

historical survey of occupational health practice by Dr. Simson. The volume ends with 44 specific recommendations grouped under headings such as company policy, personnel practices, occupational health, rehabilitation, safety, and the vexed matter of medical certification. While there is little here that has not been proposed elsewhere, this report has the advantage of having a strong practical bias and collecting all the opinions in one booklet.

P. J. TAYLOR

**Statistical Tables on the Health of the Army, Vol. I 1967, Vol. II 1968, Vol. III 1969.** (Pp. 129; 131; 129, no price stated.) **Statistical Tables on the Health of the Army 1970.** (Pp. 142; no price stated.) London: Ministry of Defence. 1972.

Detailed statistics on morbidity are always welcome and these four volumes on the health of the British army at home and abroad contain many interesting figures, but without a more detailed description of the population at risk they are of rather limited value. For example, few actual numbers are given and none of the tables is broken down by rank. It is appreciated that some of these shortcomings may lie outside the statistician's control.

The main area of interest is the differing incidence of a few conditions (skin disease, appendicitis, diarrhoea and enteritis, tonsillitis and pharyngitis) in commands situated in various parts of the world. Injuries, the main cause of admissions for treatment, are rather summarily dealt with.

The statistical appreciation with which each volume begins is somewhat terse, and several points of interest which arise from the tables are not discussed. It is a pity that more has not been made of the labour which has gone into collecting the data and compiling the tables.

D. APPLETON

**Microbiology of the Atmosphere, 2nd ed.** By P. H. Gregory. A Plant Science Monograph, general editor N. Polunin. (Pp. 377; 8 plates; 47 figs; £7.50.) Aylesbury: Leonard Hill. 1973.

The behaviour of small living particles in air is of interest in many biological disciplines and Gregory's *Microbiology of the Atmosphere*, now in its second edition, provides a great deal of factual information that will be valuable to a variety of workers. Dr. Gregory discusses the nature of the atmosphere and the behaviour of the air masses that may transport living material and then describes the mechanisms by which microbes, pollens, and spores may be liberated into the air and travel through it. As befits a volume in the series Plant Science Monographs, attention is concentrated on the spread of plant pollen and spores, and of the fungi that can infect them, and, in consequence, dispersal in the open air is predominant and is well described and illustrated. In contrast, the intramural spread of bacteria and viruses infecting men (and animals) is given relatively little space, supported by a very curious balance of references, many culled

from the last decades of the nineteenth century. Despite the use on the dust-cover of a photograph of bacteria on an epidermal scale, dispersal of bacteria from the skin has scant treatment.

The book is enriched by illustrations of fungal and other spores and pollen grains and there are 38 pages of references; it will continue to serve as an important manual for all those interested in the living matter of the air.

R. E. O. WILLIAMS

**Occupational First Aid.** The Authorised Textbook of the St. John Ambulance Association and Brigade. (Pp. 43; illustrated; 75p.) London: Macmillan Journals Ltd. 1973.

Most of the day-to-day problems that face first-aiders working alone are, of course, minor ailments and injuries. Their abilities to splint fractures, stem haemorrhage or care for an unconscious patient are seldom—if ever—put to the test except in examinations or competitions. This booklet, which supplements the standard St. John training manual, will be widely welcomed because it provides much of the guidance that has long been needed. A great improvement on previous editions, it is well laid out and easy to read. Its scope is best indicated by the titles of its six chapters, the longest being only seven pages—duties and responsibilities of first-aid attendants; treatment of minor injuries; treatment of minor illnesses; emergencies and major incidents; anoxic states and their treatment; and the first-aid and safety. The importance of good record keeping is stressed and the Birmingham Accident Transfer form is illustrated.

Reference is made to various topical subjects, such as the Robens' report and the impending translation of the Medical Officer of Health to Community Physician. Paracetamol is recommended as the analgesic of choice, and the risks of aspirin are described. Since there must still be many first-aiders who use APC or its proprietary equivalents it is a pity that no mention is made of phenacetin. The analogy of a coal-fired power station used to explain the various types of anoxia is, however, complicated—some may think laboured—and its accompanying diagram lists medical conditions such as 'pulmonary oedema' and 'cerebral ischaemia' without explanation. This chapter also describes how to use amyl nitrite in cyanide poisoning, and advises the injection of atropine by the nearest person for organophosphorus-induced respiratory paralysis but with no mention of any earlier warning signs or symptoms.

This booklet will certainly be widely read by first-aiders and it should also be read by all doctors and nurses who practice in industry or commerce, since they may be asked for their views, and perhaps even to clarify a few points.

P. J. TAYLOR

**Institute of Occupational Medicine. Report 1969-72.** (Pp. 21; 50p.) Institute of Occupational Medicine, Roxburgh Place, Edinburgh EH8 9SU. 1973.

In the early years of the National Coal Board's Medical