with the development of the occupational hygiene service. In 1956 it became necessary to relinquish the laboratories at the London School of Hygiene and new accommodation for the team responsible for this work has now been provided in a building adjacent to the central clinic at Slough.

The Chairman of the Council of Management, Sir Noel Mobbs, has contributed a brief review in a forward, and speaks of last year being outstanding in that it marked the completion of the new clinic at a cost of £60,000 subscribed by manufacturer members and by other interested bodies. His remarks are particularly interesting as he writes not only of what has been done to ensure safe and healthy working conditions, and the treatment of the injured and sick, but also of the financial cost. It is clear that at Slough close attention has been given to this matter of expense, on which all need to be well informed when advocating extensions of health supervision to those at work.

M. F. HUDSON

Digest of Statistics Analysing Certificates of Incapacity 1954/55. (76 tables, 2 charts). London: Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance. 1957.

The fourth annual digest of statistics of the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance covers the period June, 1954, to June, 1955. As in previous years, the spells of sickness, injury, or prescribed disease for which benefit is payable are analysed by different combinations of age, sex, occupation of the claimant, regional and seasonal variation, duration of spell, and certificated diagnosis. Many will again be grateful to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance for their painstaking compilation. The considerable interval of nearly three years between the period to which the digest relates and its completion is no doubt some measure of the labour involved.

According to the introduction the Digest is intended primarily for "medical and social research workers and administrators". The first two classes of user will be disappointed at the incomplete information on the population at risk which occupies only four out of the 76 tables. More tables showing a breakdown of the data by age would also be welcome, and are indeed essential for the critical use of data of this kind. There is, for example, no table with an analysis by both age and locality. Spells of absence due to accidents are analysed by age and by industry (Tables 41-42); populations are given (Table 74) but there is no analysis of these by age. The number of claimants (a rather odd index) is analysed for selected occupations and most frequent cause (Tables 31-2) and again for selected causes and most common occupation (Tables 33-4) but no corresponding populations or age analysis are provided.

On the other hand the multiplicity of tables arising from the separate tabulation of days, spells of sickness, and number of claimants is at any rate from the epidemio-

logical standpoint superfluous. One type of index, such as number of spells of sickness, analysed in greater detail, with exactly corresponding populations at risk, would be far more useful.

The "Index of Tables" in Appendix VII is confusing and could with advantage be replaced by an initial list of tables such as precedes the Registrar General's publications. In reviewing the Digest it was found desirable to make such a table for ease of reference.

No doubt the Ministry have to reconcile the conflicting claims of different users, and it is easy to suggest how some could be better served at others' expense. But the advances in medical knowledge gained in recent years through the epidemiological and statistical approach, and the growing recognition of the value as well as of the scarcity of sickness absence data justify a plea to the Ministry to re-deploy their resources for the benefit of research workers in planning future editions of the Digest.

A. S. FAIRBAIRN

Incentive Payment Systems. By R. Marriott. (21s.) London: Staples Press. 1957.

In his book of just over 200 pages Mr. Marriott has set out to bring scientific thought and investigation to bear on a subject which has numerous ramifications, many of which complicate research.

He discusses the aetiology of incentive payment systems, classifies them, and discusses their pros and cons and at the end of the book gives a general appraisal followed by an appendix listing the "basic requirements" of "sound" incentive payment systems. This will prove useful to those engaged in their practical application.

He draws freely on the opinion of people in management, trade union, and research appointments, and for this reason much of the book consists of quotations hung together with the author's remarks in between; this tends to interrupt the flow of thought when reading the book but may well be the only means of bringing some sort of homogeneity to a subject on which there have been many different views expressed, often with very little concrete evidence in their support.

This book will give the uninitiated a good all-round view of incentive payment systems, will help to bring into true perspective the ideas of those who may have dogmatic opinions, and may sound a warning to the young industrial executive who believes that human beings will react like machines provided the materials and organization are there.

To doctors it will serve to emphasize once again that man is an unpredictable animal not destined to react in any particular way to any particular set of circumstances.

This is a clear, concise work to which much thought and research has been applied.

At the end of the book one feels that opinion on the value of incentive payment systems has hardly begun to crystallize.

I. F. BISHOP