

A Manual on the Weeds of the Major Crops of Ceylon

Prepared by a Committee consisting of Dr. J. C. Haigh and representatives of the Tea, Rubber and Coconut Research Institutes. (Department of Agriculture, Ceylon: Peradeniya Manual No. 7.) Pp. iii+50+vi+50 plates. (Colombo: Ceylon Government Press, 1951.) 5 rupees.

THIS work is perhaps better described as an annotated atlas rather than a manual, since its chief feature is the set of coloured plates of fifty of the commonest weeds of Ceylon, which admirably portray their habits and also exhibit some details of the reproductive organs. The accompanying text is comparatively brief and provides botanical and native names with short notes on habit, habitats, flowering time and flower colour, modes of propagation, a few descriptive details and mention of uses and means of control. The whole atlas is contained in a loose-leaf cover so that, as the promised supplements appear, the plates can be rearranged in alphabetical order.

It is interesting to note, in this half-century of common weeds, how few would appear to be regarded as definite pests, and many appear to provide useful vegetation-cover for the soil. One notes that the eradication of two species of *Oxalis* is described as impracticable. The perennial grass, *Imperata cylindrica*, evidently plays the part of a tropical couch grass, while the recently introduced annual grass, *Cenchrus echinatus*, has spread to an extent that is causing concern. A dwarf vegetatively propagated variety of the mugwort, *Artemisia vulgaris*, appears to be a greater nuisance than the taller type, which is propagated mainly by seed.

One can look forward to the supplements that are to appear in due course, and the whole should make a valuable addition to the bibliography of the weed flora of Ceylon.

E. J. SALISBURY

The Subject Index to Periodicals, 1951

Issued by the Library Association. Pp. xi+313. (London: Library Association, 1952.) £5 5s. 0d.

THIS index maintains the high standard of production characterizing the earlier volumes and, although now limited to publications in English which are issued in the British Commonwealth, provides the general reader with a key to the contents of many periodicals which are not indexed elsewhere. United States and Canadian periodicals are excluded only because they are adequately covered by the indexes of the H. W. Wilson Co. Highly specialized periodicals in the fields of science and technology are also omitted, because they are mostly indexed or abstracted by the societies and institutions concerned; but the scientific worker and technologist will nevertheless find this index a very useful key to general discussions, in the responsible monthly reviews as well as in scientific and technical periodicals, of such questions as technological education, industrial research, broadcasting, science and society, and the like. The 'proceedings' and 'transactions' of many local societies concerned with archaeology, natural history, etc., are covered. The compilation is done on the plan of the 'dictionary catalogue', all entries being arranged under black-letter headings in a single alphabetical order. While cross-references are freely used to link up related subjects and direct attention to unusual, out-of-the-way topics which would otherwise be overlooked, one weakness has been noticed

in the referencing from the general to the particular: the referencing under particular countries has made it rather difficult to determine the extent to which this index covers the more general current discussion of Colonial development and welfare or economic assistance of backward areas, whether under United States Point Four Aid or otherwise.

Sound Recording and Reproduction

By J. W. Godfrey and S. W. Amos. (BBC Engineering Training Manuals.) (Published for *Wireless World*.) Pp. 271+10 plates. (London: Iliffe and Sons, Ltd., 1952.) 30s. net.

ALTHOUGH this book has been written primarily as an instruction manual for the use of the engineering staff of the British Broadcasting Corporation, it cannot fail to be of interest to all who are engaged in the techniques of sound recording and reproduction. The equipment described is, quite naturally, mainly that used by the B.B.C., but the principles dealt with concern not only engineers but also those students who are interested chiefly in the academic side of this subject of ever-growing importance.

The first chapter deals with the general principles involved in recording and reproduction, and thereafter the book follows a logical order, dealing comprehensively, though of course not exhaustively, with disk recording, magnetic recording and reproduction and, finally, recording on film. For those requiring data for reference purposes, there are a number of useful appendixes, and to help those who need still further information, a list of references is given.

Throughout the book the text is assisted by many excellent photographs, diagrams and graphs, and altogether the book makes very good reading. As the B.B.C. is now one of the largest users of recorded material in the world and has developed equipment of a very high standard, it does seem that such a book as this is really necessary, and it should receive a hearty welcome, especially by the staff in training.

An English Course

For Royal Society of Arts and Technical Students. By Stanley Day and S. H. Wiltshire. Pp. 164. (London: Macdonald and Co. (Publishers), Ltd., 1952.) 7s. 6d. net.

THIS is an excellent little book. It covers more ground than does Sir Ernest Gower's 'Plain Words', it is more systematic and it does not fall into the pits about which it warns others. It is succinct but not scrappy, logically developed with interesting and adequate exercises, and delicately spiced with a gentle humour. The book would do a good work in fields besides those of English courses for Royal Society of Arts and technical students for which it is primarily intended. It would solve many of the problems of expression which are met by science workers who have to convey their meanings by using the English language.

Many science students who need a little French and German would derive much benefit by taking this course in their mother tongue as an aid to their studies in other languages. A simple, direct English style which avoids ambiguity and circumlocution is the key to good science-writing, and this is the aim of the authors. An appendix gives a very useful list of books, including drama, novels, and poetry for the extended reading of the student. There is a good section on précis-writing.

W. L. SUMNER