

Portrait of Social Work. A Study of Social Services in a Northern Town. BARBARA N. ROGERS and JULIA DIXON. Published for the Nuffield Provincial Hospitals Trust by the Oxford University Press. 1960. Pp. v + 266. Price 25s.

This study is a revealing inside picture of social work in a northern town. Many of us working in general practice will have been uncomfortably aware that, though there is an enormous number of social workers connected with the local authority and the hospital board, their quality and their ability to help in the social problems that confront the family doctor are often quite inadequate.

Reading this report the multitude of social workers, their overlapping, and lack of co-operation is brought home very forcibly. The problems of welfare work evidently need to be tackled from the top and rigorous pruning carried out to prevent waste and ensure that wise guidance is given when required. How far we have departed from a rational approach to this subject is shown by the small mention of the Churches, whose ministers should be amongst the most active in social guidance. True, the Salvation Army is praised for its hostel, and the work of the Church of England's Moral Welfare Association is noticed, but these are a small part of the work being done by the churches in social and moral guidance.

The Younghusband report calls for governmental action to secure better training for welfare workers, but a complete overhaul of all the many services with the cutting out of much dead wood is also required. It is to be hoped that this report will stimulate action.

Re-educative Treatment of Suppression Amblyopia. T. KEITH LYLE, C.B.E., M.D., M.CH., M.R.C.P., F.R.C.S., CYNTHIA DOUTHWAITE, D.B.O., and JILL WILKINSON, D.B.O. Edinburgh and London. E. & S. Livingstone, Ltd., 1960. Pp. v + 135; price 25s.

Although its title is forbidding, this is a book for children. Translated from the original French version into English, it consists of a number of visual tasks arranged in an attractive and entertaining way so as to appeal to young patients. After the child's better eye has been occluded, he is set to read from what is essentially a collection of puzzles, and the amblyopic eye is exercised in the process.

The book is excellent for its purpose, and has proved its worth during the past few years at the Moorfields Eye Hospital, London. It would also serve to keep normal children quiet on rainy days during the holidays!
