

MIND AND VOICE

Brain Function, Vol. 3

Edited by Edward C. Carterette. (Proceedings of the Third Conference, Nov. 1963—Speech, Language and Communication. UCLA Forum in Medical Sciences, No. 4.) Pp. xiii+279. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press; London: Cambridge University Press, 1966.) 96s. net.

In the past decade scientific publication has increasingly tended, at least in the more progressive fields, to occur as a by-product of those occasions in Tokyo, Miami or Florence when thirty-two or -three are gathered together in the name of multi-disciplinary enterprise. Whether this formula for collaborative progress is working itself to death or not, the outcome in cold print is not always optimal as a cerebral stimulant for the reader. Redundancy, cross-purposes, and displays of throw-away erudition may all induce somnolence.

This volume of contributions and discussions has the faults of its kind, but includes as well some rewarding elements. Geschwind's challenging little essay on Wernicke's place in the history of aphasia study is an admirable corrective to the contemporary over-swing in favour of the English school of neurologists. It perhaps deserves a wider circulation among potentially interested readers than it is likely to get in its present company. Roberts's views on the central brain mechanisms of speech have directness and simplicity befitting his surgical distinction; one of the briefest papers, it provoked one of the longest discussions. Lenneberg's essay on the anatomical and physiological concomitants of speech and development can scarcely fail to whet the reader's appetite for his forthcoming book. Jakobson gives a useful survey of recent work relevant to his now well known two linguistic types of aphasia. Speech disorders in childhood, especially those associated with brain damage, have had far too little intensive study. Ajuriaguerra's suggestive contribution may do something to remedy this. The value of quantitative techniques deriving from experimental psychology for aphasia research is not as widely appreciated as it should be, and Wepman and Jones's explicit example of how they can be woven into the individual case study could be thought over with profit by those clinicians who are hesitant in making use of them. There are contributions by Lamb (a linguist), Osgood (a psychologist), Hoijer (an anthropologist), and Ferguson (an applied linguist) from diverse angles which produced varied reactions, to judge by the ensuing discussions.

The book as a whole serves to emphasize the fact that, as a result of a convergence of interests and the consequent availability of a variety of technical and methodological resources, there is now a favourable opportunity for real progress in understanding the nature and mechanisms of speech, language and communication. At present the atmosphere is multi-lingual rather than polyglot. A common tongue cannot be artificially contrived, but may well develop as solid results begin to emerge.

R. C. OLDFIELD

OBITUARIES

Academician Vladimir Sukatchev

THE prominent biologist and geographer Professor V. Sukatchev died on February 9 in Moscow. He was born in 1880 in a village in the Kharkov region and in 1902 graduated from the Petersburg Institute of Forestry.

By detailed examination, mainly of forests and marshes, as well as steppes and meadows, Sukatchev developed his own methods in plant ecology during the first quarter of the present century. His book *Plant Communities* was

first published at this time. He had already established some of the principles of present day European phytocoenology—the term itself was recommended by him in 1910. Sukatchev's principles for the distribution of plant communities and their grouping into ecological and phytocoenic series are well known. Several generalizations concerning the dynamics of vegetation and forest structures are due to him. He is considered one of the founders of the biological trend in the study of marshes in the Soviet Union. His book *Marshes, their Formation and Characteristics* was published several times. For many years he studied the Quaternary fossil flora, and on the basis of this research, as well as on spore and pollen analysis, he made important deductions about the palaeogeography of the interglacial stages in Eastern Europe and Western Siberia.

After 1914 Sukatchev worked on experimental phytocoenology. He put into practice for the first time original methods for investigating competition between species, and between the biotypes and ecotypes within the species. Sukatchev worked persistently to improve methods of field research. His best known publication is the *Guide to the Research of Forest Types*. Regional examination of vegetation was made by him or under his supervision in the Russian plateau, in Siberia and the Urals, in the Crimea, the Caucasus and in Middle Asia. From his travels came dozens of publications—a great contribution to botanical geography.

At the end of the nineteen-thirties Sukatchev formed an original conception of the complex study of the natural environment; it formed the basis of the scientific trend which he called biocoenology. He devoted the last twenty years of his life to working out a theoretical basis for biocoenology and to a complex study of forest biocoenoses. The book *Programme and Methods of Biogeoenological Investigations* was published shortly before his death.

At the Institute of Forestry Sukatchev trained many prominent foresters and typologists. At the beginning of the present century he supported women's higher education in agronomy and taught botany and ecology in the Stebut Institute. In 1925 he organized a chair of geobotany at the Leningrad University and was head of the Leningrad geobotanical school.

Sukatchev held many posts: from 1912 he worked at the Academy of Sciences; he started as a junior botanist, became a corresponding member in 1920, Academician-Ordinaire in 1943, director of the Forest Institute in 1944 and finally deputy to the Academician Secretary of the General Biological Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet Union. For many years he was active in botanical life. He was constitutor-member in 1915, and president from 1946, of the Botanical Society of the Soviet Union. He was also president of the Moscow Society of Naturalists and an honorary member of the Geographical Society of the Soviet Union. He served as the head of the Academy of Sciences' Commission for the study of the Quaternary period and he was the chief editor of the *Botanical Magazine* for many years.

Vladimir Sukatchev was an untiring worker, a passionate naturalist, brought up on the ideas of Charles Darwin and Vassily Dokutchaevev. He fought selflessly for the purity of moral principles in science and life; was very popular and sincerely respected. Sukatchev received many scientific and state decorations. In the Soviet Union he was awarded the highest honorary title of a Hero of Socialist Labour.

V. SOTCHAVA

Dr. J. K. Sen

DR. JITENDRA KUMAR SEN, who died at his home in the Indian Botanic Garden, Calcutta, on December 12 aged 45, was a distinguished palaeobotanist.

He obtained an honours degree and a masters degree from the University of Calcutta, where he attended the