Book reviews

Coal Workers' Pneumoconiosis. Edited by I. J. Selikoff, M. M. Key, and D. H. K. Lee. (Pp. 861; illustrated; \$40.00.) New York: Academy of Sciences. 1972.

This weighty volume reveals, to those who were unable to attend, the papers presented at an international conference held in New York in September 1971. It contains both review articles by senior workers long experienced in this field (mainly European) and brand new results of the most recent enquiries. Many of the latter come from the United States where research on this topic has lagged behind that in Europe. However, the Americans have tackled this problem with their customary enthusiasm and generous outlay of resources, and are clearly just about to leap-frog over the bowed backs of their British counterparts. This volume thus summarizes the present position and describes the base from which the next advances will be made. It is interesting to find that pneumoconiosis among American coal-miners seems to be very much the same as it is among European miners and that conclusions reached in one country can probably be applied all over the world.

The subjects covered by the conference ranged from physical characteristics of mine dust, through dust retention and clearance, immunology, epidemiology, pathology, physiology, radiology, treatment, and compensation to dust measurement and control.

This volume cannot be described as an essential for every doctor's bookshelf but it is extremely useful to those who wish to summarize the state of knowledge as it was in 1971, and it certainly deserves a place in the library of every institute with a concern for the health of miners.

G. L. LEATHART

Aspects of Health and Safety in Oil Development. Edited by R. P. Cumming and W. Taylor. (Pp. 124; £1.75.) Published by The Shetland Times Limited, 77-79 Commercial Street, Lerwick, ZE1 0AJ. 1973.

This short and rather scrappy book has a somewhat misleading title. It is divided into six sections which are not well related to each other and only its first part is concerned directly with health and safety in oil development. The other sections deal with occupational health nursing and occupational health services in hospitals,

noise and vibration, occupational hygiene, the health, welfare, and safety of fishermen, and general medical services in Shetland. It is in fact the Proceedings of a Symposium on Occupational Medicine held at Lerwick in Shetland in March 1973, sponsored indirectly by the Shell Company and Dundee University. Although there is some very interesting and useful material in the book, it is a curious mixture of unrelated information and brief accounts of a diverse group of subjects. There is some information of a kind not easily obtainable elsewhere about the diving community and their work in the North Sea, but it is a pity that the problems of the health of men on offshore installations was not gone into in very much more detail. While the Proceedings may have been of great interest and usefulness to those attending the conference itself, the book as a whole is insufficiently detailed for wider circulation.

R. I. MCCALLUM

Safety Audits—A Guide to the Chemical Industry. (Pp. 46; £1.00.) London: British Chemical Industry Safety Council, Alembic House, 93 Embankment, SE1 7TU. 1973.

'It is a normal part of good business practice to initiate and carry out systems of inspection and checking to ensure that operations are performed in an efficient and profitable way. No company's management would consider that its financial statement truly reflected the firm's position unless the accounts had been audited. The stores controller would be working in the dark were it not for periodic stocktaking. Engineers are rightly concerned that equipment is regularly inspected and checked. Control laboratory techniques ensure that specifications are adhered to.

'Accident prevention is just as much an aspect of efficient operation as is any other industrial activity. Yet many managers still tend to look askance at suggestions that their company's safety and loss prevention measures should be subjected to regular scrutiny and, where necessary, constructive criticism. In fact, safety audits (the process by which this is done) are an important tool for identifying falling standards, areas of risks or vulnerability, hazards, and potential accidents in proposed and existing plants and processes; for determining the action necessary to remove hazards before personal injuries or damage occur; and for ensuring that the whole safety effort is effective, meaningful and the objectives understood.'