

Book Reviews

Elements of Radiation Protection. By Ronald V. Scheele and Jack Wakley. (Pp. 99; figs, tables; \$7.95.) Illinois: Thomas. 1975.

The declared aim of Scheele and Wakley is to present in an elementary form relevant information for users of x rays and radioactivity who are not well versed in the physical sciences. It is apparent that the book has evolved from a set of lecture notes and is clearly intended as an adjunct to a lecture series. How else could the introduction of such terms as 'binding energy', 'K-absorption edge', and 'annual genetic dose' be justified in such an elementary text without preliminary explanation?

For the sake of conciseness the authors frequently resort to listing salient points under a heading, thus the required ground is covered in fewer than 100 pages. Indeed teachers will find this publication a useful check-list of material for their own lectures. From the students' point of view the book has the twin merits of a clear text and bold, uncomplicated diagrams. C. B. CLAYTON

Health and Industrial Growth: Ciba Foundation Symposium 32 (new series). (Pp. 267; \$18.50.) The Netherlands: Elsevier, Excerpta Medica, North Holland. 1975.

Some two years ago Lord Ashby suggested that the Ciba Foundation might organize a symposium on second-order effects of industrial growth on human health. It was held in September 1974 with a limited number of participants from developed and developing countries. The 13 papers presented and the discussions which followed each are presented in this book.

The symposium opened with two papers describing the current state of thinking (rather than the current position) in the United Kingdom, the first by Lord Ashby on 'Legislation outside the factory: the British philosophy of pollution control' and the second by Professor J. C. Wood (vice-chairman of the Robens Committee) on 'Legislative protection of health at work'. Other papers dealt with the current position in a number of developing countries and the attitude of the World Health Organization towards occupational health services in both developing and developed countries.

Neither in the papers nor in the discussion was the subject confined to occupational health but ranged widely into associated questions of environmental health, sociology, economics (the use of limited resources of materials and energy), and even politics. Enthusiasts, and even the proponents of, occupational medicine will find much to ponder over in a chapter entitled 'The industrialization of medicine' by Ivan Illich. Personally, when reading his works I am helped by a simile used in another context by Arthur Koestler and compare Illich's writings with an Impressionist painting which has to be viewed from a distance; if one puts one's nose into it the details seem to become clumsy blobs.

In a book as far ranging as this, each reader will find greatest value in those parts most relevant to his own circumstances. Every practitioner and student of occupational medicine in the United Kingdom would gain by studying the opening two chapters. Several comments led me to wonder whether it would have been useful to have included an account by a British social historian of the problems faced by this country when it was developing and the measures taken and the decisions made. The sense of *déjà vu* would have been much stronger had it been pointed out how our legislative measures were designed in sequence to deal with communicable disease, then vulnerable groups, education, accidents, and later with occupational disease, and that we still separate prevention from compensation.

In his excellent summing-up Lord Ashby comments that some of the political and social problems which arise as second-order effects of industrialization do not seem susceptible to rational analysis at all, and even when there are rational solutions to problems they are not valid everywhere. Certainly, reading this book I was more than once reminded of reading Tolstoy's *War and Peace* with the continual emphasis on the inevitability of events.

Finally the traffic in ideas is not only one way. I read this book during the mid-winter holiday and at the same time was reading in another book about a peasant girl in a middle eastern country who became pregnant while she was still engaged to be married. That was nearly two thousand years ago, but still. . . . W. R. LEE

Health Protection of Radiation Workers. By W. Daggett Norwood. (Pp. 442; figs, tables; \$27.50.) Illinois: Thomas. 1975.

This is a large-scale review of knowledge relating to the health and safety problems created by the nuclear power industry. Its value as a source book is enhanced by a generous use of topic headings; each chapter ends with a summary and there is often a substantial list of references.

Minor errors are sufficiently frequent to be irritating. The introductory sections on radiation physics are weak and expressions of confidence in the continuing safety of nuclear power generation are not always as reassuring as they are intended to be. Nevertheless, the major sections of the book, dealing with the biological effects of ionizing radiations, the assessment and elimination of radionuclides deposited in the body, and the metabolic behaviour of a wide range of radioisotopes represent valuable summaries of current knowledge. C. B. CLAYTON

The Human Side of Accident Prevention. Edited by Bruce L. Margolis and William H. Kroes. (Pp. 144; \$11.50.) Illinois: Thomas. 1975.

I confess to approaching this book with some eagerness. It has a good title and seemed to be stressing an approach