

World Medical Research—Principles and Practices. HARRY SUTHERLAND GEAR. Butterworths. pp. 117. Price 30s.

This book is at the same time a history of man's stumblings towards international collaboration in the prevention of disease, and an introduction to the many international organizations who play a part in world medical research. Written by a former Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organization the viewpoint is firstly that of W.H.O., but accounts are given of research work originated by the United Nations, the Food and Agriculture Organization and U.N.E.S.C.O. There is a short—and by no means irrelevant—section on the international use of atomic energy for peaceful purposes, and on the International Geophysical Year.

Members of the College who take part in research will be grateful for this book, since in it they will find expressed the justification for much of their work. The study of epidemiology—in particular of potentially pandemic diseases—is supported by W.H.O. through governmental and non-government agencies in countries throughout the world, but of even greater importance is the recognized need for accurate statistical information on morbidity, as well as mortality. Those who plan and will ultimately run an active Records Unit extending throughout the Commonwealth may already feel that this work is much needed, and that, if properly done, it will be well received.

The book is impeccably published and easily written. It is a balanced presentation of the vast amount of international medical administration, as well as research, and reading it should induce a proper sense of perspective—and humility—in the general practitioner.

The Life and Times of Sir Charles Hastings. WILLIAM MCMENEMEY, Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone Ltd, 1959, pp. xii + 516. Illustrated. Price 50/-

It is strange that no full length biography should have been written before on one whose life wrought such great changes in medical practice. Dr McMenemy has nobly filled this want, and in doing so has written a history of medical practice during the period extending from the time of the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834 to the passing of the first Medical Act in 1858. Though Hastings' work began before this period—for he was born in 1794, and early rose to eminence, and extended nearly to his death in 1866, it was during this time that the foundations of general medical practice as we know it today, were laid.

This book will be read with the deepest interest by all who take an active part in the affairs of the British Medical Association.