Books Reviews

Dr. L. R. B. Birt, the medical consultant who, at the time of compilation, was about to retire after 17 years' service.

G. F. Keatinge


Periodically since 1950, the Harvard School of Public Health has sponsored a Conference in Boston, Mass., on behalf of the Industrial Council for Tropical Health. This beautifully produced volume follows the format of earlier years and records the proceedings of the sixth meeting held in 1966. The participants include medical representatives of numerous international industrial organizations and the Harvard School.

The papers presented are reported in detail and followed by brief summaries of the resulting sessional discussions. The subject range is wide and the groupings loose. Environmental health, population control, organization of health services, and several of the more important tropical diseases are studied. Inevitably, the result is discursive rather than comprehensive, but there is evidence of a wealth of practical experience in the texts and the index is excellent. There are useful sets of references.

The value of such conferences in establishing personal contacts and fostering understanding will not be fairly reflected in a book of this kind. One suspects that it will be most highly valued by the participants whose photographs and professional details are a feature of the latter section of the book.

P. B. Cook


This is a beautiful book in every way; it purrs along like a Rolls-Royce taking one through every conceivable aspect of this protean disease, from its original description as a disease of the skin to its present position as a systemic affection.

Whilst this monograph has as its central theme the author's personal view of sarcoidosis, based on his extensive clinical experience of the condition, Professor Scadding also draws from the literature to supplement this experience to present an authoritative balanced account of current attitudes towards it. In an early chapter the difficulties encountered in the concept of 'disease' are discussed and the problems in arriving at a satisfactory definition of sarcoidosis are presented; an operational definition based on the demonstration of the appropriate tissue and its distribution is then suggested.

After opening chapters dealing with the historical survey, the pathology and the problems of definition, further separate chapters give exhaustive accounts of the disease as it affects different bodily systems and tissues, including a separate chapter devoted to the syndrome of erythema nodosum and hilar lymphadenopathy. Further chapters deal with special aspects, such as calcium metabolism, the Kveim reaction, berylliosis, associated diseases, aetiology, diagnosis, and treatment.


Presumably because this book is a collection of separate papers delivered at a symposium by 25 invited participants, there is a lack of continuity from chapter to chapter. This shortcoming is redeemed by Dr. Radomski's summing up at the end, but one would have liked a fuller comment on the meeting, especially as the discussions on the papers are not reported.

Approximately half of the book is devoted to the biochemical and metabolic mechanism of bladder cancer causation. This is of great interest to those engaged in the field, but possibly much of it is rather too sophisticated for the bystander to evaluate or even to grasp. The clinical and therapeutic aspects, which take up about one-third of the text, are not directed to the urologist or the surgeon but give the industrial physician an outline of recent progress and of some developments likely to mature in the future. The sections on the environmental and epidemiological aspects contain little that is new. One would like to have read more about one of the important developments of the last 20 years, the use of exfoliative cytology for early diagnosis and to have seen an assessment of its value in the prognosis of the disease in industrial populations.

Many useful points are again emphasized; that betanaphthylamine (BNA) is a more potent bladder carcinogen than benzidine was proved a generation ago; the synergistic effect of the two, long observed, is now proved experimentally. The identification of the ultimate metabolites may help to elucidate the changes which occur in the mucosa to produce cancer. The N-hydroxylation of betanaphthylamine is a comparatively recent discovery. It leads Troll to speculate that with BNA the metabolite 2-naphthyl-N-hydroxyamine appears in the cell of the mucosa and alters the hereditary elements of the cell. Work now in progress suggests that an in vitro modification of the guanine in the DNA may occur.

The metabolism in experimental animals of alpha-naphthylamine (ANA) is shown to be different from that of BNA. Several contributors suggest that ANA is not likely to be carcinogenic, but proof either way is still lacking. One contributor observes that since the beta isomer content of the ANA in his factory was reduced from 3-6% to 0.3% in 1959, the company (and presumably he, because he does not contest it) no longer considers the ANA manufacturing areas to be hazardous locations. It is difficult to accept the naif conclusion that the biological response to a carcinogen as potent as betanaphthylamine can be nullified by such a reduction alone.

The role of cigarette smoking and of faulty tryptophan