Book Reviews

Tata Services Ltd. Department of Industrial Health. Annual Report 1966. (Pp. 38; illustrated; no price stated.) Bombay: Tata Services Ltd. 1966.

Tata Services is a large industrial group comprising textiles, oil-mills, heavy chemicals and pesticide manufacture, and a number of hydro-electric companies. It employs 17 doctors and nine safety officers, and it stands in the vanguard of Indian industry on account of its enlightened employment policy.

The report stresses the peculiar problems of occupational health services in the developing countries, where basic problems such as nutrition, housing, sanitation, and public health have to be tackled simultaneously with those more specifically related to employment. What is particularly impressive is the fact that the range of activities in the latter field alone—environmental health and safety, first aid and safety training, rehabilitation and study of sickness absence—would do credit of itself to any western enterprise; but when to this is added tuberculin testing, malaria control, inoculations against cholera, typhoid, poliomyelitis, and tetanus, energetic participation in the national family planning campaign, and a large measure of general medical care for employees and their families in camps adjoining the factories, the magnitude of the exercise is breath-taking. The effectiveness of the work undertaken cannot be fully gauged from an annual report, but there is every indication that urgent problems are being vigorously tackled.

Pre-employment medical examinations are the rule, and there is a rejection rate of 10%. Tuberculin testing revealed 8% of negative reactors who were given B.C.G. 'Gross underweight' is listed as by far the commonest defect, the incidence ranging between 10% and 30% of those examined at the different plants, with the exception of one where no cases are listed under this heading.

Sickness absence rates show a rising trend, as in the west, and the suggestion that social security benefits, introduced fairly recently, are being abused has a familiar ring. There is little doubt that the gross incidence of physical ill-health is greater in the population reviewed than that in western countries, but none the less attention is also being directed there towards the psycho-social environment as a possible factor. Specific problems of environmental hygiene investigated are described in detail. It is not clear whether the list is exhaustive or merely a representative sample. It is refreshing to find the report pulling no punches when managements are felt to be culpable, for example, in accident prevention; all too often, the British practice in similar reports is to hint obliquely that it is 'unfor-

tunate the management did not find it possible' to do whatever is being advocated as desirable, and the details of their shortcomings are politely glossed over. A survey of personality types in ischaemic heart disease described in the chapter on Research Activities is not very impressive as a piece of research; but in view of the tremendous task the Department is undertaking in all its other fields, Dr. Johnson's observation might aptly be applied: 'Sir, it is like a dog walking on its hind-legs—the marvel being, not that it is done well, but that it should be done at all.'

F. H. TYRER

A Synopsis of Public Health and Social Medicine. 2nd Ed. By A. J. Essex Cater. (Pp. 752; 75s.) Bristol: Wright. 1967.

This new edition appears seven years after the first, and to those familiar with the more popular early version, *Synopsis of Medicine*, by Tidy, it can be said to uphold that very high standard and tradition in the abbreviated presentation of factual medical knowledge.

All the 17 chapters fall into well-worn grooves, although one might cavil at the seemingly artificial separation between Chapter VIII 'Occupation and Environment' and Chapter XI 'Environmental Health'. Some readers might also question the wisdom of relegating 'Heredity and Health' and 'The Nuclear Age' (more a euphemism for radiation hazards and the use of radio-isotopes) to a final chapter entitled 'Other Aspects of Public Health and Social Medicine'. Moreover, Health Education surely is worthy of greater priority than that given on a few pages at the end of the 696 pages of text (incidentally, some 150 pages more than in the first edition). These are small points, and obviously Dr. Essex Cater, in his foreword, is anxious to have constructive criticisms of this kind.

As the author emphasizes, this work 'cannot replace standard text-books' but is 'intended to be used with them as a means of quick revision and as an outline for persons not required to make a detailed study of the whole field of Public Health and Social Medicine'.

As a student, I was wont to abstract in summary all my lecture notes, so that in the hectic days before examinations one could have a quick review of the area of knowledge which had been covered. How I would have welcomed this aid, for the book is a most detailed and exhaustive account of the whole field of Public Health and Social Medicine in précis form. But as such, it is more descriptive and has, in some ways, a wider application than the modest claims which the author makes. It may be that in an age when time is at a