

Public Expenditure

Appraisal and Control. Edited by Alan T. Peacock and D. J. Robertson. Pp. viii+168. (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1963.) 21s.

THE publication as a separate volume of the ten papers contributed to a symposium on the appraisal and control of public expenditure is timely when not merely the efficiency of Government control in general has been brought in question, for example, by Prof. Brian Chapman in his recent book, *British Government Observed* (*Nature*, 200, 198; 1963), but also the effectiveness of Government organization has been re-examined by the Trend Committee.

Originally, the papers were published in the *Scottish Journal of Political Economy*, and while books by Basil Chubb and S. H. Beer have in recent years discussed the control of public expenditure from the administrative point of view, these papers concentrate on the economic side and indicate, for example, the value of Dr. R. McKean's systems analysis in decisions on Government spending. The subject is one which is likely to grow in importance, and as Prof. A. T. Peacock shows in his paper on "Economic Analysis and Government Expenditure Control", while the way forward has been pointed by the Plowden Report, for example, extensive adoption of economic analysis is likely to await a major change in the attitude of the electorate to public spending—or, it might be suggested, some rational understanding between political parties.

The specific problems of defence expenditure, health service policy, the allocation of expenditure in the electricity supply industry and the control of subsidy expenditure in agriculture are discussed by Dr. McKean, Mr. J. Wiseman, Dr. R. L. Mook and Mr. G. F. B. Houston, respectively. Others deal with the appraisal of Government purchasing, controlling the Government's wage bill and the growth of Government expenditure in the United Kingdom since 1790. In discussing problems of expenditure control in local government, Mr. L. Boyle comments that many universities appear to have been singularly remiss in providing facilities for studying public finance and political science. He suggests that a much closer contact is desirable between the academic world and the field of practice so that senior officials in the public service can communicate their problems to the universities, enabling research to be conducted into those problems, and thereafter benefiting from the results of such research.

Such a remark itself attests the significance of this volume to which Mrs. Ursula K. Hicks contributes an epilogue on choice, efficiency and control in the public services, which has some sound comments to make on the Plowden Report.

Experiments in Physical Chemistry

By J. M. Wilson, R. J. Newcombe, Dr. A. R. Donato and Dr. R. M. W. Rickett. Pp. xii+290. (London and New York: Pergamon Press, 1962.) 21s. net.

EXPERIMENTS in *Physical Chemistry* is intended for use by students reading chemistry to honours degree standard. The form of presentation is most attractive. Each experiment is assigned to one of three sections, the sections differing in the degree of complexity of the operations and the associated theory.

Each experiment is prefaced by a discussion of the theory involved. The discussions are incomplete but serve to relate the book with theoretical texts. Next, the apparatus required is described. Diagrams are useful, and firms manufacturing the equipment to be used are listed. The method to be followed is then given, and here the text is weak. More detail is required; too much initiative is required of the student. For this reason the book might prove a valuable addition to the teacher's library, the student reaping the benefit second-hand.

The book has an efficient index and the contents are set out very clearly. One hundred and two experiments are presented and they are selected to cover the wide range of physical theory and technique. Although most of the experiments are of college standard, there is a great deal here to interest the very able sixth-form pupil, and the book would be a very useful additional source of ideas for end-of-term laboratory work. D. C. FIRTH

Organic Chemistry Laboratory Operations

By W. B. Renfrow and P. J. Hawkins. Pp. viii+216. (New York: The Macmillan Company; London: The Macmillan Company, New York, 1962.) n.p.

THIS book covers a very wide range of techniques. Its introductory chapters on distillation, extraction, melting and boiling point determinations are familiar ground for a pupil in the lower sixth form. The final chapters on high-pressure hydrogenation and infra-red spectroscopy are the province of an honours student in his final year.

A range of preparations are given and these illustrate well the basic reaction types of organic chemistry. Many of the experiments are done using unfamiliar materials. For example, *p*-xylene is sulphonated and not benzene. Saturation and unsaturation are illustrated using cyclohexane and cyclohexene and not the more familiar methane and ethylene. The general theme, worthy of close attention, is that reactants must be easy to handle, reactions must work quickly, and the products be easy to isolate.

Each chapter includes a discussion illustrated by clear diagrams; also an equation and a suggested mechanism for the reaction. A problem is given at the end of the chapter and is designed to test the student's understanding of the theory. Between theory and problem there is a method. This is adequate in earlier chapters on elementary experiments, but quite the reverse later in the book when advanced work is under discussion. Students are asked to see the instructor for working instructions!

The early part of the book is well worth reading at the bench; the latter part has no place in the laboratory.

D. C. FIRTH

Mild-Moderate Forms of Protein-Calorie Malnutrition

Symposia of the Swedish Nutrition Foundation, Bastad, August 29-31, 1962. Edited for the Swedish Nutrition Foundation by Gunnar Blix. Pp. 159. (Stockholm: Almqvist and Wiksell, 1963.) Sw. Kr. 35.

TOWARDS the end of 1961, the Swedish Nutrition Foundation came into being, mainly through the financial support of the Swedish food industry. Among its projected activities is an annual symposium. The first of these was held in August 1962. This book records the papers read then, and a summary of the discussion. There were 13 contributions, all by workers who had a direct concern in the problem of protein-calorie deficiency. These included research workers from the United States of America, Africa and Central America, as well as a representative from the World Health Organization and one from the Food and Agriculture Organization. The contributions dealt with the clinical and biochemical features of the condition and with related questions such as protein and calorie requirements, methods of assessment of physical condition, the use of protein-rich foods for prevention, and an exhaustive and provocative article on the evaluation of the nutritive value of protein.

Together these papers form an excellent review of the present-day situation. The discussion is especially valuable in emphasizing how much we still have to learn about this, the commonest of all forms of malnutrition. The book is beautifully produced and a pleasure to read. There are very few and quite unimportant misprints, a most praiseworthy effort for a book produced and printed in Sweden.

JOHN YUDKIN