Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety
Vol. II/L-Z. (Pp. 755-1621; illustrated; 180 Swiss francs for two volumes.)

The second volume of this valuable encyclopaedia reinforces the impression produced by the first, but it also generates some new thoughts. For example, reading through an international symposium such as this creates a picture of the pattern of world disease which is reinforced by my own impressions from travelling. The reader from north-western Europe may think that the sections in this volume which deal with malaria and schistosomiasis are too long, until it is realized that there are about 130 million cases of the latter disease in the world which increase with the construction of each hydro-electric dam in the tropics with the consequent formation of a sea of infected snails.

In the section on pre-employment examination there is no mention of using a questionnaire, and the importance of both the history and the examination itself seems a little inflated when the trend of opinion is towards the reduction, or even elimination, of this type of examination in healthy populations. There are detailed sections on occupational health institutes, pesticides, and petroleum refining, and one of the most interesting attributes of the volume is the amount of description of technical processes. The section on occupational health institutes contains some wise words on the importance of their undertaking field service work to improve their research and teaching, thus keeping their academic feet on the ground.

There is a comprehensive section on pneumoconiosis, which ranges from the coal miner's condition to mushroom worker's disease. The reproductions of the radiographs of the various types are appreciably better than is usually found in articles of this kind. However, in a couple of pages of coloured plates, the one which sets out to show a positive patch test for bichromate and also to nickel is not entirely convincing to the reviewer (even when wearing his latest pair of spectacles). But, in the article on closed-chest cardiac massage it is a more serious criticism to note that its dangers are not mentioned, particularly when non-medical people such as first-aid staff attempt to perform it. However, these dangers are clearer now than they were when the article was written. It always takes a few years before enough experience has been gained in a new procedure so that it can be properly assessed.

There is always something to be learned when reviewing a book, and in reviewing this one I learned, among other things, that what I call 'accident neurosis' (because these two words convey the two essential facts about it) is known in this encyclopaedia as 'sinistrosis'. Two omissions from the article on this condition are that it is not mentioned that it commonly follows head injuries and that it tends to disappear quickly when any compensation claims are settled.

There are four informative pages on occupational skin disease and useful sections on social security and the use of statistics. A page of pictures of occupational stigmata on the hands needs a good deal of faith in the eyes of the beholder. Welding is given five pages with very full treatment and there is an interesting piece on whaling. A logical point is made from Sweden in the article on the employment of women, where it is stated that there is no need to prohibit their employment underground if the environmental conditions are satisfactory.

The world arrangements for workmen's compensation are well reviewed in six pages and the volume closes with a useful list of appendices, and of contributors and an easy-to-use index with subheadings, which save a lot of searching. My initial enthusiasm for the index was somewhat cooled, however, by noticing that in the review copy pages 1591 to 1614 were missing. The fault seems to be in the binding, and perhaps production costs are being held down at the expense of quality.

Reviewing the second volume of this encyclopaedia increases my sense of its value, and what criticisms I have made would be considered as only minor.

Unfortunately, I cannot wait 40 years to read the next revision, and I return to my original suggestion for a revision office to be set up by the ILO which will produce another edition in about 10 years' time.

R. C. Browne


No single volume could do more than provide a bare introduction to the range of subjects indicated by the title. The questions are: how bare, and which parts are barer than others? Some parts of this book are so thin and leave the subject so bare that one must feel that the resources of space and time could have been better used to thicken other parts. Thus, two pages on 'The Ancient Civilizations', including slavery and a page and a half on feudalism seem intended to be brushed aside so as to get at the body of the book. The central chapters deal with