

BOOK REVIEWS

Classification of Occupations 1960, General Register Office. (Pp. 136. 27s. 6d.) London: H.M.S.O.

This volume is compiled primarily for use in the Census, but it is also the principal mode of categorization in the Registrar General's Occupational Mortality Supplement, in morbidity inquiries, and in various small-scale and local studies, hence its value to research workers and industrial medical officers. The social class groupings are used in much socio-medical research thus ensuring a degree of comparability between studies rarely achieved in the field of social differentiation. For these and other reasons there will be considerable interest in the new classification.

The reduction in the number of occupational groups constitutes the largest change in the system of classification since 1921; this in itself raises a number of considerations only a few of which can be touched upon here. The allocation of occupations to occupational groups, and of occupational groups to social classes has been brought up to date but certain anomalies remain. The job descriptions "sandblaster"—which exists no longer—and "drowner" are not to be found in the alphabetical index; the civil servant has been given a code number to himself while the shepherd and the greengrocer have been robbed of theirs; the van driver turned instructor does not lose status and the doctor who passes from university employment to industry is no longer promoted.

The experts came to the conclusion that "the degree of sub-division in 1951 and earlier classifications was over-elaborate, having regard to the quality of the answers given at the Census or death registration, for the main purpose of the Census and occupational mortality analyses". Few of us are qualified to dispute the validity of this statement where Census and mortality data are concerned, but from the practical point of view there are a number of drawbacks to the present system: there is an increased likelihood of occupational hazards being hidden and comparisons over time will be even more difficult to interpret than before. The increased heterogeneity of many of the occupational groups—there are now about 200 instead of about 600—will make further grading of occupations as by nature of work (Morris and Crawford, 1958) more difficult. The increased insensitivity of the classification may encourage those working on special inquiries to rely to a greater extent on groupings of their own construction.

The orders under which the occupation groups are enumerated have remained substantially the same, but the sub-orders have been dispensed with. The detailed "Classified List" has been replaced by a 12-page description of the contents of each of the occupational groups. Since the coder can pass, as previously, direct

from the alphabetical index of occupational terms to the occupation groups and class categories this need not concern him greatly. For the social class allocation he must now turn to the Appendix; here it is combined with employment status and socio-economic group. The layout of the alphabetical index is little altered, but the introduction of italics for the industry, where entered, makes for greater clarity. This volume is more manageable than its immediate predecessor, but some valuable detail has been lost.

Since considerable changes have been made it is perhaps regrettable that they are based primarily on one set of considerations, *i.e.* the need to reduce registration anomalies, and that no allowance has been made for new developments and changing emphasis in epidemiological and social inquiry.

REFERENCE

Morris, J. N., and Crawford, M. D. (1958). *Brit. med. J.* 2. 1485.

SUSAN MEADOWS

Klinische Grundlagen der Sechszwanzig Meldepflichtigen Berufskrankheiten (The Clinical Bases of 46 Prescribed Occupational Diseases in West Germany). By Ernst W. Baader. (Pp. xii + 479; 90 figures. D.M.58.) Munich and Berlin: Urban and Schwarzenberg. 1960.

To those who remember Baader's little book of 30 years ago, the present volume of nearly 500 pages will inevitably bring a certain nostalgia for the days when one could carry extant knowledge of the subject with some measure of assurance and authority.

Baader himself, by his presence at conferences both here and on the continent, brings back more than a taste of the pioneers of those early days of the century. His manifest enthusiasm and brightly acute interest in all that pertains to occupational medicine is clearly recognizable in this greatly enlarged edition of the original work.

Now that German is much more widely understood and read in medical circles, there is no good reason for our colleagues in industry to miss the great experience of reading Baader's account of his vast experience in our field.

Before dealing with the 46 prescribed occupational diseases, Baader warns us that "Those who regard biological science as a mathematical affair will, in occupational medicine, soon founder". This is perhaps a useful reminder that Medicine, in all its branches, is an Art, albeit an Art which is always striving to become a Science. But the proposition as stated by Baader will not do, since it will tend to absolve practitioners of our subject from the onus of developing a reasonable competence in elementary statistics. The day is past when the legal