

The short title of this publication, "Digest of Pneumoconiosis Statistics", is thus slightly misleading, but within its specified field it brings together most of the useful figures available which relate to applications for compensation for pneumoconiosis. The various tables subdivide the claimants according to their industry of origin (for coal-miners their National Coal Board Division and Area), the outcome of their claim, their age, and the advice as to future employment offered to them. Three tables provided by the National Coal Board analyse the employment of men referred to them by the Pneumoconiosis Panels in relation to the advice offered, showing whether suitable employment was offered and accepted, offered and rejected, or not available. A noteworthy feature is revealed by the table which gives assessments of disability. As high a proportion as 55% of the newly-diagnosed coal-miners were assessed as having 10% disability, or less, and only 2% were thought to be completely disabled. Either many cases are diagnosed at a relatively early stage, or the disability associated with pneumoconiosis is, on the average, small. It would be of value if simple and complicated pneumoconiosis could be distinguished in the tables, since the aetiology of these two forms is thought to be different, and the associated disability to be greater when massive fibrosis is present.

The Digest provides valuable data for those concerned with the problems raised by the application of the Industrial Injuries and Workmen's Compensation Acts to pneumoconiosis, particularly the appropriate Ministries, the employers, and the trade unions. It will inevitably be referred to also by those concerned with the prevention of pneumoconiosis, but here great caution is necessary. The reasons are clearly set out in the introduction to the Digest:

"Current increases in the number of men who are certified to be suffering from pneumoconiosis provide no guide to the present risks of contracting the disease. It must be remembered that pneumoconiosis is the result of many years of exposure to dust in the mining and quarrying industries, and that the majority of cases are in the older age groups. Cases now being diagnosed are the product of dust conditions of many years ago, before the present arrangements for dust suppression were in operation. The rise in numbers of new certifications is mainly attributable to increasing awareness of the disease as a result of which workmen are very sensibly showing a greater readiness to be x-rayed. Mass miniature radiography and other x-ray surveys at the collieries chosen for research on pneumoconiosis have undoubtedly contributed to this awareness. Rises in certification figures therefore should not necessarily be taken as indicating that the true prevalence of the disease is increasing."

Speculations provoked by changes and trends in these annual figures might provide useful guidance; it is far more likely that they would lead to ill-founded criticism of present methods of inspection and control and to unnecessary administrative action.

P. D. OLDHAM

**In their Early Twenties: A Study of Glasgow Youth.**  
By T. Ferguson and J. Cunnison. (Pp. vi + 110.  
12s. 6d.) London: Oxford University Press. 1956.

This work presents a follow-up study of a large number of young people who left school in Glasgow in 1947. It excludes those who were serving apprenticeships or receiving special training and who claimed deferment from National Service, approximately 30% of the total. The book, as a whole, is an attempt to estimate the impact of National Service on young people. For this purpose the young men are divided into two groups, those rejected for National Service and those accepted, and a comparison is made between them.

Many interesting points emerge, but in almost every case the differences noted are too small to form the basis of judgment. In many cases the differences are those which might be expected. Nearly one-third of those accepted for National Service had at least started an apprenticeship though nearly 8% had lapsed, while the number of unskilled boys was higher than the average of all boys because of the deferment of the more able and stable lads. National Servicemen form, therefore, to some extent, a selected group. Those rejected for National Service had a definitely poorer background and poorer record.

Ignoring the absence of the apprenticeship element, Professor Ferguson suggests that those accepted conform to the average of performance and says that in considering the record after National Service it would be unrealistic to expect the lads rejected to do as well as those accepted. In spite of this difference the percentages serving apprenticeships at 17 were, rejected 28, accepted 33.3, while at 22 the figures for those in skilled work were rejected 21 and accepted 24.3. Often the unfit and the less intelligent stick more closely to their jobs, some because they value security, others because they lack initiative. The deciding factor with a high proportion of all lads is the way they are treated by the firm, the sense of purpose and personal value they are given. Comparisons are made between boys serving in the R.A.F. and the Army, and the differences should be appreciable because the R.A.F. is known to be more selective; one out of two is rejected and those rejected go automatically into the Army. On the whole the figures show R.A.F. performance on return to civilian life to be better. The proportion of all lads rejected for National Service from Glasgow is 33% compared with about 20% for the country as a whole.

