Handling, Processing and Packing Dates

It has been estimated that at least 1 million people are supported entirely by date cultivation, and in view of the nutritional value of this fruit, particularly in the diet of many people in the Middle East, the recently published Food and Agriculture Organization Development Paper, No. 72, will be of considerable interest, especially as hitherto there has been no single publication dealing with the processing of dates (*Dates: Handling, Processing and Packing*. Pp. xxiv+392. Prepared by V. H. W. Dowson and A. Aten. Rome: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; London: H.M.S.O., 1962. 20*s*.; 4 dollars). Much of the information concerning the various operations to which the date may be subjected after harvesting has been provided by workers actively engaged in the date industry and should be of particular interest to several countries where attempts are being made to improve the quality of the fruit. Knowledge of the composition and changes which constitute ripening is essential in the processing of dates, as is that of the different varieties, and these subjects have all received full attention from the authors. Gathering and modern packing-house procedures, including the equipment used, are described in detail. In the appendix, information is given of various analytical methods used to examine dates and of the standards used to evaluate their quality. There is also a most comprehensive explanatory list of the Arabic words so widely used by the date industry. The Paper is freely illustrated; the coloured plates showing the development stages in the Beiyuudhi date of Libya are of a particularly high standard. It is perhaps a pity in a work of this standard that such a number of minor errors have occurred in the text, resulting in the inclusion of a rather depressing corrigenda sheet. Nevertheless, as a reference work this Paper will be of great value to all who are interested in the date.

Neuropharmacology

The January issue of *The Practitioner* (19, No. 1147; 1964) deals with neuropharmacology. The reason for the choice is that in no branch of therapeutics have there been more advances than in this. The introduction of the so-called 'tranquillizers' opened up a fascinating new approach to the management of mentally and emotionally disturbed patients. Many of the original claims for this new group of drugs were over-optimistic, but the basic concept was sound. This is clearly exemplified in several of the articles. Almost equally impressive has been the progress achieved in the fields of anti-convulsants and anti-Parkinsonian drugs, but here, as in the case of tranquillizers, the multiplicity of these new preparations has proved a handicap to the general practitioner. To decide which of them is best for his individual patients is proving an ever-recurring problem, and it is hoped that the advice provided in this special issue of *The Practitioner* will prove of real value. Other articles deal with therapeutic problems that the practitioner is liable to encounter.

Fœtal and Infant Liver Function and Structure

All scientists are already greatly indebted to the New York Academy of Sciences for the well-known series of articles published in its *Annals*. The recent publication entitled *Fetal and Infant Liver Function and Structure* contains the forty papers presented to a conference called for the purpose of bringing together numerous papers on the function and structure of the fœtal liver that have been published (Vol. 111, Article 1. Pp. 1–558. New York: New York Academy of Sciences, 1963. 7 dollars). The papers given to the conference are classified under seven major sections: Part 1, "Morphology", contains six papers on the structure, growth and regeneration of the liver; Part 2, "Physiology", contains five papers on the physiology of the liver in the fœtus, new-born infant and chick embryo; Part 3, "Chemistry", contains seven papers on the chemistry of the formation and action of various enzymes; Part 4 contains papers devoted to bilirubin and its related compounds; Part 5, "Pathology", contains six papers on the pathology of various diseases of the liver; Part 6 contains seven papers discussing the clinical problems of jaundice in early infancy and those of biliary atresia; Part 7, "Discussion Workshop", reports discussions on various subjects, such as terminology, regeneration, enzymes, morphology, circulation, neonatal chemistry, bilirubin conjugation, problems of pathology and clinical problems. Edited by Harold E. Whipple with Julian A. Sterling as consulting editor, these contributions by 82 authors together provide a valuable and factual epitome of the present-day knowledge of this subject.

Television Society Premiums

The Television Society has awarded the following Premiums for outstanding papers read before the Society in 1962–63: *The Mullard Premium* to Mr. G. B. Townsend (Rank-Cintel Ltd.), for his paper on "New Developments in SECAM"; *The Wireless World Premium* to Dr. P. Schagen (Mullard Research Laboratories), for his paper on "Electronic Aids to Night Vision"; *The Electronic Engineering Premium* to Mr. A. C. Dawe (E.M.I. Electronics Ltd.), for his paper on "Characteristics of Special Vidicon Camera Tubes and their Applications"; *The Pye Premium* to Mr. K. Fawdry (B.B.C.), for his paper on "Education by Television"; *The T.C.C. Premium* to Mr. C. F. Whitbread (Associated Aerials Ltd.), for his paper "Receiving Aerials for U.H.F. Television".

The Royal Society of New Zealand

The *Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* for April 1964 (Vol. 91, Part 1) includes the report of the tenth New Zealand Science Congress, with reports of the half-yearly meeting of the Society, 1962, and of the annual and half-yearly meetings, 1963. In his presidential address, Dr. C. A. Fleming, discussing the promotion of science in a Commonwealth democracy, reviews the formation and growth of the Society. He notes particularly the consistent desire of the Council during the past 25 years to become more representative of New Zealand science by some kind of liaison with the increasing number of national scientific bodies serving a particular discipline, the desire that the fellowship should adequately represent the balance of science in New Zealand, and the desire that Fellows should play a more active part in the Society's affairs. He suggests that three changes in the fellowship rules are desirable. Scientific eminence should be the sole criterion for nomination, but all nominees should agree to pay, if elected to the fellowship, a substantial annual fee towards the Society's administrative expenses. The right of nominating Fellows should be extended to groups of the Fellows themselves. The issue also includes Prof. H. Barraclough Fell's Hudson Lecture for 1962: "Saint Cuthbert's Birds and Thunderstones: Sidelights on the Search for Living Fossils".

University News : Belfast

The following appointments to lectureships have been announced: Dr. M. G. Burnett (physical chemistry (supernumerary)); K. G. Proudfood (plant genetics); Dr. R. M. Pengelly (applied mathematics (digital computing)); Dr. D. L. Smith (botany).

Birmingham

The following appointments have been made: *Lectureships*, Mr. B. Ahamad (econometrics and social statistics); Dr. N. Cottingham (mathematical physics); Mr. B. D. Giles (meteorology and climatology); Dr. L. A. Griffiths (physiological chemistry); Mr. E. Stones (educational