Book Reviews

Medical Surveys and Clinical Trials: Some Methods and Applications of Group Research in Medicine, 2nd ed. Edited by L. J. Witts. (Pp. 367; illustrated; 42s.) London: Oxford University Press. 1964.

It is pleasing to welcome a new edition of this book which deals with clinical studies of groups as opposed to individuals. The book is a compendium of essays on methods and applications by 18 well-known English workers. A unifying thread is found in the contention that the individual cannot be fully understood except by knowledge of the groups to which he belongs. Subjects include diagnosis, prevalence, aetiology, follow-up, prophylactic and therapeutic trials, operational research, genetics, cancer, nutrition, child development, mental disorders, diseases of the chest (including occupational) and cardiovascular system, and tropical disorders.

Since the first edition was published this type of work has proceeded at an ever increasing rate, and this edition has some alterations and additions, but what criticism there is, is that the editing is not always sufficient. In the first edition, in Chapter 12, we read the promise that 'there is every prospect that during the next few years several popular ideas based on incomplete or unsatisfactory data will have to be revised'. Now, five years later, the same promise appears, and the particular chapter has only one new reference in its list although a lot of work on the subject has been published elsewhere. One feels also that the approach to operational research in medical care will need to be more sociologically orientated than that suggested for studying hospital needs. However, these are examples of small defects in a book that is both interesting and informative on many topics. The bibliographies alone are a valuable addition to a library.

We are at present on the brink of developments in data handling techniques by computers which may well change our way of thinking. Although this book does not deal with computers, it deals expertly for the general reader with many of the concepts on which we base our studies of medical data in the mass.

A. M. ADELSTEIN

Medical Microbiology, 11th ed. Edited by R. Cruickshank. (Pp. 1067; illustrated; 55s.) Edinburgh: Livingstone. 1965.

Ever since the first edition appeared in 1925 Mackie and McCartney's *Handbook of Bacteriology* has been an indispensable part of the equipment of every laboratory devoted to medical or veterinary bacteriology. Essentially a practical manual, it was a favourite with the laboratory

staff of all grades, but had less appeal to anyone not directly concerned with practical bacteriology. There are to be no more editions of Mackie and McCartney; instead Professor Cruickshank and his colleagues in the Department of Bacteriology in the University of Edinburgh have replaced it with a much larger book intended for a wider circle of readers. A thorough revision of the text begun in the tenth edition of Mackie and McCartney has been completed, and a great deal of new matter has been added. It now runs to over 1,000 pages and seeks, according to the editor, to cater for the needs of 'all those concerned with the laboratory diagnosis and control of infection in man' including medical students and their teachers, general practitioners and house officers as well as 'bacteriologists' and 'laboratory technicians'. In the opinion of the reviewer, it is difficult to see how any volume can cater for needs so diverse while remaining one coherent whole and not becoming in effect several distinct books bound between a single pair of covers. Professor Cruickshank and his colleagues have come as near to success as could be expected. However, the mass of technical detail will tend to deter the ordinary medical student and the practitioner not concerned directly with work in the laboratory (six modifications of the Gram stain are included!); any but senior technicians may easily get lost in so large a book. Nevertheless, like its progenitors, the new work should find an important place in every medical or veterinary bacteriology department; not only in the laboratory but in the library as well. It is to be hoped that the publishers will consider issuing future editions in two volumes: Parts I to IV in the first volume and Part V in the second.

T. S. L. BESWICK

Fringe Benefits, Labour Costs and Social Security. By G. L. Reid and D. J. Robertson. (Pp. 336; 48s.) London: Allen and Unwin. 1965.

'Fringe benefit' is an expression of recent origin and, like the word *Paris*, means different things to different people. Was a truck shop in an isolated eighteenth century mining community a fringe benefit? Certainly the expense account and company car for the executive, and the canteen and the luncheon voucher for the workers, would be included in the term. What about holidays with pay, and the employer's contribution to National Insurance and what about medical services?

The book opens with a chapter examining the scope and meaning of fringe benefits. From the definition evolved no distinction is made between statutory services and services provided voluntarily by the employer. There follows an account of a survey of fringe benefits to