Archives of Disease in Childhood, 1970, **45**, 734.

Book Reviews

Neurology in Pediatrics. By PATRICK F. BRAY. (Pp. xiv + 514; illustrated + tables. 220s.) Chicago: Year Book Medical Publishers. 1970.

This new textbook of paediatric neurology covers the subject clearly and fairly comprehensively in less than 500 pages. It is arranged in a novel but sensible manner, Part I discussing problems as they present to the paediatrician, and Part II describing conventional categories of disease under the conventional headings. This book has many merits, perhaps the most striking being its conciseness, clarity, and directness. Instead of the beating-about-the-bush with which textbooks so often open, page one plunges us straight into the heart of the matter with a clear introduction to mental retardation. Complicated topics such as differential diagnoses are summarized in well set-out tables. References are numerous, appropriate, and up to date. Illustrations are well chosen and well reproduced. The whole volume is pleasing to look at and handle.

Paediatric neurology is a difficult, complicated, and diffuse subject. One of the problems confronting the author of a book like this is to decide in how much detail to describe each of the very large number of syndromes and diseases. There is, after all, nearly as much that is known and could be said about a rare condition like Krabbe's disease as about a common one like spastic diplegia. Inevitably some will feel that some particular topics should have been dealt with more fully. To this reviewer the section on cerebral palsy seems sketchy, and the approach to neonatal problems less authoritative than the rest. However, the virtues of this book greatly outweigh its faults. It will certainly be of great value to paediatricians, many of whom will now turn to it first when they have a difficult neurological problem.

Mineral Metabolism in Paediatrics. A Glaxo Symposium. Edited by D. BARLTROP and W. L. BURLAND. (Pp. x + 171; illustrated + tables. 55s.) Oxford: Blackwell. 1969.

This book is the outcome of a short colloquium sponsored by Glaxo Laboratories Ltd. on a somewhat neglected aspect of development and medicine. The meeting was opened by two Zürich paediatricians, Professor Prader and Dr. Fanconi, and roughly the first half of the book is devoted to the metabolism and pathology of calcium, strontium, magnesium, and fluorine. We are still very much in the dark about how vitamin D, parathormone, and calcitonin interact in the production of the various forms of rickets, and why they sometimes fail to stabilize the serum calcium of the newborn, and these were clinically important subjects to discuss. The text section on the metabolism of fluorine should be widely read in view of the present dilemma about fluoridation, though the last page or two on the aetiology of fluorosis require a little thought. The morning closed with a thoughtful critique of the dangers of ^{90}Sr.

Dr. Elsie Widdowson opened the afternoon session and, after emphasizing how important iron, copper, zinc, molybdenum, and now chromium, had been shown to be to the structure of enzymes, she went on to discuss the accumulation and metabolism of these elements in the fetus and newborn. A group then showed how important a deficiency of zinc might be in general malnutrition, and Czech workers discussed the damaging effects of cadmium and mercury on reproduction, and the protection selenium salts might afford. The last chapters were on the transfer of lead to the fetus and the genetic aspects of haemochromatosis, respectively.

One cannot have everything in a one-day colloquium, but how good it would have been if a chapter on Wilson's disease or the therapeutic possibilities of chelating agents could have been slipped in afterwards—or even one on the risks of magnesium deficiency in enteritis. Perhaps Glaxo will oblige again!

Diets for Sick Children. By DOROTHY E. M. FRANCIS and DAPHNE J. W. DIXON. 2nd edition. (Pp. xi + 310; 65 tables. 50s.) Oxford and Edinburgh: Blackwell Scientific Publications. 1970.

The new edition of this book is excellent, and provides the only comprehensive source of reference on all aspects of paediatric dietetics in this country. It supplies, not merely a list of diet sheets, but gives well-explained, easily understood information about each disease, as well as why the diet is necessary, and how to put it into practice. The diet sheets, food lists, and recipes are extremely thorough and of immense value in making adherence to the diet easier for the child and the relatives.

The subjects covered range from the nutritional requirements of normal infants and children, through the more common dietary problems of children, e.g. obesity and diabetes, to aminoacid disorders, e.g. phenylketonuria, carbohydrate intolerances, and disturbances of fat metabolism. The latter three complicated subjects are covered exceptionally well, but the chapters on obesity and diabetes are sketchy. We are constantly and rightly reminded that children are not small-scale adults and that remembering the principles of good nutrition is very important if children are to grow normally as well as keep in better health even on the most restricted synthetic diet.

Some small criticisms—Salt free Marmite has been off the market for some time and the use of cyclamates as sweeteners has been banned since January 1970.

Using the book for reference would be easier if the chapter headings had been repeated at the top of each page.