being considered in breach of his terms of service. Alternatively, suppose a civil action were brought against him; where, indeed would he stand?

Verily he would not have a leg to stand on, and would be in dire need of help from his Medical Defence Society!

My other observation is of a somewhat different nature and is in the realm of the medico-political, horrid word, but in my active life I have had some experience.

I think I started attending annual representative meetings of the B.M.A. in 1934, and have always endeavoured to interest myself in the problems facing all branches of the profession rather than just ours.

How well I remember the problem of the registrars' bottleneck and of the refusal of the government of the day to create more consultant posts, preferring, according to information given to us, to economize by giving senior registrars, in certain cases, responsibilities appertaining to consultants.

As I see it, Dr Stone's suggestion goes even further in providing the powers that be with another source of cheap labour. Does he seriously suggest that the S.R.N. should have this extra responsibility thrust upon her —however interesting she might find the work—having regard to the fact that financially the public, as represented by the government (of either political colour) values her services at less than, say, those of a bus conductor?

Silverdale. C. VIPONT BROWN.
Lancs.

Book reviews

Infectious diseases. CARL C. DAUER, ROBERT F. KORNS AND LEONARD M. SCHUMAN. American Public Health Association. Vital and Health Statistics Monographs. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press. London. Oxford University Press. 1968. Pp. xviii+262. Price £2 7s. 6d.

This book will only be of interest to those wishing to compare vital statistics from the U.S.A. with their own experience. For others the short introduction holds some unexpected treasures: "Reporting was often required of masters of ships, inn and tavern keepers, boarding house managers, and heads of households, even before physicians were required to report . . ." "A system of collecting information annually on certain diseases from selected physician correspondents was instituted in Michigan in 1875." "Minnesota required the reporting . . . of specified diseases of domestic animals as well as of man in 1885."

The three main chapters cover infectious and parasitic diseases, other specified infectious diseases (e.g. infections of the kidney, otitis media etc.) and respiratory diseases. Each chapter divides clearly into sections on particular diseases, starting with a short historical note. Differences between age groups, sexes, races and States or regions are brought out in the text and tables. One feature of the tables which might irritate British readers is that the latest or current figures appear at the top or in the left column, so that annual rates are read from right to left or from bottom to top. Differences in morbidity or mortality between whites and coloured races may hold some lessons for those doctors in Britain who have many coloured immigrants or residents among their patients.

Diagnosis and treatment of cardiac arrhythmias. J. P. P. STOCK, M.D., F.R.C.P. London. Butterworths. 1969. Pp. 234. Price £3 15s. 0d.

The basis of this book is Dr Stock's careful analysis of electrocardiograms of cardiac arrhythmias. The recognition of much of the subject matter has been hastened, if not actually made possible, by the use of the direct writing electrocardiograph.

The first three chapters are devoted to descriptions of normal rhythms with the relevant anatomy and physiology. Subsequent chapters deal with detailed analysis and descriptions of arrhythmias, and the general practitioner who does not use an electrocardiograph may find chapters on subjects about which he has seldom heard. These include escape beats and escape rhythms, extra systoles and parasystole, ectopic tachycardias and atrioventricular dissociation; the commonly known arrhythmias are also described.

The factual descriptions of the arrhythmias are clear, concise and always illustrated with reproductions of electrocardiograms. Theoretical considerations relating to aetiology are discussed, and while