poisoning is an increasing hazard today', when, almost without exception, the material in the tables shows that the acute hazards are slowly but steadily declining from a peak in the early 1960s. Perhaps the Bureau of Health Education is doing a better job than it realizes.

D. F. HEATH

Ergonomics and Physical Environmental Factors. (Pp. 427; illustrated.) Available free of charge from I.L.O., Occupational Safety and Health Branch, CH1211, Geneva 22. Geneva: I.L.O. 1970.

Proceedings of a Symposium organized by the International Labour Office and the Ente Nazionale Provenzione Infortuni in Rome, Monte Porzio, 16-21 September 1968.

The opening speaker in this symposium poses the

question, 'Why is ergonomics spoken of in connection with physical factors in the working environment which have traditionally been the domain of industrial hygiene and industrial health?' After a fairly close reading of the proceedings, the same thought occurs to the writer. While isolated contributions comment specifically on the effects of physical energy stresses on performance and comfort at work, and thus fall within the ILO definition of ergonomics as '... the application of the human biological sciences in conjunction with the engineering sciences to achieve the optimum mutual adjustment of man and his work, the benefits being measured in terms of human efficiency and well being', the majority of the papers deal with the potential health hazards, physiological effects, evaluation, and control of the abnormal physical environment. In fact, for the worker in occupational hygiene or occupational medicine, this collection of papers provides a comprehensive and very readable review of the problems associated with the more familiar physical factors, such as noise, lighting, and climate, as well as much up-to-date information on the newer entrants to the field, microwaves and laser radiations.

The topics are grouped under the headings of Vibrations, Noise, Electromagnetic Radiations, Lighting, Climatic Conditions, and Free Communications. A small but interesting group of papers on Odours is obviously a cuckoo in the nest. The overall usefulness of the book is somewhat marred for the non-linguist by the fact that of the 62 papers presented, 43 are published in French, German or Italian, although in every case the foreign text is prefaced by an abstract in English.

J. STEEL

The Application of Metabolic and Excretion Kinetics to Problems of Industrial Toxicology. By Jerzy Piotrowski. (Pp. 166; copies may be purchased at \$2.23 from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Maryland, Washington D.C. 20401.) U.S. Department of Health Education and Welfare, Bethesda, Maryland. 1971.

Although this book contains a good deal of interesting information, I cannot recommend it to British readers. Those potentially interested in the subject can be divided into those who are and those who are not prepared to