

**Health and Welfare. The Development of Community Care.** Cmnd. 1973. London: H.M.S.O. Pp. 371. 1963. Price £1 4s.

This blue book closely follows the ten-year hospital plan and is meant to be considered in parallel with it. The major part of the report summarizes the answers given by local authorities in England and Wales to questions about the staffing and building programmes of their health and welfare departments during the next ten years. Some authorities have given estimates based on a sober realization of what they are likely to achieve, some have hopefully put down what they would like to get, all have had to rely to a considerable extent on guesswork. The elaborate tables set out in the report cannot therefore be taken at their face value and are certainly no direct guide to the excellence or otherwise of any particular local authority's provisions. This is not, in fact, a "plan" in the sense that the report on hospital services was. Its importance lies simply in the fact that a cautious first step has been taken towards giving a central lead to local government services.

Subsequent reports may well be bolder. If so, one hopes that the brief initial section on "Needs" will be greatly expanded. In the seven pages devoted to the mentally ill and mentally subnormal some excellent principles are laid down. Handicapped patients must be helped to live normal lives as far as possible and they should be at home most of the time. They and their families should have the personal service of social workers who can give support and practical advice. The services available should include, apart from such domiciliary help, facilities for training and occupation, the possibility of spending short periods in residential care, and a choice of suitable foster homes, lodgings or hostels. The problem is, how should such ideals be put into practice? Which of the several models at present available provides the best community service? How can the needs of patients be balanced against the needs of relatives? To what extent should services perform a humanitarian function and how far should they aim to decrease morbidity? What are the most practical and efficient ways of ensuring co-operation between local authority staff, hospital workers, general practitioners, voluntary bodies and Ministry of Labour officials? What can be done about handicapped patients who are "unco-operative"? What should be the functions of the social worker and public health nurse?

Local authorities cannot be expected to supply the answers to these and many other questions without much guidance from the centre. In particular, they need to know where their extra staff will come from and what kind of extra financial support they will

receive. They also need the kind of detailed information that can only be obtained from extensive operational research and which should form the basis for the section on "Needs" in the next 10-year report. A rational plan could then be developed, grounded in the facts of the psychiatric services as they are now operating and clearly indicating how progress could be made.

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**Recent Advances in Biological Psychiatry.** Volume V. The Proceedings of the Seventeenth Annual Convention and Scientific Program of the Society of Biological Psychiatry, Toronto, Ontario, May 4-6, 1962. Edited by JOSEPH WORTIS. New York: Plenum Press. Pp. 380+xiii. 1963. Price \$13.50.

The 30 papers presented here cover many different disciplines and interests and the subject matter varies from the effect of maternal anxiety during gestation on neonatal behaviour to the effect of 5-hydroxytryptophan on behaviour and the EEG. As such it is likely to be of most value in introducing the reader to interesting work now being carried out on topics outside his own immediate field. The clinical psychiatrist will perhaps find 2 papers of particular interest. Brune and Himwich report their work on the relationship between urinary indole excretion and the severity of psychotic behaviour in schizophrenic patients. They emphasize that these differences in indole excretion are not specific for schizophrenia as such but are related to variations in the severity of the psychopathology. The second paper by Cameron and his associates reports his work on the effect of R.N.A. on the failure of memory for recent events in presenile and aged individuals. If his striking results are confirmed this work should be of the greatest theoretical and clinical importance.

A. J. COPPEN.

**Guide to Psychiatry.** By MYRE SIM. Edinburgh: E. & S. Livingstone. Pp. 868. 1963. Price 55s.

Dr. Sim's *Guide* is written for those who need more than is provided by the small textbooks for medical students but less than the "large ones for the would-be specialist". It is also written for the perplexed.

Any guide book should give the traveller a description of the places he may visit, indicating features of especial interest, both historically and at the present time, and should advise on how and where he may meet his needs. A good guide should inspire him to see for himself, be enjoyable to read for itself and convey to the reader the personal enthusiasm of the