OBITUARY

Dr. Sydney Henry died in London on February 13, 1960, at the age of 79. He came into industrial medicine through general practice in Rochdale where he was the certifying factory surgeon. Encouraged by his friend, Sir Thomas Legge, he left his practice in 1920 to become a medical inspector of factories. For 10 years he worked in Manchester where he came into contact with the problems of byssinosis and mule spinners' cancer in the cotton industry. He was secretary to the Departmental Committees which enquired into these hazards, and Henry was acknowledged as an outstanding secretary because of his tact, courtesy, knowledge, and indefatigable zeal.

His own work on cancer of the scrotum, in which he revealed its risk in various trades, is an outstanding contribution to occupational health. He footslogged through remote towns and villages ferreting out the occupational history of the musician, the egg dealer, and the parish clerk who had died of scrotal cancer. In this work he was helped particularly by his non-medical colleagues whose intimate knowledge of industrial processes and suggestions as to cause were so valuable to him.

His researches into occupational cancer were recognized by the Royal Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons. He had the rare honour of being elected a Fellow of both colleges. At both colleges, he endowed lectureships in industrial medicine in the names of his parents.

Henry was a selfless man who gave his unstinted services to the Factory Department which he loved so much. It was always the prestige of the Department which mattered and he had a complete disregard for his own status. He did not seek the honours bestowed on him, nor did he wish to receive any official recognition for his outstanding work as a public servant.

He had an intensity and vigour tempered by humour which overcame many difficulties and frustrations. He was well known for his forgetfulness of what he regarded as trivialities—his bag or railway ticket—but he seldom forgot his lantern slides or the notes of his research and he was always ready to help those in trouble.

There are more than a few of us in industrial medicine today who owe a great deal to Sydney Henry—appointed factory doctors and industrial medical officers to whom he taught the principles and ethics as well as the details of their work. But perhaps those who owe most of all to him are the few who became medical inspectors when Henry was in the London office. They will always remember his kindness and his generosity and the way he instilled into them the things that really mattered in their lives.

I have a vivid memory of him, peering over his glasses breathing heavily. Suddenly, he would stop breathing, tilt back his head, look closely and intently through his strong lenses and ask a profound question. He almost compelled one to give the absolute truth.

R. S. F. SCHILLING

BOOK REVIEWS


In this monograph Mr. Le Gros Clark has brought together the findings and the interpretative ideas from a number of industrial, medical, and social studies in an attempt to assess the extent to which ill health limits the employment of men in old age. His approach is positive and constructively critical, and to the factual data are added his own comments and "reasoned guesses". The result is a worthy addition to his long series of studies in this field.

The work surveys health assessments and job changes, mainly between 60 and 65, and retirements, mainly from 65 to 70. The similarity of the data about these from different sources is striking and leads the author to the conclusion that "The statistics seem to give little support to any proposal for raising the pensionable age. A postponement of the statutory age would probably only mean a corresponding increase in National Assistance and Unemployment charges".

The author is clearly aware that overall figures for the whole population or for broad classes of industry do not take account of the fact that a disability, which may be crucial for a man in one type of job, may be of little importance for one in another type. Again they neglect the fact that the range of jobs open to a man who has to leave his work will very much depend on his previous training and experience. Mr. Le Gros Clark stresses the point, made by the present reviewer and his colleagues as long ago as 1950, that studies must be directed to individual jobs rather than whole industries, and he backs this contention with some striking and provocative figures from the 1931 and 1951 census tables.

These are probably the best data readily available although, as the author is aware, they still fall short of what is really needed: at some stage knowledge is required about normal age changes of bodily and mental capacity, together with detailed assessments of the demands made by various jobs. Without these it is impossible to take account of the subtle but important differences which often exist in the work done by men whose jobs are nominally the same.

Mr. Le Gros Clark has performed a great service in this monograph by showing clearly the overall picture provided by various statistical surveys, and at the same