The book is well written and is eminently readable. If the style is almost too colloquial at times, it sustains a lively interest throughout. Good use has been made of contemporary writings, and the quotations, of which there are a number, are particularly well chosen.

Despite its shortcomings, the book fully justifies itself. It provides a useful introductory text for the student and can be recommended for its lucid presentation of the historical setting of some of the principal public health problems of the present day.

S. P. W. Chave


This study of sickness absence attributable to neuroses is based mainly on data for three groups of workers, namely, (a) 57,000 employees of 31 industrial undertakings which submitted returns to the Netherlands Institute of Preventive Medicine (N.I.P.M.) for 1953; (b) 13,000 employees of Philips Works at Eindhoven for 1953; (c) 6,000 employees of the Royal Netherlands Iron and Steel Works for 1954.

Unfortunately different diagnostic groupings were applied to the data from each of these sources. The author has estimated the sickness absences in each group which would fall with the codes 310-318 of the International Statistical Classification, first from the distribution of the coding of the detailed diagnoses available with the N.I.P.M. data, and secondly from a study of the detailed case histories of samples of employees with neuroses from Philips and the Iron and Steel Works.

The N.I.P.M. data disclose an incidence of "definite neuroses" as defined in Russell Fraser's wartime study "The Incidence of Neurosis among Factory Workers", which is only about one sixth of Fraser's results for men and one quarter for women.

Within codes 310-318, the N.I.P.M. statistics show annual incidence rates (spells) ranging from 8 to 12 per 1,000 men; the Philips data show rates of 8 per 1,000 men and 12 per 1,000 women. These results correspond closely with the experience of the London Transport Bus Overhauls, 1949-52, published in "Health in Industry" (1956). The iron and steel workers experienced a substantially higher rate of 45 per 1,000 men.

Examination of the samples of cases indicates that the above rates for Philips' employees may be underestimated and the rates for the iron and steel workers overestimated but that there is, nevertheless, a higher prevalence of serious neurotic disorders among the iron and steel workers.

The N.I.P.M. data falling in codes 310-318 show little variation of incidence with age, except that the rates are lower for the very youngest workers. The incidence rates are higher for women than for men, especially at the younger ages. There is no evidence of seasonal variation.

One difficulty associated with this type of study is that it is of necessity related not to morbidity but to sickness absence, which is affected by the employee's criterion for stopping work, the medical standards of the employer, working conditions generally, and the financial consequences of sickness absence. Variations in these factors may give a false impression of changes in morbidity. The author compares the increase in absences attributable to non-functional disorders of the nervous system and sense organs, where the morbidity is unlikely to have altered substantially. He concludes that there is no evidence of an increased prevalence of neurosis.

Another difficulty lies in the lack of consistency of diagnosis. For a study of neuroses, particularly, the allocation of symptoms to a system of codes can be a major disturbing factor. The author points out a number of serious defects in the International Statistical Classification in this respect. The impression given to the reader is that the problem is nearly insoluble, and this prompts the reflection that if separation of the symptoms does not in any event assist in a study of psychosomatic conditions, then in any broad grouping of diagnoses it would be better to relate symptoms to the associated physical diseases because this would undoubtedly aid the quantified analysis of the incidence of those diseases.

A third difficulty is the extension of the term "neurosis" to cover psychosocial troubles, not requiring treatment, among healthy people, the so-called "socioses". The author contends that these should be separated from morbid neurotic conditions but the reader may doubt whether this can in fact be done objectively.

This book is a valuable contribution to the literature, not only for the results achieved but as a study in methodology and an exposition of the philosophy underlying the analysis of sickness absence data.

C. J. Cornwall


This is a much needed book, for although all physicians would be the better for some knowledge of psychiatry, the industrial physician needs it perhaps more than most. In spite of some, this mysterious occupational disease of those concerned with industrial medicine seems to cause them to be even more antagonistic to psychiatry than their colleagues in other branches of medicine. One could read through the books on occupational diseases, industrial hygiene, and the rest which have been published since the war without even suspecting that the worker possessed such a thing as a mind—except, of course, for the usual accounts of occupational cramps (do they still exist?) and compensation neurosis.

Although the title of Professor Ross's book would seem to imply that he is solely concerned with the problem of mental disorders in industry, he in fact deals with a great deal more. He discusses absenteeism, accidents, fatigue, promotion, supervisors, trade unions, morale, the problems of new and old employees, of the woman worker, and—to delight the organically minded—neurological disabilities, head injuries, and industrial intoxications. The main emphasis, however, is on the everyday aspects of factory life, the everyday troubles of fairly ordinary people. He has written a useful com-