It is certainly not surprising that the great majority said they preferred civilian life and considered that National Service was just a job to be done. On return from National Service approximately 32% of the men continued an apprenticeship or some form of training. Two years later 8.6% were still undergoing training and 15.5% had completed training, a wastage of 8%.

Of those rejected for National Service at 20 about 23.5% were still undergoing training and two years later 18% had either completed training or were still in training, a wastage of 5.5%. This may be due to the unsettling effect of National Service but that may be good rather than bad, if it means that lads are less easily satisfied with the second-rate, and the dull monotony of repetitive work. In any case those who interrupt their apprenticeship to do National Service are on the whole less stable than those who are deferred. The drift from

skilled to semi-skilled work between the ages of 20 and 22 may represent, also, the effect of lack of wage differentials. The grading between skilled and unskilled work is often difficult to assess. A much higher proportion of those rejected for National Service were performing unskilled work at 17 and 22.

In view of the fact that many boys take apprenticeships with a minimum of preparation or selection it might be argued that the failure rate is really remarkably low, especially when it is remembered that the failure rate of carefully selected and prepared students for university courses varies from 13% to over 20%.

It is interesting that the proportion of men convicted of crimes, whether accepted or rejected for Service, rose steeply as the level of scholastic ability declined, and was closely associated with the standard of home and housing. It is a pity that convictions between the ages of 8 and 22 are combined because many will commit a crime at the earlier age and not at the later. In short there are so many factors to be taken into consideration and these are so inter-connected that it is a very difficult, if not impossible, task to evaluate them in detail. It is therefore not altogether unexpected that the groups should fail to show appreciable differences. No mention is made of the effect of the introduction in 1950 of the three-year engagement system which enabled lads to obtain a selected training in the Forces. During the years under review the war in Korea and Malaya was causing concern to parents, and many parents and employers did much to hinder and little to help the lads to make the best of their Service. Pre-Service courses can be most valuable. It is possible that an up-to-date survey might show appreciably different results. Rather than compiling a large amount of statistics, which makes the text in places hard to follow, it is possible that more could be gained by a personal assessment of individual cases taken on a random sample basis.

However, the book contains many valuable points for

reference and will, undoubtedly, be of value to anyone interested in the problems of youth.

M. E. M. HERFORD

**The Treatment of Fractures, Vol. I.** By Lorenz Böhler. (Pp. xxxii + 1,072; 1,527 figures. £8. 12s.; \$24.50.) London and New York: Grune and Stratton. 1956.

The first edition of this epic was published in 1929 and the fourth English edition of 1935 only contained 567 pages. Now, 20 years later, comes the next English translation and it is very welcome. Professor Böhler's early works were unique as he had unrivalled experience in fractures and talked with an authority that could not be contradicted. This edition is very similar to the old one except in its size, for this is the first of three volumes and extends to 1,072 pages.

The chapter on open injuries consists largely of his war experiences and little mention is made of penicillin; thus it is out of date. His treatment of closed fractures has not changed very much and many of the illustrations are the same as in the first edition, but his methods are still sound and show how good results can be obtained without excessive operative interference. His liking, however, for local anaesthesia cannot now be accepted as a satisfactory substitute for a general anaesthetic. I am pleased that he still advocates the use of unpadded plasters.

In spite of the increase in size the spirit of the old "Böhler" is still evident and we can find sound common sense which should be studied by the younger generation. One may not always agree with the treatment of individual types of fracture but if his principles are followed then fractures will be very well treated and results will be excellent.

J. CRAW